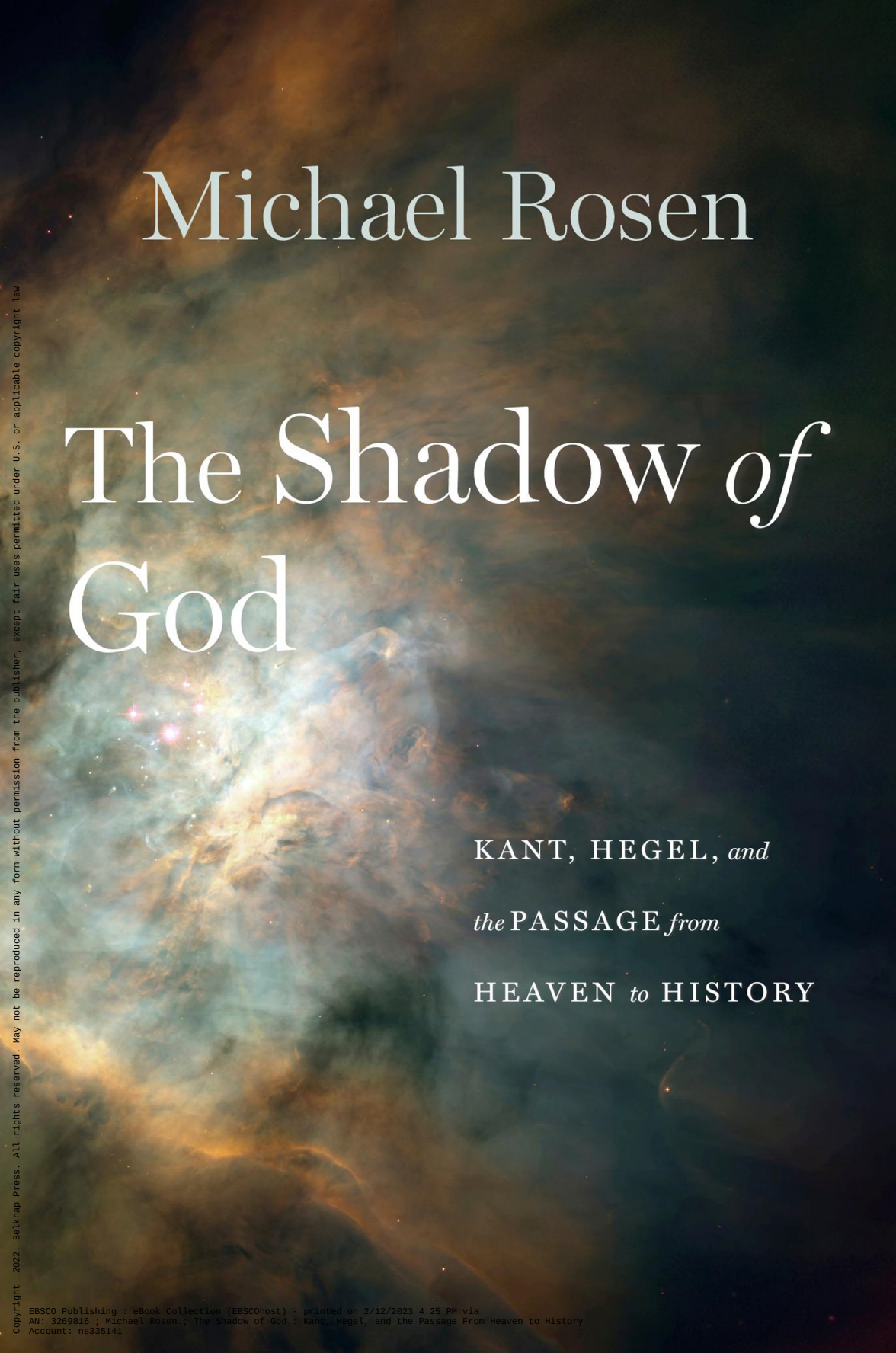

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The Shadow of God

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Michael Rosen

The Shadow *of* God

KANT, HEGEL, *and the* PASSAGE *from* HEAVEN *to* HISTORY

THE BELKNAP PRESS *of* HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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For my students

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I am not a religious man but I
cannot help seeing every problem
from a religious point of view.

—LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

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References and Abbreviations

References to Kant are made in the following way. The abbreviation "Ak." (standing for "*Akademie Edition*") is followed by two numbers separated by a colon, the first of which stands for the volume number, the second the page. In first references and in the bibliography, I will give the title both in English and in German, but subsequent references will be from the English title alone. The exception is *The Critique of Pure Reason,* to which reference is standardly made by the pagination of the first two editions (A and B).

References to Hegel's works are, in almost all cases, to the German of the Suhrkamp edition of *Hegels Werke in 20 Bänden.* Again, first references and the bibliography will contain the title in both English and German but later references will use the English title as an abbreviation.

The works of Marx and Engels are referred to by the GDR edition of the Marx-Engels-Werke (*MEW*), which has the advantage of being both complete and available online. Again, English titles will be used as an abbreviation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A Not So Secular Age?

> The last thing one settles in writing a book is what one should put in first.
>
> —PASCAL

A Spy Story

Here is how a spy story starts.

A man in a cheap suit hurries through an industrial wasteland. He is nervous and runs his fingers through his hair, which looks as if he has cut it himself with nail scissors. At length, he comes to a wall and reaches over to pull out a loose brick. He takes a small packet out of his pocket (a notebook? a roll of film?) stuffs it into the cavity and puts the brick back. Then he walks away, all the while glancing around to see if he is being observed. Suddenly, seemingly from nowhere, a large black car appears and two men leap out. He is bundled inside and driven off, not to be seen again.

The scene now shifts. Two sleek-looking middle-aged men in bowler hats are walking through St James's Park, deep in conversation while pretending to feed the ducks. "So there you have it, George", one says to the other. "There's probably nothing in it, but the Minister would like you to take a look—discreetly, of course."

And with that we're off. We know that, if le Carré or whoever it is is on form, by the end of the next few hundred pages, after some unexpected

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but plausible twists and turns, the events described in St James's Park and the poor chap with the bad haircut will have been tied together into a satisfying whole. That, to put it briefly, is the separation (and final coincidence) between plot and story, and it's what you pay your money for when you buy a thriller or a crime novel.

Jonathan Wolff (to whom I owe this insight into the contrast between plot and story) remarks: "A detective novel written by a good philosophy student would begin: 'In this novel I shall show that the butler did it.' The rest will be just filling in the details."[1] Would it really, though? I suspect that a philosopher's detective novel is more likely to start: "In this novel, I shall challenge the widely held view that the butler did it. I shall call into question received assumptions about what it is to be a butler and what would count as evidence for showing that the butler (if indeed he is one) had 'done' it." Or something like that.

Even if philosophy is not a whodunnit, it is still a kind of mystery tour: the aim is to change the understanding of what is otherwise taken for granted, so how can we describe our destination adequately until we have reached it? Worse, what makes us confident we are really *advancing towards* that destination? As Hume worries, "by what criterion shall I distinguish [truth], even if fortune should at last guide me on her foot-steps?"[2]

Most Anglo-American philosophers deal with such vexing considerations by ignoring them. One philosopher who certainly did not, however, was Hegel, and they led him to some disparaging remarks about the very idea of preceding works of philosophy with prefaces or introductions. The sort of considerations presented in prefaces are, he says at the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit,* inappropriate and contrary to philosophy's purpose:

> For whatever one might properly say about philosophy in a preface and in whatever way one might say it—for example, a historical statement of its tendency and standpoint, its general content and results, a network of randomly pointing assertions and assurances about truth—none of this can be accepted as the way in which to present philosophical truth.[3]

The reader can be forgiven, surely, if she does not find this encouraging. Hegel, whatever his other merits, hardly stands as a model of reader-friendliness. What is more, he himself then goes on to give the *Phenome-*

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nology a preface—fifty of the densest and most demanding pages of philosophical prose ever written.

Nevertheless, the difficulties that Hegel points to are real ones. We—author and reader—need to start from a shared understanding of how philosophical argument is to take place. But that is something that anyone with the slightest acquaintance with the history of philosophy will see cannot be taken for granted. It is true that philosophy has had brief periods when it has looked somewhat like Thomas Kuhn's "normal science" (these are usually called "the end of metaphysics") but, despite the best efforts of professional establishments to impose uniformity, such orthodoxies have not proved durable.

In that connection, a dismissive (if funny) remark attributed to the Harvard philosopher W. V. Quine needs to be reckoned with. Quine is reported to have said that two sorts of people are drawn to the study of philosophy: those interested in the history of philosophy and those interested in philosophy.[4] This book proceeds, however, from exactly the contrary conviction. Its objectives are both philosophical and historical: not only is the history of philosophy itself philosophical, but philosophical history, I believe, represents the most fruitful way of understanding some of the deepest and most perplexing issues that face us—as philosophers and as citizens. And this means that the way it is written and the kind of arguments it advances will be very different from those given by more conventional English-speaking philosophers.[5]

So an Introduction there shall be. As a first step, I shall present and discuss briefly a series of quotations that the reader will encounter again later in the book. The idea is to give a sense of purpose to a journey that will carry us through what will be, at times, very dense and tangled terrain.

Secularization

Let us start with a quotation that gives this book its title, *The Shadow of God*. It comes from section 108 of Nietzsche's *The Gay Science:*

> After Buddha was dead, his shadow was still shown for centuries in a cave—a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which

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> his shadow will be shown.—And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow.[6]

Nietzsche's aphorism is enough to establish that this is a book about *secularization*. Yet what do we mean by "secularization"? On one understanding—most common in the English-speaking world, although not confined to it—secularization is simply the retreat of traditional religious practice. It can be measured in the decline of public worship, church membership and the existence of confessional political parties, for example.[7]

Among those who agree that such a change has taken place with the coming of the modern world, there is, however, the broadest possible spectrum of views as to how it is to be evaluated. At one end stand those self-professed "Enlightenment" thinkers who see the retreat of religion as part of a movement by which reason and science gradually clear away the cobwebs of superstition and advance human well-being.[8] At the other are those for whom secularization is part of a process in which technological capacity is paid for by the loss of what really matters: a stable sense of what really matters. A remark attributed to the Chicago Straussian Allan Bloom captures the idea very succinctly. Modern Americans, Bloom is reputed to have said, are promised life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, while the ancients had war, slavery . . . and happiness.[9] Between the two extremes, one finds countless narratives of mingled gain and loss—Schiller's *entgötterte Welt,* Max Weber's *Entzauberung* or the "long withdrawing roar" of the tide in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach", for example.[10] This is "secularization" as the move from one social world to another—whether that transition is counted as good, bad or a mixture.

Yet those who read German may know that there is another, almost exactly opposite, sense of "secularization". The third chapter of Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology* starts: "All significant concepts of modern political thought are secularized theological concepts."[11] In other words, on this interpretation, religion, so far from disappearing, still carries on, although translated. This view is less common in the English-speaking world, but one famous example is worth noting. Carl Becker's *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*[12] is, as its title makes plain, a treatment of Enlightenment political thought whose aim is to show that the historians and political theorists of the eighteenth century, their own professed hostility to religion notwithstanding, were repeating an older, theo-

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logical tradition of looking at political processes from the perspective of redemption and salvation.

Nietzsche's image does not correspond exactly to either of these two senses, however: its message is one of continuity and discontinuity. Yes, things have changed ("God is dead") but, at the same time, a vestige of religion remains (God's "shadow") and that is not innocent. We "have to vanquish" that shadow too. Still, of course, for Nietzsche, God himself was always a kind of shadow—a fiction or illusion. How, then, does the "shadow of God" differ from "God"?

The shadow of God may refer to ideas and practices that, in important ways, resemble traditional religion. Yet they are not recognized as religious, most likely because they do not contain some of religion's most familiar features—miracle stories, claims to revelation or practices of shared worship, for example. Nevertheless, they continue the role of religion in consoling us for the brevity of our lives and the suffering that those lives contain. This book is particularly focused on one feature of traditional religion: the belief in personal immortality and the way in which new conceptions of human self-transcendence through historical community emerged that, at first (in Kant and Fichte) existed alongside belief in personal immortality, but later came to act as a substitute for it.

Nietzsche, we have noted, sees the shadow of God as something that we moderns still have to "vanquish". Yet why should that be so? And how should we do it? A simple answer would be that human beings should live by the standards of reason and truth, and that such post-religious ideas and practices, once identified and tested according to those standards, should be rejected for failing to meet them. But Nietzsche, as we shall see, has a much more radical and troubling suggestion to make. What if the idea of "living according to reason" and believing only what can be given a solid foundation is itself a myth? If so, those who believe that they have emancipated themselves from religion in embracing the "modern, scientific world-view" are themselves the perfect illustrations of the power of "the shadow of God". As Nietzsche puts it in another aphorism:

> An idealist is incorrigible: throw him out of his Heaven and he will make himself an ideal out of his Hell.[13]

In that case, the consequences of connecting a belief back to its religious origins or motivations become much less straightforward. Of course, it may be that the force of a belief depends on it being thought *not* to have

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such sources and that it will lose its authority as soon as the connection is uncovered. But that does not have to be so.

Consider, for example, the belief that human beings have "certain inalienable rights" just by being human. It is undeniable that modern ideas about human rights have their origins in Western religion—whether directly (human beings were "endowed" with those rights "by their creator") or in virtue of a "human dignity" that comes from mankind being formed "in the image of God".[14] But what happens to the idea of rights once those religious sources are revealed? Certainly, if rights are made independent of religion, a number of questions suddenly become problematic—most obviously, who (or what) the bearers of rights are. How can one conduct rational disputes about the rights of fetuses, of animals—or AI bots—when there is no shared religious foundation to settle the issue?[15] But that does not mean that the idea of rights stands or falls with belief in religion. It is quite possible—if complicated—for secular thinkers to sustain belief in human rights and at the same time to be perfectly well aware of the religious context in which such beliefs about rights originated.[16]

Another important point is that, instead of treating secularization as the effect of external developments (the emergence of the "scientific worldview", changing social structures requiring new ideologies, or whatever) this book frames its narrative from a perspective internal to ideas themselves. The monotheistic religions face a standing problem. They present the world to believers as the product of an omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent deity. If that is to be more than blind faith that God is good, although it is not open to human beings to comprehend how, the believer must have the world and her place in it justified to her, and this effort to justify—to combine faith with reason—causes monotheism enormous difficulties.

Faith and Reason

This brings me to my next quotation. In an essay in the *Wall Street Journal,* the conservative British philosopher Roger Scruton invoked Kant to claim, against Stephen Hawking, that "There is still room for God." Scruton concludes:

> Kant, who destroyed all the systems of metaphysics and dug a grave for theology, was also a believer who, as he put it, "attacked the claims

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> of reason in order to make room for those of faith." It seems to me that he was right.[17]

Scruton was misquoting Kant. The famous quotation he had in mind in fact reads: "I have therefore found it necessary *to deny knowledge* to make room for faith."[18] And this apparently small slip represents, in fact, an extremely significant change of meaning. To make sense of our place in the world and to justify it by connecting it with a benevolent creator requires understanding and explanation as well as emotional commitment, which means that, for Kant, religion is *not* beyond reason.

The Lisbon Earthquake of 1755, which killed tens of thousands (including many of the faithful, who were worshipping in Lisbon's churches when the earthquake struck) produced an intellectual crisis in the eighteenth century that deeply affected many of its leading thinkers, Kant not least among them. It led to a search for new ways to defend the claim that the world is the product of a benevolent creator. For Kant ("*sur Lisbonne fumante Kant froidement penché*", as Samuel Beckett pictures him in his poem "ainsi a-t-on beau") the solution was that the goodness of the world lies in human freedom—freedom that makes human beings justifiably open to reward and (more especially) deserving of punishment in an afterlife.[19] This in turn entails a conception of the relationship between God and mankind that requires divine justice to be intelligible to human beings. Tying divine goodness so closely to morality—something which it is open to human beings to know by their own reason—threatens, however, to make God himself superfluous. In this way rationalistic religion, when pressed to its limits, as Kant does, turns out to be self-undermining.

Posterity

Kant's picture of an afterlife in which punishment is meted out to the wicked that they had escaped here on earth might not encourage belief in personal immortality for those who do not share his uncompromising retributivism, but we also find in Kant a new conception of human self-transcendence, centred on individuals' membership in historical communities—a conception that increasingly came to take belief in personal immortality's place. My next quotation foreshadows this. It comes

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from a letter written by Diderot and contains an impassioned appeal to posterity:

> Oh holy and sacred Posterity! Support of the unhappy who are oppressed, you who are just and who is not corrupted, who avenges the virtuous, unmasks the hypocrite, and tames the tyrant; sure and consoling idea, never abandon me! Posterity for the philosopher is the other world of the religious man.[20]

It is a puzzling idea. Why should an avowed non-believer look to an allegorical personification for consolation in a godless universe? How could "Posterity" ever "do" anything? Nevertheless, it is the argument of this book, it is an idea that we should take very seriously.

One of the great themes of the monotheistic religions is that human lives are lived under observation. In countless sermons, priests, rabbis and mullahs have warned their congregations that their misdeeds, while they may escape human detection, will not go unnoticed by God.

Yet, observation is in itself a kind of relation—a one-sided one, to be sure—between observer and observed. For Coleridge, writing at the heart of the period that most concerns us, it is a promise as well as a threat:

> What comfort in the silent eye upraised to God! "Thou knowest." O! what a thought! Never to be friendless, never to be unintelligible! The omnipresence has generally been represented as a spy, a sort of Bentham's Panopticon. O to feel what the pain is to be utterly unintelligible and then—"O God, thou understands!"[21]

Simply to be observed—observed *and* understood—can be a kind of consolation.

The idea that human beings "live on" in the memories of their successors is by no means a new one—it was very important to the Romans. Its modern revival is somewhat different, however. Where the Roman hoped to be remembered by his countrymen for his glorious deeds, modern versions, inheriting, as they do, the Christian religion, are more universal and celebrate a less martial conception of virtue: in living under the eye of posterity, we are united as part of mankind as a whole. And it is not just that posterity will judge us justly and give us the public honour we deserve. Even if we do nothing outstanding and are not remembered, we take part in the great unfolding drama of human history—our actions connect us with one another in a never-ending human chain.

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The Church Invisible

My next quotation comes at the end of a letter written by the young and radical Hegel to the equally radical and even younger Schelling:

> Let reason and freedom be our watchword and our rallying point the Church invisible.[22]

Hegel and Schelling had become friends as fellow-students at the Tübinger Stift—the Protestant theological seminary in Tübingen that produced lawyers and administrators for the Dukedom of Württemberg, as well as pastors. They were, then, more than familiar with the history of theology. On its most traditional interpretation, the "Church invisible" corresponds to a division between the living and the dead—those who form part of the Church in this world and those members of the Church who have achieved salvation and now enjoy the presence of God in the next. Closely related is the idea that the Church is a "*corpus mysticum*"—the mystical body of Christ. These notions regarding the nature of the Christian community took on a new significance with the Reformation.

The Reformation, at first a struggle to reform the Church, soon became a dispute about the theological significance of the Church itself. The original reformers were, in most respects, orthodox Augustinians who believed in the doctrine of Original Sin and the need for divine grace. Where they came to differ from Augustine is how that grace might be conferred on human beings: exclusively through the sacraments of the Church or more directly.

It is often assumed from this simple story that the Augustinian idea of the Church as a community disappeared from Protestantism and all that was left was the bare relationship between the individual believer and God. But that is not so. For the majority of Protestants, the old idea of the Church—the community of believers who had become its members by validly receiving its sacraments—needed to be replaced by a new, more complex conception. Thus, for Calvin, there is both a "church visible"—those who are outwardly Christians by the standards of practices and conventions—and a "church invisible"—the true Christians sanctified by divine grace. Needless to say, this conception is deeply problematic: who is truly a member of the Church and who is merely outwardly a member? Is there any way of telling—even in one's own case? By the time that the phrase "Church invisible" was being used by Hegel and Schelling, however, the

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issue was not about who really was "in communion" by divine grace and who only seemed to be so, but about a much broader conception of the human community.

For Kant, the ideal form of moral community consists in a world composed of human beings who exceptionlessly follow the moral law, what he would famously call in the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* the "kingdom of ends". He gives an earlier presentation of this ideal towards the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason.* At that point, however, very significantly, Kant refers to it as the "kingdom of grace"—a phrase taken from Leibniz (A812, B840). In the Mongrovius transcription of Kant's *Lectures on Ethics* of 1785—lectures that were given between the publication of the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Groundwork*—Kant explains that the two formulations are equivalent: "Leibniz also calls the kingdom of ends moral principles of the kingdom of grace" (Ak. 29:610). The kingdom of grace is, he writes in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* "a *corpus mysticum* of the rational beings in it, so far as the free will of each being is, under moral laws, in complete systematic unity with itself and with the freedom of every other" (A808, B836). The *corpus mysticum* of the Church is thus transformed, on Kant's metaphor, into a transcendental moral community.

Whether it be called the "kingdom of grace" or the "kingdom of ends", it is important that this is not just a hypothetical test for evaluating action in the world as we have it. It also gives Kant (as he explains in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*) a standpoint by which we can see mankind moving through history towards the realization of a "republic of virtue". Hegel and Schelling's embrace of the idea of an "invisible church" is an expression of their shared commitment to a progressive ethical-political ideal that would embody what was best and most valuable in Kantian philosophy and French politics.

Freedom

Hegel's farewell salutation to Schelling also invokes the ideas of reason and freedom, and a central purpose of this book is to present the distinctive conception of freedom that was first articulated by Kant and continued in its essentials by his successors, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. An anticipa-

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tion of that conception can be found in a famous, if also puzzling, quotation from Rousseau:

> the impulse of appetite alone is slavery, and obedience to a law that one has prescribed to oneself is freedom.[23]

How can one "obey" one's own law? Of course, you can commit yourself to following a principle that you yourself have decided upon, but, if you are the *source* of a law—if you have "prescribed" it to yourself—can't you also choose to unbind yourself from it? And, in that case, is your following that law "obedience"? Does it really have authority over you? This, we can say, is the *paradox of autonomy.* How did the Idealists deal with it?

Here is a passage from Hegel, written thirty years after his letter to Schelling:

> . . . nature is not free but is only necessary and contingent. For necessity is the inseparability of different terms which yet appear as indifferent towards each other; but because this abstract state of externality also receives its due, there is contingency in nature—external necessity, not the internal necessity of the notion [*Begriff*].[24]

An apparently bewildering quotation! We commonly assume two things: that freedom is opposed to necessity, and that necessity is opposed to contingency. Yet Hegel is here rejecting both ideas. On the one hand, nature is said to be unfree because it is "only necessary *and* contingent". On the other hand, the *Begriff* is said to be free, yet at the same time "necessary". Plainly, for Hegel, necessity must come in more than one form: a "bad" necessity that binds from outside ("external necessity") and a "good" necessity that is internal. "Bad necessity" is also, at the same time, "contingent".

Such a contrast between internal and external necessity can be traced back to Spinoza. As he wrote in a letter to his correspondent Dr Schuller:

> I say that that thing is free which exists and acts solely from the necessity of its own nature; but that that thing is under compulsion which is determined by something else to exist, and to act in a definite and determined manner. For example, God, although He exists necessarily, nevertheless exists freely, since He exists solely from the necessity of His own nature. So also God freely understands Himself

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> and absolutely all things, since it follows solely from the necessity of His own nature that He should understand everything. You see, therefore, that I do not place freedom in free decision, but in free necessity.[25]

For Spinoza, internal necessity is something reserved to God alone. It was the distinctive contribution of the German Idealists to claim that human beings themselves have both a kind of "free necessity" as well as "free decision". In this way the "paradox of autonomy" can be resolved: the law which we "give to ourselves" is binding on us, not because we have willed or chosen it, but because it is expressive of our true, rational nature. The resulting conception of freedom makes "reason" and "freedom" practically synonymous.

Hegel and Religion

In the notebooks that Hegel kept between 1803 and 1806, at the time when he was teaching in Jena and working on what was to become the *Phenomenology,* there is an observation that reminds one strongly of Nietzsche's aphorism about the shadow of God:

> The public are concerned in philosophy with religion—lost religion; not science—that only comes afterwards. Human beings want to experience what their situation is, they want satisfaction for themselves; that is the interest of humanity in this time.[26]

Of course, there is an important difference—Hegel is looking to philosophy for the restoration of what has been lost with the decline of religious consciousness, while Nietzsche is calling on us to complete the work of demolition—yet what unites the two is the idea that there has been a basic change in the religious landscape and that this has fundamental consequences. So what is the relationship between Hegelian philosophy and the Christian religion?

In the years following his death in 1831, Hegel's pupils and followers split into two groups, known as "Left" and "Right" Hegelians or "Young" and "Old" Hegelians. Initially, the division was political—what attitude should Hegelians take towards the existing Prussian state?—but behind that, it swiftly emerged, was the question of religion.

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It can be argued that Hegelianism and Christianity are in agreement. Hegelian philosophy is not in competition with the received doctrines of religion but is a way of articulating their content. This does, indeed, seem to be Hegel's own official view.

> Nothing can be further removed from philosophy than to overturn religion or to maintain that the content of religion cannot be truth in itself. Rather, religion *is* the true content, although in the form of *Vorstellung* [representation]. Philosophy is not the first to give substantial truth; nor did mankind have to wait for philosophy in order to get consciousness of the truth.[27]

The question, however, is what this difference between religious *Vorstellung* and philosophical *Denken* [Thought], as Hegel calls it, involves. When religion is transformed in the act of "translation" into the more fundamental discourse of speculative philosophy, what happens to its content? Is it being vindicated or is it being deciphered and, implicitly, criticized?

Hegel was a public professor at the University of Berlin—indeed, he was chosen by the Rector of Berlin University to deliver a public address in praise of Protestantism on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession—and he was undoubtedly far too conscious of that role to risk anything that the Prussian authorities would have considered contrary to public order and good morals. Yet there are places where it seems that the mask of Protestant orthodoxy slips. Here, for example, is a famous passage from Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion:*

> God is this movement in itself, and, only through that, living God. But this persistence of finitude must not be held fixed, but sublated [*aufgehoben*]: God is the movement to the finite and thus, as its sublation [*Aufhebung*], to himself. In the I, as that which sublates itself as finite, God returns to himself and only exists as God in this return. Without the world, God is not God.[28]

Hegel's language is elusive. Although "*Aufhebung*" is a familiar word in everyday German (unlike "sublation" in English) it is ambiguous—it can mean to remove (to lift a prohibition, for example) to preserve (to save up for later) or to elevate (literally "lift up"), all of which seem to be ingredients in the way in which Hegel uses the term. Still, it is hard not to read this and similar passages as moving religious doctrine away from traditional

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ideas of divine transcendence towards something more immanent and pantheistic—God is in the world, and the world is necessary for the self-realization of God.

This picture of Hegel as making God a part of the world is reinforced when one adds in what he has to say about the way in which the divine must be knowable by human reason.

In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* Hegel writes:

> But in mentioning knowledge of the plan of divine Providence I have recalled one of the most important questions of our day: that of the possibility of knowing God—or rather, since it has ceased to be a matter of question, to the doctrine that has become a prejudice that knowledge of God is impossible. In direct contravention of what is commanded in Holy Scripture as the highest duty—namely, not just to love God but to *know* Him—the opposite of what is said there—that *Geist* leads to truth, that it knows everything and that it permeates even the depths of the divine nature—now dominates.[29]

So there is strong textual support for the Left Hegelians' belief that, for Hegel, religious faith must be held to the standards of reason.

One religious doctrine concerns us particularly. Kant believed in the Last Judgement and that human beings faced the prospect of punishment in an afterlife. Did Hegel? When it comes to Hegel's views on the subject of personal immortality, we have a story from a not-absolutely-reliable source. Heinrich Heine had studied in Berlin and knew Hegel. Looking back in his *Geständnisse* (written in 1854) he paints a picture of Hegel as almost pathologically cautious about revealing his private views—hence, Heine speculates, his friendship with the somewhat simple-minded Heinrich Beer, the brother of the composer Jacobo Meyerbeer, with whom he could relax, knowing that he would not be called upon to discuss anything complicated or controversial. In that connection, Heine tells the following anecdote:

> One beautiful starlit evening we stood together at the window, and I, a young man of two-and-twenty, [thus in 1820] having just had a good dinner and finished my coffee, spoke with enthusiasm of the stars, and called them the habitations of the departed. But the master

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> muttered to himself, "The stars! hum! hum! The stars are only a brilliant leprosy on the face of the heavens." "For God's sake," I cried, "is there, then, no happy place above, where virtue is rewarded after death?" But he, staring at me with his pale eyes, said, cuttingly, "So you want a bonus for having taken care of your sick mother, and refrained from poisoning your worthy brother?" At these words he looked around anxiously, but appeared to be immediately set at rest when he saw that it was only Heinrich Beer, who had come to invite him to a game of whist.[30]

It is from this perspective that I propose that we interpret Hegel's famous reference in the *Philosophy of Right* to world history as "the Last Judgement" (a reference, in fact, to a line in a poem by Friedrich Schiller).[31] In tacitly abandoning the traditional religious doctrine of the Last Judgement, Hegel's thought represents a very significant break from Christian orthodoxy and a decisive move away from heaven to history.

Philosophies as Forms of Life

No great artist ever chose to live a more public, documented life than Goethe. Not only do we have his own extensive autobiographical writings and correspondence, but those who were granted audience with the great man carefully recorded their conversations. Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* became an international best-seller in the middle of the nineteenth century, and industrious editors added to the corpus of reminiscences, culminating in a multi-volume supplement to the Weimar edition of Goethe's works. Among those additions was Johann David Falk's *Goethe aus näherm persönlichen Umgange dargestellt* (Goethe presented from close personal intercourse).[32] It contains the following striking recollection:

> Just as Goethe did not like what had been learned by rote or cramming, he likewise maintained that all philosophy must be loved and lived if it would gain meaning for life. "But does one still live at all in this age?" he added. "The Stoic, the Platonist, the Epicurean—each must deal with the world in his way [*mit der Welt fertig werden*]; that

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> is the task of life, from which no one, to whichever school he counts himself, is excused. The philosophers, for their part, can give us nothing but forms of life." [*Die Philosophen können uns ihrerseits nichts, als Lebensformen darbieten*.][33]

This conversation soon became famous (Kierkegaard copied it *verbatim* into his *Notebooks*). But what does it mean to say that a philosophy is a "form of life"? The passage continues:

> "How they suit us, whether we are able, by our nature and abilities, to give them the required content, that is up to us. We have to test ourselves and examine everything that we take in from outside most carefully, as if it were nourishment; otherwise we will perish from the philosophy, or the philosophy will perish from us."

It sounds as though, for Goethe, a *Lebensform* is something personal, tailored to the individual. And he goes on to muse on the correspondence between Kantian philosophy and Kant's own character of "rigorous moderation" (*strenge Mäßigkeit*). If philosophy is subjectivized in this way, must we abandon its claim to reason and justification? Not so, I think. It is possible to put the two dimensions together: the philosophical drive to explain the world and to subject authority to the requirement of justification is one of the ways in which human beings "deal with the world".

In *The Republic,* Plato, famously, tells philosophers that they should allow themselves to be led by arguments "like the wind".[34] Yes, but *where* do they lead? Philosophical problems characteristically emerge when a number of commitments that are individually felt to be compelling lead to apparent conflict when brought together. From the point of view of logic alone, it is an open question how to respond to such inconsistency. Is the fact that p leads to q an argument for q or an argument against p? As Hilary Putnam has put it, "one philosopher's *modus ponens* is another philosopher's *modus tollens*."[35]

The different strategies of response—to give up one or another belief; to claim that the beliefs are ambiguous and, when properly re-interpreted, may be seen to be consistent; that they are ill-formed and so to be discarded; to argue that the conflict is a product of further, unstated but questionable, premises; to claim, indeed, that we may just have to live with the conflict—are the central heart of philosophical debate.

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For this reason something like the Rawlsian idea of "reflective equilibrium" in moral theory applies to philosophy more widely.[36] Very briefly, "reflective equilibrium", as Rawls understands it, denotes the procedure by which we seek to articulate our first-order moral judgements and our broader moral principles ("reflection") and to bring them into balance ("equilibrium"). The distinctive thought is that, while in empirical theory-formation (at least, on a common-sense view) observations have priority—there is no way to save the proposition "all swans are white" once we have seen a black swan—in moral theory, when there is a logical conflict between principles and first-order judgements, it is an open question which to save and which to sacrifice.

At this point it is worth recalling William James's thought-provoking essay "The Will to Believe".[37] We are, says James, often faced with incompatible beliefs that each satisfy requirements of evidence and consistency. James calls such beliefs "live options". When live options are of "momentous" importance and choice between them is unavoidable, it is, James argues, not unreasonable to be oriented by our "passional natures" in deciding between them:

> Our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that cannot by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under such circumstances, "Do not decide, but leave the question open," is itself a passional decision—just like deciding yes or no—and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.[38]

This is, as James recognizes, in many ways a very counter-intuitive idea. Surely, factual belief isn't the kind of thing that can be adopted at will, made into a matter of choice like an item off the supermarket shelf. Yet it becomes less so when we consider that philosophical commitments are not just "beliefs". They may include convictions about value, ways of seeing the world and practices that are not matters of empirical fact. To reflect the breadth of the different kinds of commitments that are significant for philosophy, let me refer to them as *doxai* (the plural of *doxa*). It is the conflict between *doxai* that makes it plausible to see philosophies as "forms of life".

The term comes from the Platonic contrast between *doxa* and *episteme*—the contrast between everyday opinion, which is illusory, and true knowledge, which is not. More recently, it has been used by the sociologist Pierre

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Bourdieu to designate the unreflectively accepted substrate of social practices that, in Bourdieu's view, underlies all social systems. I shall be using it in a way that does not make either of those assumptions. *Doxai* may be beliefs that are true or false ("The world was created in seven days"; "Human beings evolved from non-human animals") but they may also be attitudes, practices and evaluative commitments. Likewise, *doxai* may be matters which those who hold them are fully aware of, but, equally, they may not. I have chosen the word just because it leaves such questions open.

In *The Mirror and the Lamp,*[39] one of the classic works of historical literary criticism, M. H. Abrams surveys the transformations in literature and culture that took place in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This period, Abrams claims, saw a move from a view of the mind as directly reflecting the world to one in which the process of knowledge involves active engagement. In consequence, the aesthetic ideal of *mimesis*—what it would be for art to represent the world—changed from an ideal of reproduction to what Abrams calls a "heterocosm": the work of art is an artifact whose "realism" lies in the way that the creative agency of the artist corresponds on a limited scale to the creative force that lies behind reality as a whole. Framing Abrams's project is the idea that there are different, contending ways of "making the world intelligible". As he wrote:

> The crucial difference lies in the choice of the initial premisses (often, if I have not been mistaken, the analogical premisses) of our reasoning, and the validity of the choice is measured by the adequacy of its coherently reasoned consequences in making the universe intelligible and manageable. If this criterion incorporates our need to make the universe emotionally as well as intellectually manageable, is not that the most important requirement of all?[40]

My conviction that we should look at philosophies as, ultimately, "forms of life" draws me back to Hegel. G. A. Cohen, in the introduction to his book on Rawls, recounts an anecdote about the Columbia philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen to explain, by analogy, his own critical engagement with Rawls's *A Theory of Justice:*

> My friend Marshall Berman told me that the Columbia philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen would give a seminar every year on Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit,* and that Cohen's contribution

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> to the seminar proceedings was to criticize Hegel mercilessly, so that the text lay in shreds by the end of the semester. Then, when a photograph of the Columbia Department was to be taken, Cohen appeared with the *Phenomenology* under his arm, to be displayed in the picture. A surprised colleague said, "But you're always attacking it! Why did you bring that book?" Cohen's answer was "What other book is there?"[41]

This is a book written out of an even deeper coincidence with Morris Raphael Cohen: Hegel himself haunts it from first page to last. All of Hegel's writings (and especially the *Phenomenology*) explore the various ways in which human beings come to terms with the world, through science, faith or politics, and ask which ones remain open to us today: the "project of reconciliation", as it has been aptly called.[42] Yet I do not believe that Hegel's (alleged) a priori philosophical development of the necessary structures of *Geist* and his claim that they underlie both history and nature, so far as it is knowable, represent live options for anyone sensible today. I also share the view of critics such as L. T. Hobhouse, Bertrand Russell, Popper and Adorno that Hegel's politics are repellent. But even if one rejects Hegel's metaphysics and his state-worship, there are persuasive reasons, in my view, to adopt what one can reasonably term an idealist understanding of the nature of philosophy and of the place of ideas in society.

Materialist theories of ideology that see ideas as the product of interests have to face the difficulty of how it is that people come to accept ideas that *go against* their interests. Idealist approaches, on the other hand, start from the perspective that ideologies are ways of giving existence meaning, that they are forms of reconciliation, as Hegel would call them—although we should not be misled by that word into assuming that they are always peaceful and accepting of reality. On the contrary, ideologies may be both scientifically absurd and horrifyingly destructive (think only of Nazism). Nor, as Hegel well recognized, are they free from inner contradictions. The important point, however, is that ideologies are not simply imposed on those who hold them by trickery or brainwashing but adopted by those people for some reason and so they cannot be abandoned without loss. By looking at ideologies "from the inside" we can, one hopes, come to understand their force.

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The Threat of Nihilism

In the last major work he published in his lifetime—the *Negative Dialektik*—Theodor Adorno made the following statement about the metaphysical significance of Auschwitz:

> The Lisbon Earthquake was enough to cure Voltaire of the Leibnizian theodicy, and that comprehensible catastrophe of "first nature" was insignificant compared with the second, social one, that escapes the human imagination in making a real Hell from human evil.[43]

Once again, there is something immediately puzzling about this claim. Why should Auschwitz—vile and horrifying as it was—have a particular theological significance? The Lisbon Earthquake was an unpredictable event whose causation had nothing whatsoever to do with human agency—a "natural evil". The suffering it caused to human beings had nothing to do with their moral qualities. As such it called into question the idea that an omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent God has created this world in order to express that benevolence through the promotion of human well-being. Yet human evil, by contrast, is, sadly, old news. As Pope puts it in *An Essay on Man:*

> If plagues or earthquakes break not heaven's design
> Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?

My suggestion is that it makes the best sense of Adorno's statement if we see Auschwitz as a challenge, not to the idea of the world as the product of an omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent creator, but to the humanistic conception of history as a project of collective self-realization that succeeded and, to some extent, replaced it. If the horror of deliberate, sustained, technologically advanced genocide makes convictions about collective human progress unsustainable, what remains?

With and against Hegel

I started the Introduction with a thought of Hegel's. Because philosophy aims to change our minds—not just like a lawyer who tries to persuade us that the defendant who seemed guilty is, in fact, innocent, but to change

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the very perspective from which we see things—it is very difficult to say in advance where it is going to end up. That is why I have used the Introduction to set the scene with some striking and apparently paradoxical quotations and the promise to return to explore them in more detail.

I also agree with Hegel about two other matters. Like Hegel, I believe that philosophy is holistic. In the end, its subject-matter is our whole set of beliefs (*doxai*) and how they sustain or stand in tension with one another. Moreover, since philosophy is not just about the evaluation of *doxai* but about *how* they should be evaluated (*doxai* about *doxai,* as one might say) there is no hope of isolating the method of philosophy from its substance.

However, in other ways, I disagree with Hegel completely.

For Hegel, philosophy is directional: philosophical "*Wissenschaft*" is the unfolding of a content that moves inevitably from one stage to the next. And that directionality is matched by history in general and the history of philosophy in particular.

At the same time, for Hegel, there is a contrast between philosophy and common human understanding. While philosophy expresses the truth that underlies common human understanding, it is also discontinuous with it. It transforms everyday representations (*Vorstellungen*) into philosophical "Thoughts".[44] Hence the characteristic Hegelian mixture of breathtakingly ambitious claims to necessity and universality with wildly esoteric language—something that many readers find repellent but others (perhaps secretly) find rather seductive.

This book takes a different approach. Although, like Hegel (and, indeed, Plato) it embraces a dialectical conception of philosophy—that philosophy starts with conflicts of *doxai*—it does not think that there is a unique, inescapably rational, way to respond to them. Its aim, rather, is to look at conflicts that are embedded in our culture and the responses that extremely thoughtful men and women have found convincing while, implicitly, asking the reader to make up her own mind where she stands. Hence, although this book is historical, it is not a narrative sequence of events, much less a teleological account of how a single argument unfolded itself compellingly through time. Nor can there be any objection to trying to lay one's authorial cards on the table in advance, so far as that is possible.

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A Summary and a Few Remarks on Presentation

I hope that it will be helpful at this stage to tell the reader how I have made the decisions I had to make. Let me start with a brief inventory of the chapters to come.

Chapter 2 starts with a defence of what I call a LILO (Legitimation-In-Legitimation-Out) approach to the understanding of ideas in society against interest-based (Instrumentality-In-Legitimation-Out, IILO) accounts and what I call "Discursive Transcendentalism" (the thought that human beings, in engaging with the world, are always limited by a pregiven network of concepts). It continues by describing two problems that frame the narrative of the book: the problem of theodicy and the Euthyphro dilemma.

Each of these problems has both a broad and a narrow form. On one level, the problem of theodicy is how a good (and omnipotent and omniscient) God could allow the apparent evil in the world. But, more broadly, it is how we can find our place in the world acceptable, the facts of death and suffering notwithstanding. Likewise, the Euthyphro dilemma starts as the problem whether something is pious because the gods love it or whether the gods love it because it is pious, but it broadens into the question how moral claims can be binding on us. If morality is merely the result of an act of will, then how can it have rational force? On the other hand, if it reflects a realm of objective moral facts, then is it not, for that very reason, remote from our agency? The conclusion of the chapter is that Kant is deeply concerned with both problems and that he has a distinctive response. For Kant, morality is neither a human creation nor a divine one, but something that ties man and God together. The goodness of the world consists in human freedom and the possibility it creates of responsible human agency.

Chapter 3 thus turns to one of the densest and, in my opinion, most misunderstood parts of Kant's philosophy: his theory of transcendental freedom. In contrast with very many of his interpreters, I do not think that Kant's philosophical "defence" of the possibility of transcendental freedom is redundant or obviously unsatisfactory. On the contrary, I argue, it is an ingenious and complicated attempt to make use of the broader doctrines of transcendental idealism to reconcile free human agency with the claims of physics and the natural sciences. Without such a defence, Kant's idea of

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human life as being given value by freedom would be untenable and divine punishment of human beings for their misdeeds obviously unjust.

Chapter 4 explains, however, that this is only a part of the Idealist conception of freedom: that freedom involves the emancipation from arbitrariness, and that "arbitrariness" can consist in the purely contingent exercise of will ("*Willkür*") as well as in being subject to exogenous causal forces. This Kantian idea, I claim, runs through the later German Idealists—Fichte, Schelling, Hegel—and constitutes an interpretive key to their very un-Kantian seeming philosophical projects.

Chapter 5 returns to Kant to give its interpretation of what is commonly regarded as the core of Kant's moral philosophy: his understanding of the moral law as embodied in the "categorical imperative". I argue that, not only do attempts to give an account of the categorical imperative as a rational procedure for the resolution of moral dilemmas not succeed, but that to see Kant as engaged in the search for such a procedure is to misunderstand his project.

Kant is instead a "moral unanimist": someone who thinks that, unless we are blinded by our own self-interest, we will agree in our moral judgements. If, as I believe, Kant is driven by the thought that human beings face reward or punishment by a just God, how could it be otherwise? How could a knowledge of what is morally required of us be available to some people and not others? The idea that philosophy is needed to help try to resolve fundamental moral disagreement is a modern, post-Kantian one.

Chapter 6 describes what the title of this book calls "the passage from heaven to history". Alongside Kant's narrative of human beings living their lives in the prospect of being held to account by divine justice is the idea that, collectively, they can see themselves as engaged in a historical project of bringing about a just world. Inspired by Kant, but also independently of him, German thinkers of the period (notably, Herder, Schiller, Fichte and Hegel) developed a modern conception of "historical immortality" that gave human beings an object of identification and hope as the idea of personal immortality receded.

Chapter 7 returns to the idea of freedom as the overcoming of arbitrariness and asks whether it does not extract a high price. If all relations of authority (the relationship between God and humanity included) must be fully justifiable, what becomes of the personal character of relationships? In overcoming the "alienation of arbitrariness" we pay a price in the

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"alienation of impersonality". Moreover, if the only part of human beings that is fully rational is the moral agency we carry within ourselves, then our identity shrinks to a narrow kernel. Alternatively, if it is only *Geist* that is fully free and rational, then individuals must find a way of aligning themselves with it, either by philosophical speculation or, for most of us, by immersing ourselves uncomplainingly in the requirements of our own society and its "*Sittlichkeit*".

Chapter 8 brings together the outcome of my re-interpretations of Kant and Hegel and addresses the connection between philosophy and history. Kant's picture of human beings acting freely under the shared moral law represents a culmination of "Socratic" religion. Hegel's system takes Socratism even further: reconciliation comes from the fact that the whole of reality is open to rational comprehension when seen from the standpoint of philosophy. What happens when the project of reconciliation and the rational understanding of reality, no longer held together within Hegel's claimed "speculative" conception of reason, come apart, however? My argument is that the philosophical project continues, but its ambitions to reconcile human beings with their lives are necessarily chastened.

Finally, in Chapter 9, I look at the consequences. One thing that I try to establish is that the idea of historical immortality, though it flowed naturally from Kant's idea of human history as a history of human freedom, was not confined to Germany. On the contrary, we can see it at work in (some of) the French *philosophes* and revolutionaries; in the great anti-revolutionary Edmund Burke; and in the patron saints of nineteenth-century British progressive liberalism, John Stuart Mill and George Eliot. Belief in historical immortality takes various forms, as is revealed when we consider the reasons why, as Diderot claimed more than 250 years ago, the prospect of human extinction a thousand years in the future would be a moral catastrophe for human beings now.

Beyond that, there is the question of "post-Socratic" religion. Does the waning of Socratic religion open the way for an experiential kind of religion that can co-exist peacefully with its competitors, or will it lead to a resurgence of intolerant religions of ecclesiastical authority and direct revelation? And are there not other religious legacies at work in the modern world too: the idea that Satan, the "father of lies", is "prince of this world", for example? But these are vignettes and suggestions for thought. If the

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reader thinks that there is a very great deal more to be said on these matters, then I can only say that I agree.

So much, then, for *what* will be said in the succeeding chapters, but it will be helpful too to say something about *how* it will be said.

This is a long book, the issues it deals with are often abstract, and the texts it examines are notoriously hard to penetrate. So it is only right for the author to do what he can to make it easier for the reader. Not even the vainest author could imagine that a book interpreting Kant and Hegel could be undemanding, but I want to make it as simple as possible—although no simpler.

The book's chapters are, of course, intended to build on one another by continuing and deepening the argument. But I have also tried to make the book, so far as possible, modular (at the price of a small amount of repetition). Each chapter is capable of being read independently, although it will, I hope, lead the reader to questions that the others can help to answer.

Although the book was, of course, written to challenge orthodoxies (why else would anyone write a work of philosophy?) I want to do that in a way that is as free of polemic and combativeness as possible. This has some important consequences for what is and is not included. In general, I have tried not to discuss my disagreements with contemporary authors *unless* I believed that that would be helpful to the reader. So I am content to let my differences with many other writers who have dealt with the same subjects emerge by implication.

It is really only in Chapter 5 that disagreement with alternative interpretations is in the foreground. Why so? In the course of that chapter, I argue for the claim that for modern interpreters of Kant "to look to find in Kant a 'decision procedure for ethics' is to enlist him in a project that is ours, not his." In principle, I believe that there is nothing wrong with such efforts at philosophical reconstruction—if they work in practice. But in this case I do not believe that they do. That is why I think it is important to show what I see as their weaknesses as a way of preparing the way for what I believe is a more illuminating interpretation.

In any case, I am sure that the reader will agree that those authors whose views I have used to contrast with my own (for example, Frederick Beiser, R. M. Hare, Christine Korsgaard, Iris Murdoch, Onora O'Neill, Derek Parfit, John Rawls, Quentin Skinner and Bernard Williams) are quite sufficiently distinguished for criticism from me not to matter greatly.

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Although the book started its life as lectures, it has come a long way since then. In another of his conversations with Falk, Goethe compared reading the writings of university professors, with their quotations and footnotes, to travelling in a dog-cart and having to stop off at the side of the road every few minutes while the dogs relieved themselves. I have to plead guilty, at least in part. Where the original lectures were sparing in their use of quotations, this book buttresses its interpretive claims with a large number of them. It is, I think, what integrity demands: the reader is entitled to have the evidence fully in front of her. On the other hand, I have done my best to take Goethe's strictures to heart and to resist using the notes to follow side-tracks. Although there is always room in philosophy for a "yes, but" or a "what if?" or "isn't there more to be said?", I have tried to include all of the substantive points I want to make in the main body of the text and to save the notes for references and the originals of quotations.

Texts and Translations

Referring to quotations brings me to the issue of texts and translations. "Traduttore, traditore", the Italians say, but, however scrupulous a translator is about remaining loyal to the author, a certain amount of tacit interpretation is inevitable. This is particularly so with authors whose vocabularies are as distinctive as Kant's and Hegel's. In some cases, the problem is one that simply transfers semantic perplexity from one language to another: the author uses an unusual word in his native language ("*Apperzeption*" or "*Beisichsein*") and the problem is just to find an equivalent in the translator's language. More difficult is when the author uses a familiar word that does indeed have an equivalent in the target language, but where, without further explanation, such equivalents miss the author's meaning. Thus Hegel uses the words "*Begriff*" (concept) and "*Gedanke*" (thought) in ways that are quite specific to him. And then there are single German words for which several English ones are available, none of which capture all of the aspects of the German meaning. Hegel's term "*Aufhebung*" is notorious (cancellation, preservation, elevation); "*Bestimmung*" (determination, vocation, end), "*Bildung*" (education, development, formation, culture) and, above all, "*Geist*" (mind, spirit, God) are other important examples.

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Of course, such issues are discussed in the course of the book where they become relevant. As for the translations, they are my own: I have departed, more or less, from existing translations, as I felt necessary, and highlighted or left untranslated very important German terms (*Willkür* and *Geist,* for example) in order to leave the reader free to make up her own mind. I have also made the original German texts available in the notes.

In the case of Kant, that has been reasonably straightforward. The edition started by the Prussian Academy of Sciences and continued by its variously named successors (the *Akademie-Ausgabe*) has given standard pagination and texts for Kant's writings. What is more, almost all other editions, both in English and in German, including the excellent *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant,* give the *Akademie-Ausgabe* volume and page numbers in their margins. So I have followed that practice, except, as is also standard, for the *Critique of Pure Reason,* where page references to the first two editions (A and B) are used. Among the many virtues of the *Cambridge Edition* is the glossary provided with each volume. I have only rarely departed from its translations, except in the very important case of the word *Persönlichkeit,* which the *Cambridge Edition* translates as "personality" but should, for reasons that I explain, be given as "personhood".

The situation with Hegel is much less easy. The *Gesammelte Werke* produced under the auspices of the University of Bochum is available in only a few libraries outside Germany. The Suhrkamp edition of Hegel's *Werke in 20 Bänden* (*Works in 20 Volumes*) is much more accessible and adequate for almost all purposes, so I have used it as the basis for quotations and references. As for translations, there are many to choose between. Some of the older ones (many of which are available online) are readable but often so free as to amount almost to paraphrase. I have tried to keep my own translations closer to the original. But to try to be both accurate and idiomatic in rendering Hegel into English is a hard task indeed and I fear that my efforts have not always been successful.

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Chapter 2

An Idealist Theory of History

> The Pope! How many divisions has he got?
>
> —STALIN

Marx and the Acceptance Problem

One reason to look at philosophy from the outside is the dispiriting record of repeated failure on the part of philosophical system-builders. Karl Marx believed that this was enough to show that philosophy is ideology: it is, he writes, "nothing more than religion brought into thought and developed in thought".[1] For this reason, there is no such thing as a genuine, independent history of philosophy. "Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness . . . have no history, no development."[2] The historian should turn away from studying ideas directly and look instead at human beings' "real life processes", of which "ideology" is merely a "reflex" or "echo".

This book is written from the contrary perspective: that it is possible and fruitful to look at social change downwards (or, at least, outwards) from philosophy. It is the task of this chapter to defend that approach against Marx and others, and to articulate a framework for the interpretation of Kant and his successors that will be presented in the chapters that follow.

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In a very famous passage of *The German Ideology,* Marx writes:

> If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.
>
> In direct contrast to German philosophy, which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises.[3]

Three objections to this passage stand out immediately.

(1) Marx moves directly between what we can call metaphysical or epistemological materialism—the primacy of matter over mind or the primacy of external reality over our knowledge of it—and sociological or historical materialism: the primacy of human beings' practical economic activity over morality, religion and metaphysics ("ideology"). But clearly, the two are different and, equally clearly, you can believe in the former without accepting the latter (or, indeed, vice versa).

(2) Marx assumes that the inversion that takes place in the process of vision as a result of the optics of lenses results in a "false" or "illusory" perception. But this, as we all know from our own experience, cannot be true. Human beings have no difficulty moving around the world and seeing things the right way up because the "upside-down" images on our retinas are just what our brains are evolved to work with.

(3) Finally, there is the implication that ideas are epiphenomenal—"reflexes", "echoes", "phantoms". But if ideas really are "at the end of the line" when it comes to causal processes, how can ideas themselves play an effective role in legitimating the social order?

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Marx does not have a single *theory* of ideology. Over the course of his work, he puts forward several distinct (and largely mutually incompatible) models, each of which faces difficulties.[4] Even in *The German Ideology,* however, Marx presents the reader with another model for the understanding of the place of ideas in society. The materialist conception of history, he says, "does not explain practice from the *Idea,* but explains the formation of ideas from material practice".[5] Ideas, in short, are the product of interests.

The history of ideas abounds in such instrumentalist views—and not just from the political Left. The importation of the methods of microeconomics into political science has led to the proliferation of attempts to give "rational choice" explanations of political processes (often called "positive political economy"). It would certainly be foolish to deny the role of interests in understanding politics. When huge corporations hire lobbyists and contribute to political campaigns, it is not, we should assume, to advance a vision of the good life. Even here, however, one must note exceptions. There seems to have been no economic motive, but a strong religious one, behind the US arts-and-crafts store Hobby Lobby seeking exemption from the duty to offer its employees health insurance that includes contraception, or the fast-food chain Chick-fil-A supporting campaigns against gay marriage.

But there are very fundamental difficulties with instrumentalism. Most obviously, absent an independent definition of "interest", the approach threatens to fall into emptiness. To say that people pursue their interests in their actions is, as Sidgwick puts it, merely to repeat the "tautological proposition" that "what I desire and aim at is aimed at by me".[6] Amartya Sen articulates the objection very trenchantly:

> There is another non-empirical—and possibly simpler—reason why the conception of man in economic models tends to be that of a self-seeking egoist. It is possible to define a person's interests in such a way that no matter what he does he can be seen to be furthering his own interests in every isolated act of choice. While formalized relatively recently in the context of the theory of revealed preference, this approach is of respectable antiquity, and Joseph Butler was already arguing against it in the Rolls Chapel two and a half centuries ago. The reduction of man to a self-seeking animal depends in this ap-

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> proach on careful definition. If you are observed to choose x rejecting y, you are declared to have "revealed" a preference for x over y. Your personal utility is then defined as simply a numerical representation of this "preference," assigning a higher utility to a "preferred" alternative. With this set of definitions you can hardly escape maximizing your own utility, except through inconsistency. Of course, if you choose x and reject y on one occasion and then promptly proceed to do the exact opposite, you can prevent the revealed preference theorist from assigning a preference ordering to you, thereby restraining him from stamping a utility function on you which you must be seen to be maximizing. He will then have to conclude that either you are inconsistent or your preferences are changing. You can frustrate the revealed-preference theorist through more sophisticated inconsistencies as well. But if you are consistent, then no matter whether you are a single-minded egoist or a raving altruist or a class-conscious militant, you will appear to be maximizing your own utility in this enchanted world of definitions.[7]

As Sen explains, neo-classical economics initially presents itself as taking a view of utility that is agnostic about people's desires and values. To say that individuals maximize their utility is to say no more than that they place themselves on the highest available utility frontier, given the preferences that they have, and these may, in principle, include ideas, ideals and ideologies of all kinds. When we turn to the level of the firm, that is taken, again reasonably enough, to pursue the goal of profit maximization. But the approach immediately becomes wildly tendentious once it is assumed—as it most frequently is—that political agents, like firms, are engaged in behaviour that is analogous to profit maximization. At this point reductive individualism about human agency is smuggled in by default.[8]

Yet perhaps reductive individualism in some form is true and a non-circular account of self-interest can be found—Hobbes, Nietzsche and Freud certainly thought so. If so, it is a surprising fact about human psychology that runs against apparently obvious, observable features of human behaviour—that human beings are often co-operative, sympathetic to one another, loyal to ideals, and so on—not something that follows simply from the way that "utility" is defined.

Even so, interest-based theories of ideas face another, very deep problem.

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It is a problem that is clearly apparent in the case of Marxism. The Marxist theory of ideology claims (in this model) not just that ideas are the products of interests, but (in all of its versions) that ideas play an indispensable role in ensuring the acceptance of unequal and exploitative societies on the part of the majority. In other words, ideological ideas are not simply ideas formed in the rational pursuit of individuals' own interests. They are ideas that go against the interests of (some of) those who hold them and, in this way, further the interests of others. How do such ideas come to be accepted? I shall call this the Acceptance Problem.

The answer to the Acceptance Problem that Marx gives in *The German Ideology* is that "the ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas"—that is, he claims:

> . . . the class which is the ruling *material* force of a society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.[9]

But this is not a satisfactory solution. It divides society into two: the makers of ideas and the takers. Why should one suppose that the ruling class is capable of promoting its interests effectively, forming its ideas in response to those interests, whereas the dominated classes accept what is served up to them by "the means of mental production" (whatever they may be exactly)? The problem leads Marxists—their official belief in the emancipatory role of the oppressed classes notwithstanding—to relapse repeatedly into a view of those who live under domination as lacking in agency: passive, unreflective recipients of propaganda.[10]

Interests-in-Legitimation-Out or Legitimation-In-Legitimation-Out?

It is not just Marxists who face the Acceptance Problem, however. It is there for any historian or social scientist who believes that ideas play a significant role in sustaining social orders that would otherwise not be acceptable to significant numbers of their members. Thus Quentin Skinner, the

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great "Cambridge School" historian, who has done more than any other author to articulate what he considers to be a properly historical approach to intellectual history, writes that it is "in large part by the rhetorical manipulation of [evaluative-descriptive] terms that any society succeeds in establishing, upholding, questioning or altering its moral identity".[11] Such terms play a role, he says, in providing "legitimation" for "form[s] of social behaviour generally agreed to be questionable".[12]

Skinner illustrates this general point with an example. The entrepreneurs of early modern Europe, he writes, had "a recognisable motive for wanting to pursue their ventures unhindered . . . They needed as a matter of some ideological urgency to legitimise what they were doing to those expressing such comprehensive doubts about the morality of their lives".[13] Whether that would be possible, however, depended on their society's "moral identity":

> It is by describing and thereby commending certain courses of action as (say) courageous or honest, while describing and condemning others as treacherous or disloyal, that we sustain our picture of the actions and states of affairs which we wish either to disavow or legitimate.[14]

That being so, he continues:

> . . . the task of the innovating ideologist is a hard but an obvious one. His concern, by definition, is to legitimate a new range of social actions which, in terms of the existing ways of applying the moral vocabulary prevailing in his society, are currently regarded as in some way untoward or illegitimate. His aim must therefore be to show that a number of existing and favourable evaluative-descriptive terms can somehow be applied to his apparently untoward actions. If he can somehow perform this trick, he can thereby hope to argue that the condemnatory descriptions which are otherwise liable to be applied to his actions can in consequence be discounted.[15]

Yet how do such descriptions gain acceptance as legitimate, particularly in contexts that are "ideological" in the (loosely) Marxist sense that Skinner is using it here? Here the Acceptance Problem confronts us. If a certain vocabulary advances the interests of a particular group it will, at the same time, most likely, do so at the expense of the interests of others. And if the

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legitimation is to be effective, it is those others who must be brought to accept it. How will this be so? The answer, for Skinner, lies in the conventions that govern the possible intentions available to authors and speakers in any particular social context:

> We need to focus not merely on the particular text in which we are interested but on the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of the issues or themes with which the text is concerned. This injunction gains its force from the consideration that any writer will normally be engaged in an intended act of communication. It follows that whatever intentions a writer may have, they must be conventional in the strong sense that they must be recognisable as intentions to uphold some particular position in argument, to contribute to the treatment of some particular topic, and so on. It follows in turn that to understand what a writer may have been doing in using some particular concept or argument, we need first of all to grasp the nature and range of things that could recognisably have been done by using that particular concept, in the treatment of that particular theme, at that particular time. We need, in short, to be ready to take as our province nothing less than the whole of what Cornelius Castoriadis has described as the social imaginary, the complete range of the inherited symbols and representations that constitute the subjectivity of an age.[16]

Taking Skinner's claim about the "social imaginary" ("the complete range of the inherited symbols and representations that constitute the subjectivity of an age") and putting it together with his talk about the "prevailing conventions" governing language and the intentions of speakers shows him to adhere to a form of what I shall call "Discursive Transcendentalism".

Discursive Transcendentalism presupposes that the intellectual historian's ultimate target is the background structure within which particular utterances, speech-acts and texts are given their meanings. Just as the person who makes the rules of a game has power over its players, so, even more, do those who set the rules of language, for, while we can refuse to play a game whose rules we think are unfair to us, we have nowhere else to go when it comes to our language. Hence language acts as a transcendental

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framework, although not in the way that Kant thought of the categories (as a set of, as it were, a priori spectacles, through whose lenses we cannot help but look in framing our encounter with the world) so much as by setting the limits of what people can say and (hence) think.

Discursive Transcendentalism is, however, subject to precisely the objection made earlier to Marx. How is it that some people, apparently, manage to operate at the level at which the discursive framework is set and manipulate it in their own interests, while others, whose interests are thereby curtailed, remain trapped within it? The phrase Skinner uses ("if he can somehow perform this trick") is extremely revealing: it does indeed look like magic!

It might seem unfair to attribute such a grand theory (or, at least, such a grandly named theory) as Discursive Transcendentalism to Skinner, on the basis of what may be no more than a passing reference to Castoriadis and the "social imaginary". Indeed, Skinner also uses another, much more instrumentalist-sounding, vocabulary to describe what he thinks is going on at times of linguistic change. Thus he writes in relation to the work of Reinhart Koselleck:

> Koselleck and I both assume that we need to treat our normative concepts less as statements about the world than as tools and weapons of ideological debate. Both of us have perhaps been influenced by Foucault's Nietzschean contention that "the history which bears and determines us has the form of a war."[17]

Skinner's reference to Foucault does not, however, help to solve the Acceptance Problem. Indeed, to judge by the following programmatic statement, Foucault himself endorses what is, if anything, an extreme expression of Discursive Transcendentalism:

> My problem is . . . this: what rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth? Or alternatively, what type of power is susceptible of producing discourses of truth that in a society such as ours are endowed with such potent effects? What I mean is this: in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations

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> of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. This is the case for every society, but I believe that in ours the relationship between power, right and truth is organised in a highly specific fashion. If I were to characterise, not its mechanism itself, but its intensity and constancy, I would say that we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function: we *must* speak the truth; we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth. Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalises, professionalises and rewards its pursuit. In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place. In another way, we are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at least partially, decides, transmits and itself extends upon the effects of power. In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of specific effects of power.[18]

Significantly, this passage is equivocal as to whether "power" is, like Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht,* some kind of subterranean, Schopenhauerian driving force at work below the realm of appearance, or whether it belongs to agents themselves, something that people actually "exercise" (as Foucault feels entitled to say) in pursuit of their own interests. Foucault has here rhetorically substituted the "relations of power" ("which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body", as he claims) for the Marxist idea of the "relations of production" as the invisible substrate governing social reality—not, I should say, gaining in precision thereby. Behind the ever-impressive coloured smoke and mirrors, what is actually doing the work to underpin Foucault's Discursive Transcendentalism is just a crude

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social functionalism: "we are *forced to produce* the truth of power *that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function*." Society itself is (somehow) the maker, and the rest of us (except, perhaps, the epistemically superior intellectual historian) are all takers.

No doubt, Foucault elsewhere invokes a different, more overtly conflictual, model. But that will face exactly the same difficulty as other forms of instrumentalism in failing to deal with the Acceptance Problem. While Discursive Transcendentalism is a framework from which none can escape (but then, how do some people have the ability to shape it in their own interests?) if the history of ideas is a "war", what decides the outcome? How can it be that a small subset of the members of society, apparently, have more powerful weapons at their disposal than others?

Any interests-based account of ideas in society faces the problem of how it is that ideas come to have force. We have not just to ask whose interests ideas serve but to explain why it is that people—whether or not their interests are served by them—find those ideas *persuasive.* Giving an empirically plausible account of people's underlying motivations in terms of their "interests" is difficult enough, but the need to explain too how people accept ideas that go against their interests is, it seems to me, the fatal difficulty for all approaches to ideology that see legitimation as "Instrumentality-In-Legitimation-Out"—IILO.[19]

This draws me towards what I shall call a LILO approach—"Legitimation-In-Legitimation-Out". "Legitimation" I take here in the very broadest sense—ultimately rooted in human beings' standing need to find ways to find their lives acceptable in the face of the unpalatable but inescapable facts of death and suffering. People who follow ideas that (apparently) go against their interests are not mere dupes and victims but should be seen as embracing ways of thinking that also reward them by offering them ways of legitimating the world and their place in it.

An immediate objection to such a Legitimation-In-Legitimation-Out approach is that it is, apparently, circular. Yet this need not mean that it is explanatorily empty. The objective is to explain how a standing need can be fulfilled in a variety of different ways and why some ways of meeting that need are in some contexts "live options" while in others they are not. How those possibilities of legitimation have played out—how they have become exhausted and new ones developed—is essential to the history of ideas as I envisage it (which is certainly not to deny that questions of economic

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interest, institutional power—and, indeed, individual psychology—also play their roles). It is for this reason that I refer to what I am proposing as an *idealist theory of history.*

Hegel's Idealism

What *is* an idealist theory of history? It is easiest to start from what it is not, since what a materialist theory of history amounts to, in its Marxist version at least, is fairly much agreed. Notwithstanding Marx's own materialist views about philosophy, and the fact that, as was apparent above, he often wrote as if those views were closely connected with the theory of historical materialism, historical materialism as a theory of history is independent of any commitment to materialism as a philosophical doctrine in epistemology or metaphysics.

Historical materialism in its Marxist form sees history moving in stages. There is a general tendency for the level of the productive forces in societies to increase and, as they do, societies pass from one suitable configuration of the relations of production to another. During each of these phases, however, societies marked by exploitation and class struggle are held together by "superstructures" of institutions and ideas which are explained by their functional relationship to an existing economic "base".[20]

Thus we can say that the Marxist version of historical materialism has two main ingredients: a "diachronic" theory of historical change and a "synchronic" theory of how it is that societies (during their periods of stability) cohere.

Contrast now historical idealism. In Hegel's version of it, idealism too has both a diachronic theory of social change and a synchronic theory of social cohesion. Societies change because, in the end, they are all vehicles of Spirit (*Geist*) as it comes to realize and know itself. But what does Hegel mean by "*Geist*"? On one reading, behind the religiously inflected vocabulary, with its echoes of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, lies a much more mundane sociological reality. Hegel's language of objective *Geist,* so says the entry on Hegel in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* refers to "culturally distinct objective patterns of social interaction to be analysed in terms of the patterns of reciprocal recognition they embody".[21]

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Yet such a restricted, not to say watered-down, understanding of Hegel is demonstrably at odds with Hegel's own texts. For Hegel, as he says quite explicitly, *Geist* is the Absolute itself.

> That the true is actual only as system, or that substance is essentially subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as *Geist*—the most sublime notion and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion. The *geistig* alone is the actual.[22]

To recognize God as *Geist* is, he says, the special achievement of Christianity: "God is only recognized as *Geist,* insofar as he is known as the Trinity."[23] *Geist* is the essential kernel of reality—both the sensible and the super-sensible:

> Everything that happens in heaven or on earth—happens eternally—the life of God and everything that occurs temporally, only strives towards this: that *Geist* knows itself, makes itself objective, finds itself, becomes for itself [*für sich*], merges with itself. *Geist* is bifurcation and alienation, but only in order to be able to come to itself.[24]

Geist has a special, unifying relationship to human history (which Hegel describes as "the unfolding [*Auslegung*] of *Geist* in time")[25] just as the "church invisible" and the "*corpus mysticum*" were thought to give a collective identity to the community of Christian believers through time. History is the realization of divine purpose:

> World history is the presentation of the divine, absolute process of *Geist* [Spirit] in its highest forms—this staged process by which it attains its truth, its self-consciousness over itself.[26]

But *Geist*'s significance is not confined to history and society alone. Nature too, Hegel asserts, must be seen as an expression of *Geist:*

> Nature is the son of God, although not as the Son, but as abiding in otherness—the divine Idea as held fast for a moment outside divine love. Nature is *Geist* alienated from itself; *Geist* is *released* into nature: a Bacchic god unrestrained and unmindful of itself. In nature, the unity of the notion [*Begriff*] is concealed. . . . alienated from the Idea, nature is only the corpse of the understanding. Nature is the

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> Idea, however, only implicitly. Hence Schelling called her a petrified—others, indeed, a frozen—intelligence, God, however, does not remain petrified and dead: the very stones cry out and raise themselves to *Geist*.[27]

Nature and history are, in the end, complementary:

> World-history, we see, is just the unfolding [*Auslegung*] of *Geist* in time, as nature is of the Idea in space.[28]

In short, it is as clear a matter of interpretation as anything can be, given the difficulty of Hegel's texts, that *Geist* is much more than just a set of social relations between individuals: it is the divine spiritual unity that encompasses them and everything else besides.

The different forms that *Geist* goes through "to attain its truth" lead societies to relate to the world (understand it and act in it) in fundamentally different ways. At each individual point in that process societies are held together because they share in being embodiments of a stage of *Geist*'s progress towards self-knowledge:

> . . . each stage [of the development of the *Weltgeist*], being different from every other one, has its specific and particular principle. In history, such a principle becomes the particular determination of the spirit [*ein besonderer Volksgeist*]. It is here that it expresses concretely all the aspects of its consciousness and will, its total reality; it is this that imparts a common stamp [*das gemeinschaftliche Gepräge*] to its religion, its political constitution, its social ethics [*Sittlichkeit*], its legal system, its *mores* [*Sitten*], but also to its science, its art, its technical skill. These special peculiarities must be understood as deriving from that general peculiarity, the particular principle of a people.[29]

Particular cultures grow and die like individual plants:

> The life of a people ripens a certain fruit, for its activity is aimed at the completion of its own principle. But this fruit does not return to the bosom of the people that conceived and bore it; on the contrary, it becomes a poison-draught to it. It cannot leave it alone, for it has an insatiable thirst for it; to taste the drink means its own downfall—and, at the same time, the rise of a new principle.[30]

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In their youth, such cultures are vigorous and passionate, thrusting forward in novel and creative ways. By the end, however, they have become exhausted and mechanical:

> This habit (the watch has been wound up and continues of its own accord) is what brings natural death.[31]

But Hegelian idealism is not just the reverse of Marxist historical materialism. It is not that the "superstructure" here determines the "base". For Hegel, there is no "base" or "superstructure". Each particular area of social existence is the way that it is because, underlying it, there is a single principle coming to expression:

> . . . the constitution [*Verfassung*] of a people, with its religion art and philosophy (or, at least, with its conceptions and Thoughts [*Vorstellungen und Gedanken*]—its culture [*Bildung*] generally) . . . forms *one* substance, one *Geist.* A state is an individual totality; it is not possible that any single aspect of it, however important—the political constitution, for example—can be extracted independently, examined and assessed by an isolated examination directed at it alone.[32]

Each society, for Hegel, is an expression of reason—but it is reason in its very broadest sense. Hegel uses the words *Bildung* ("education" or "formation"—but also "development") and *Sittlichkeit* (often translated as "ethical substance") to convey the idea that law and politics are anchored in practices, traditions and unreflectively held values that penetrate every nook and cranny of social life—what his successors would call "culture".[33]

This leads Hegel to a novel (and, to liberals, extremely unpalatable) answer to the Acceptance Problem. Ideas, for Hegel, are not instrumentally produced by interests. To the contrary, human beings' apparently immediate desires and strivings embody an awareness—most frequently unreflective—of *Geist* at work beneath the surface of social reality. In this way, *all* enduring societies are legitimate expressions of a "General Will":

> The origin of a state involves imperious lordship on the one hand, instinctive submission on the other. But even obedience—lordly power, and the fear inspired by a ruler—in itself implies some degree of voluntary connection. Even in barbarous states this is the case; it is not the isolated will of individuals that prevails; individual

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> pretensions are relinquished, and the General Will is the essential bond of political union.[34]

Yet one area of culture does, in Hegel's view, have a special status. *Geist* comes to expression in many fields, but it comes to expression in philosophy with particular clarity because philosophy is especially concerned with articulating the way in which human beings relate to the world:

> [All] development [*Bildung*] reduces itself to a difference in categories. All revolutions, in the sciences, no less than in world history, derive from the fact that *Geist,* for its own understanding and self-awareness, in order to possess itself, has now changed its categories, and grasped itself more deeply, inwardly and unitarily.[35]

Thus, although philosophy does not take place in isolation from society, nor is it a mere side-product of more fundamental social processes taking place elsewhere. Philosophy is, in fact, the key to the understanding of the social whole. The history of philosophy, says Hegel, is

> . . . the fullest blossom, the notion [*Begriff*] of *Geist* in its entire form, the consciousness and spiritual essence of all things, the *Geist* of the age as *Geist* present in itself.[36]

Hegel's grandly conceived account of historical change and social unity thus answers the challenge of explaining how societies give their members a way of seeing the world that they find both intellectually and emotionally persuasive. But it does so in a way that depends on his metaphysics of an all-pervading *Logos* (*Geist*) coming to self-realization in history. Can there be a "Hegelianism without Hegel"?[37]

The objections to the Hegelian approach are not just in relation to its metaphysical foundations, formidable as those are. There is also its presupposition of a very strong kind of social unity. *Geist* permeates and structures society from its highest and most abstract forms of discourse (law, science, philosophy) all the way to the most apparently peripheral kinds of social practice—indeed, even to individuals' most private experiences. Heinrich Heine, in one of his many articles for French newspapers, recalls another conversation with Hegel:

> My great teacher, the blessed Hegel, once said to me: if all the dreams that human beings had dreamt in a particular period were written

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> down, a completely accurate picture of the spirit [*Geist*] of the period would emerge from a reading of these collected dreams.[38]

The advantage of the "interests-based" approach to ideology is that it is, at least, in a position to recognize that different groups have different and conflicting interests and that ideological differences in society are real—not merely surface divergences to be traced back to an underlying spiritual unity or placed within a single, discourse-structuring transcendental framework. A defensible form of historical idealism must do justice to this.

Socratism and the Religious Tradition

To present my own conception, I shall start from the ideas of a thinker who, while certainly not a historical materialist, was no speculative idealist metaphysician either: Friedrich Nietzsche. The ideas that I shall be drawing on are expressed most clearly in *The Birth of Tragedy,* although many of the themes are continued in his later writings. But my purpose here is not Nietzsche interpretation.

Famously, in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche identifies Greek tragedy as embodying a fusion of two impetuses, which he labels "Apollonian" and "Dionysian". Less often noticed, however, but decisive for present purposes, is the impetus that, according to Nietzsche, displaced the culture of tragedy: what he calls "Socratism". Nietzsche's starting point is that all human cultures face the standing problem of coming to terms with the unvarying facts of death and suffering. As he writes, much later, in the *Genealogy of Morals:*

> Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, not suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far.[39]

Apollonianism and Dionysianism are two strategies for dealing with suffering. They are epitomized (as Nietzsche describes them) in *dreams* and *intoxication,* respectively. The Dionysiac finds ways—through drugs, dance, ritual, the frenzy of battle or whatever else—so to transform his or her

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psyche as to become impervious or indifferent to suffering. Apollonians console themselves by contemplating a realm of order, beauty and happiness beyond our own—the prototypical aesthetic attitude. The Greek gods, originally at least, were Apollonian; not so much wise and just governors of the human world as the beautiful denizens of a higher realm:

> The same impulse which calls art into being as the contemplation and consummation of existence, seducing one to a continuation of life, was also the cause of the Olympian world which the Hellenic "will" made use of as a transfiguring mirror. Thus do the gods justify the life of man: they themselves live it—the only satisfactory theodicy![40]

The "Socratic" response to suffering that follows Dionysianism and Apollonianism is quite different, however. Rather than escaping from suffering through ecstatic self-transformation or the aesthetic contemplation of another realm, Socratism attempts to integrate the acceptance of suffering as part of its wider project of making the world intelligible—to give suffering a "meaning" in a narrower and more direct sense. It was with Socrates, says Nietzsche, that a "profound *illusion* . . . first saw the light of the world":

> . . . the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it. This sublime metaphysical illusion accompanies science as an instinct and leads science again and again to its limits at which it must turn into *art—which is really the aim of this mechanism.*[41]

Socratism connects naturally to the omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent God of Christianity. The monotheistic God is the wise author of the universe, guaranteeing that it is not just open to knowledge, but that it shares in its creator's goodness and (ultimate) justice. Moreover, at least in its Christian, Islamic and later Judaic forms, monotheism brings a further important element. The divine creator offers human beings the prospect of an afterlife. Traditional Christian orthodoxy does not simply hold out the promise of a future paradise. Christianity envisages human existence as lived under the shadow of both heaven *and* hell: damnation is as real a prospect as salvation. Heaven is for the virtuous, the faithful or the elect. The role of personal immortality in responding to the facts of human fini-

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tude may seem too evident to need spelling out. Yet it is part of Nietzsche's disquieting insight that, even without a creator-god or the belief in personal immortality, Socratism remains religious in a broader sense: it plays a role in satisfying the human need for reconciliation and consolation through its faith that the world is *intelligible.*

In the course of a visit to Germany in September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI gave an address to his former colleagues at the University of Regensburg. Benedict opened the address with an account of a medieval dispute between Christianity and Islam, in which the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologos objects to Islam for spreading its faith through violence. This aspect of the Pope's address caused a scandal—not surprisingly, given that Benedict failed to mention that similar practices have hardly been absent from the history of Christianity.

Less widely commented on, however, was that the central focus of the address was the connection between faith and reason. Although Benedict recognizes that the issue has been a matter of controversy in the history of Christianity (quite an under-statement!) the central doctrine of the Church, he insists, is that human and divine reason must correspond:

> . . . the faith of the Church has always insisted that between God and us, between his eternal Creator Spirit and our created reason there exists a real analogy, in which—as the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 stated—unlikeness remains infinitely greater than likeness, yet not to the point of abolishing analogy and its language. God does not become more divine when we push him away from us in a sheer, impenetrable voluntarism; rather, the truly divine God is the God who has revealed himself as *logos* and, as *logos,* has acted and continues to act lovingly on our behalf.[42]

The Christian religion, he asserts, is based on the claim that the world has been created as an expression of the Greek ideal of "*logos*"—rational divine goodness. Hence science and religion ultimately coincide. Clearly, for Benedict, Christianity remains an essentially Socratic religion: "The scientific ethos", he concludes, "is . . . the will to be obedient to the truth, and, as such, it embodies an attitude which belongs to the essential commitments of the Christian spirit."

The retreat to a purely experiential conception of religion, beyond the reach of the corrosive forces of reason, is a characteristically modern

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response to challenges faced by religion—an immunization strategy. If what matters about religion is just something subjective—the believer's faith and sense of the sacred—then scepticism about matters of empirical fact will have no purchase.

In tying Christianity so tightly to the Socratic project, however, Benedict leaves faith exposed to the difficulties that come from "reason"—arguments of principle and empirical facts alike. To the extent that religion is part of the Socratic project of making the world acceptable by making it intelligible, it contains its own dialectic of dispute and objection: a supernatural doctrine that lives by the *logos* can die by it too. What is more, given Nietzsche's insight that finding meaning in life is a primary human need, the force of such dialectics will be fundamental and far-reaching, not just a matter for the philosophical classroom or theological seminary.

There are two important ways in which this book differs from Nietzsche, however.

As Nietzsche sees it, Socratism comes to an epistemic-metaphysical impasse. In pursuing Socratism's project of attempting to believe only what could be justified, two heroic German philosophers, Kant and Schopenhauer, were led to cut the ground, or so Nietzsche claims, from under our most reassuring prejudice: the idea of realism:

> . . . great men, universally gifted, have contrived, with an incredible amount of thought, to make use of the paraphernalia of science itself, to point out the limits and the relativity of knowledge generally, and thus to deny decisively the claim of science to universal validity and universal aims. And their demonstration diagnosed for the first time the illusory notion which pretends to be able to fathom the innermost essence of things with the aid of causality. The extraordinary courage and wisdom of Kant and Schopenhauer have succeeded in gaining the most difficult victory, the victory over the optimism concealed in our culture. While this optimism, resting on apparently unobjectionable *aeternae veritates,* had believed that all the riddles of the universe could be known and fathomed, and had treated space, time, and causality as entirely unconditional laws of the most universal validity, Kant showed that these really served only to elevate the mere phenomenon, the work of *maya,* to the position of the sole

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> and highest reality, as if it were the innermost and true essence of things, thus making impossible any knowledge of this essence or, in Schopenhauer's words, lulling the dreamer still more soundly asleep.[43]

In focusing on the epistemic aspect of Socratism, however, Nietzsche, surprisingly, ignores its ethical-justificatory dimension—the conviction that the world is not just knowable but knowable *as good.* It is the powerful and destructive tensions that arise once that conviction is pursued consistently to its conclusion that frame the narrative of this book.

Nietzsche also thought that, as Socratism came to its end, the way would open for a revival of the Apollonian / Dionysiac worlds of art and myth (as embodied in the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*). Very surprisingly, given how much attention he paid to history and historical consciousness, Nietzsche did not notice that a distinctive new conception of self-transcendence was emerging. Instead of dissolving the self in the intoxication of a Dionysian orgy or escaping into a dream-world, human beings were coming to identify themselves with human collectivities extended through history.

Lost Religion

To focus understanding of how German Idealism attempted to meet needs to which religion once responded, we shall examine it through the lens of two venerable and very general problems on the borderline of philosophy and theology: the problem of theodicy and the Euthyphro dilemma.

Although the term "theodicy" is a (relatively) modern one, the idea that the existence of evil requires a rational response on the part of the religious believer goes back in Western religion at least as far as the Book of Genesis. Indeed, Hans Blumenberg, the great scholar who has done the most to apply a broadly Nietzschean framework to the understanding of the history of ideas, goes so far as to assert that the whole history of Western culture is a series of attempts to resolve the problem of theodicy that is haunted, as he puts it, by the "threat of Gnosticism"—that is to say, a basically monotheistic religious framework, when it addresses the problem of evil, is constantly pulled towards a dualism that makes evil into an independent principle at odds with the intrinsic nature of the deity.[44]

The basic moves by which the Western tradition has responded to the "problem of evil" are relatively easy to summarize. The dominant answer,

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stretching from the Book of Genesis through St Augustine and including the founders of Protestantism, Luther and Calvin, has been the story of the Fall—the idea that death and suffering are just punishments for Original Sin. But whose sin? Adam's? If so, why does a just God punish us for the sinful actions of someone who is simply our (very remote) ancestor?

In the early modern world—in Renaissance humanism and the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, in particular—that view came to be challenged (though never completely replaced) by another, technically speaking, *optimistic* view: the idea that we live in a world that should be seen as a realization of God's benevolence, a world within which (to put it in Locke's language) each is to be preserved as much as may be. Where the story of Original Sin leads us to doubt God's benevolence (why does he punish us, apparently unjustly?) optimism casts doubt on God's omnipotence—is this *really* as good as it gets? This is why it is often said that theodicy came to an end with the Lisbon Earthquake.

The second problem to frame our narrative is the dilemma to be found in Plato's *Euthyphro.* Again, the Euthyphro dilemma can be expressed with great simplicity. In its original form it is simply the following question: "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?"[45] The question broadens naturally, however, into a more general question about morality and applies with particular force in Nietzsche's world of Christian Socratism: is morality binding on God or is God's omnipotence such that goodness itself is a product of his sovereign, commanding will?

These two problems, that arose within what was clearly a theistic framework, are central to understanding Kant's work—he feels their force and gives distinctive answers to them. Moreover, they give us, I believe, an important perspective for the understanding of the transformation of German philosophy in the years after Kant. Indeed, I shall argue, even those who do not accept the force of these problems in their theistic form feel their legacy, whether we are aware of its nature or not. In that sense, they form part of the *aether of modernity.* The Kant depicted here is certainly a highly innovative thinker. Yet it is my contention that the radicalism of his thought emerges most clearly when we see him as engaged in taking an inherited project to its conclusion. This sets my interpretation at odds with a number of scholars whose accounts of Kant present him as much more sharply discontinuous with what went before him.

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Frederick Beiser, for example, one of the most distinguished historians of German Idealist philosophy writing in English, makes two claims about Kant's conception of autonomy in his book *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism.* First, he claims, the significance of autonomy is principally political, not metaphysical.

> It is important to recognize that Kant's new concept of autonomy was formulated primarily in a political rather than a metaphysical context. What disturbed Kant was not the problem of determinism but that of oppression. Tyranny and injustice are threats to freedom, not the causality of the natural order.[46]

Secondly, he contrasts Kant's "new ethics" with the natural law tradition:

> This tradition places the source of moral value not in the human will but in the providential order. The law of nature is the end appropriate to a thing, the purpose God intended for it. To know our moral obligations, then, we need to know "the vocation of man", our place in the Creation or role in the divine design. Although Pufendorf and Wolff maintained that natural law can be justified by natural reason alone, they never ceased to regard God as its creator and enforcer. Compared to this tradition, Kant's new ethics are revolutionary. The source of moral value is the rational will inside us, not the providential order outside us. Here lies the real depth and impact of Kant's Copernican revolution. This took place not only in epistemology but also in ethics. Just as the natural world depends on the laws of the understanding, so the moral world depends on the laws of the will. Both ethics and epistemology have become anthropocentric.
>
> The political implications of Kant's new ethics are . . . radical in the extreme. If the human will creates moral values, so that it is obliged to obey only the laws of its own making, then it has the right to recreate the entire social and political world. The onus is now on society and the state, not on the individual. Rather than individuals conforming to a divinely sanctioned social and political order, it must conform to the demands of their will.[47]

The interpretation of Kant that will be elaborated and defended in this and the following chapters is very different. To introduce it, it is worth

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stating first, in its broad outlines, how, in my view, Kant sees the relationship between God and man with respect to morality.

(1) The world is ruled by a single God: an omnipotent creator who is absolutely good.
(2) God is just: that is, he rewards the good and (as we shall see, even more significantly) punishes the wicked.
(3) Justice requires that people are punished only for what they are responsible for.

Which means:

(3.i) That human beings should not be punished for what others do (to punish mankind as a whole for the sin of one man, Adam, would be unjust).
(3.ii) That human beings should *know* what is required of them. If right and wrong are a matter of following the moral law, then the moral law must be knowable by everyone to whom it applies, which means (assuming that it applies to mankind as a whole) that morality cannot depend on a particular religious revelation or membership of a particular faith community.
(3.iii) That human beings should be *capable* of doing what is required of them. If their sense that their choices were free were merely subjectively limited interpretations of a reality that, when known fully, would reveal those choices to have been antecedently determined by factors over which they had no control, it would make no more sense to punish them for violations of morality than it would to punish an earthquake.

This leads to some sharp differences between my interpretation of Kant and Beiser's. In the first place, it follows from the requirement that human beings should be capable of responsible action that, *pace* Beiser, metaphysical questions of freedom are indeed of the greatest importance to Kant, and we shall explore them in Chapters 3 and 4 (which is, of course, not to deny that Kant was also extremely concerned about injustice between human beings). Secondly, while it would be wrong to deny that Kant believes that the moral will is "a law to itself"—Kant says so quite explicitly

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(Ak. 4:440)—that does not entail Beiser's assertion that "the human will creates moral values". To assume that either God is the creator of moral value or human beings are is a false alternative. Thirdly, I am not persuaded by Beiser's claim that Kant's philosophy marks a "profound break" with natural law. Throughout his long career, Kant described himself as being engaged in continuing the natural law tradition.[48] Was this a piece of self-misunderstanding on his part? I see no reason to believe so. On the contrary, if human beings are to be properly held responsible, then they must be capable of moral knowledge by means of reason, not revelation alone—and this is just what the natural law tradition maintained.

If Kant's ethics is "anthropocentric", then, on my reading, it is only in the sense that morality is knowable by human beings and they are capable of following its requirements without the assistance of an act of divine grace that is available to some but not to others. But, as the schema given above shows, this does not come from the rejection of religion but its embrace alongside the requirement of rationality. Socratic religion requires that God should not be capricious, sometimes angry at mankind, sometimes forgiving towards them; nor should he punish human beings for the sin of their ancestors. Yet the consequence of taking this form of religion to its conclusion is to weaken human beings' dependence on God to the point that it is no longer visible.

The Problem of Evil

Let us now look at Kant's response to the theodicy problem.

The first thing to note about the problem of evil is that evil is of two kinds: evil that is a result of human action and that which is not. The "Pelagian" strategy that we find in "Socratic" monotheists such as Kant for dealing with human evil seems straightforward. God has given human beings free will and the capacity to tell good from evil, and it is good that God should have done so. But, of course, this gift may be horribly abused by its recipients, and injustice and suffering are the result.

On the other hand, so-called "natural evil" presents very great difficulties. One response is simply to deny that an explanation is possible for us—that God's purposes transcend the limits of human knowledge. But this too has its difficulties. How can human beings be expected to love and

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worship a creator who has given us reason but who doesn't make it possible for us to use our reason to see his goodness—indeed, one who allows things that are, so far as human reason can tell, plainly bad? The point is made brilliantly by John Stuart Mill in one of the all-too-rare passages in which his passionate character bursts through his otherwise stilted and impersonal prose:

> To say that God's goodness may be different in kind from man's goodness, what is it but saying, with a slight change of phraseology, that God may possibly not be good? . . . If, instead of the "glad tidings" that there exists a Being in whom all the excellences which the highest human mind can conceive, exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that "the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving" does not sanction them; convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do: he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.[49]

As I have said, it is often supposed that the project of giving a rational account of theodicy came to an end with the Lisbon Earthquake. Thus claims like Hegel's that:

> Our examination [of history] is a theodicy, a justification of God, such as Leibniz in his way attempted metaphysically in abstract, indeterminate categories, so that the evil in the world could be comprehended and the thinking Spirit [*Geist*] reconciled with evil.[50]

are taken (as is perhaps Hegel's philosophy as a whole) as a throwback to a pre-Enlightened era.

Yet in the years following the Lisbon Earthquake one thinker at least did come up with a deeply original and radical response to the problem of

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evil: Rousseau. In Book IV of *Émile* (1762) the tutor and Émile meet a "Savoyard Vicar" who, as an obliging fictional mouthpiece for Rousseau himself, treats them to an extensive account of philosophy and natural theology. Here are the "Vicar's" views on evil:

> It is the abuse of our powers that makes us unhappy and wicked. Our cares, our sorrows, our sufferings are of our own making. Moral ills are undoubtedly the work of man, and physical ills would be nothing but for our vices which have made us liable to them. Has not nature made us feel our needs as a means to our preservation? Is not bodily suffering a sign that the machine is out of order and needs attention? Death. . . . Do not the wicked poison their own life and ours? Who would wish to live for ever? Death is the cure for the evils you bring upon yourself; nature would not have you suffer perpetually. How few sufferings are felt by man living in a state of primitive simplicity! His life is almost entirely free from suffering and from passion; he neither fears nor feels death; if he feels it, his sufferings make him desire it; henceforth it is no evil in his eyes. If we were but content to be ourselves we should have no cause to complain of our lot; but in the search for an imaginary good we find a thousand real ills. He who cannot bear a little pain must expect to suffer greatly. If a man injures his constitution by dissipation, you try to cure him with medicine; the ill he fears is added to the ill he feels; the thought of death makes it horrible and hastens its approach; the more we seek to escape from it, the more we are aware of it; and we go through life in the fear of death, blaming nature for the evils we have inflicted on ourselves by our neglect of her laws.
>
> O Man! seek no further for the author of evil; thou art he. There is no evil but the evil you do or the evil you suffer, and both come from yourself. Evil in general can only spring from disorder, and in the order of the world I find a never-failing system. Evil in particular cases exists only in the mind of those who experience it; and this feeling is not the gift of nature, but the work of man himself. Pain has little power over those who, having thought little, look neither before nor after. Take away our fatal progress, take away our faults and our vices, take away man's handiwork, and all is well.[51]

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The implications of this passage are extraordinary. If we could only get back to living "according to nature", there would be no natural evil—death would be no evil and suffering would be slight and insignificant—so the central difficulty of theodicy would simply go away. It is only the modern world with its inflated sense of self-hood that creates the problem.

We are all familiar with the famous story of Professor Kant, who was so regular in his afternoon walks that the citizens of Königsberg would set their watches by him, and that only once were his walks interrupted—which was when Kant received his copy of *Émile* and was so overcome with the excitement of reading it that he could not bear to interrupt himself. Less well known is the fact that Kant was greatly engaged by the Lisbon Earthquake. Shortly afterwards, he published three essays in which he attempted to give a scientific, geological explanation for what had happened.[52] I must confess that I used to think that Kant's view of natural evil was much the same as Rousseau's. I believe that it would be helpful to present my former view and to explain why I am now convinced that it was not quite right.

As I saw it, we can indeed understand the world as the product of a good creator because, in the end (appearances to the contrary) there is, for Kant, as for Rousseau, no such thing as truly natural evil. The point is that God's goodness does not consist in having created a world of *happiness* so much as in having created a world of *freedom.* So, instead of seeing God's goodness as compromised or called into question by death or physical pain, Kant, like Rousseau, will deny that they are *bad.* This is not simply to say that freedom is a good that outweighs the bads of pain and suffering, which are a necessary price to be paid for it; freedom alone is what is intrinsically good, and so pain and suffering are not even something to be balanced against it.

In this way, Kant comes very close to ancient Stoicism. In the *Critique of Practical Reason,* for example, he writes:

> Thus one may always laugh at the Stoic who in the most intense pains of gout cried out: Pain, however you torment me I will still never admit that you are something evil (*kakon, malum*)!; nevertheless, he was correct.[53]

As is well known, Kant had little time for Aristotle or (as an ethical thinker) Plato. There were, he said, "strictly speaking", only two schools of Greek

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ethics: Epicureanism and Stoicism, who, "followed one and the same method insofar as they did not let virtue and happiness hold as two different elements of the highest good".[54] The Epicureans made virtue a part of happiness, while Stoicism sought happiness in the consciousness of virtue. Kant, as I once interpreted him, would have followed Stoicism in the primacy of virtue (understood, in his case, as free moral agency) although he would have rejected the attempt to include happiness as a part of it.

In favour of this reading is that it accounts for Kant's uncompromising anti-hedonism. I don't mean by this just his opposition to views that equate morality with the pursuit of happiness or that make moral reason a matter of feeling but something more radical: his apparent refusal to concede that sensual pleasure has intrinsic value at all. If pain is not intrinsically bad, then sensual pleasure is not intrinsically good. If my view were right, that opposition to the value of sensual pleasure would have deeper roots than the familiar biases and inhibitions of ageing academic bachelors.

But, as I have said, I now see that this view of Kant is not fully adequate. To explain its limitations, let us look at an essay that Kant published in 1791 (that is, ten years after the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*) called "On the Failure of All Philosophical Attempts at Theodicy".

In this essay, Kant divides the objections to the deity through the existence of evil into three. The first two are familiar: what Kant terms the "morally counterpurposive" and the "physically counterpurposive". They correspond to what I have called human evil ("evil" in the full sense of something being bad because it is the outcome of evil agency) and natural evil (bad things that result from non-human agency). But it is the fact that Kant identifies a third kind of "counterpurposiveness" that is of particular significance. Kant calls this the "counterpurposiveness of justice". What does Kant mean by "justice"?

Famously, according to Kant, actions, to have moral worth, must be performed for the sake of duty and for that reason alone:

> . . . that the human being *ought to perform* his duty quite unselfishly and that he must altogether separate his craving for happiness from the concept of duty, in order to have this concept quite pure: of that he is aware with the utmost clarity, or, should he believe that he is not, it can be required of him that he be so, as far as he can; for the

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> true worth of morality is to be found in this purity, and he must therefore also be capable of it.[55]

Yet happiness is not completely absent from Kant's account of morality. Moral theory (*die Moral*), he writes in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* "is not properly the doctrine of how we are to make ourselves happy but of how we are to become *worthy* of happiness".[56] The "highest good", according to Kant, requires that happiness be combined "in the most exact proportion" with the worthiness that comes from moral conduct.[57] It is this, he says there, that connects morality with religion. Only when religion is added to morality "does there also enter the hope of some day participating in happiness to the extent that we have been intent upon not being unworthy of it".[58] So I am to hope for happiness from actions that are not—indeed, if they are to make me worthy of happiness, cannot be—aimed at happiness.

But, if the highest good consists of the proportion between happiness and desert, then deviations from it can be of two kinds: either good people can fail to receive an appropriate measure of happiness or bad ones fail to receive the unhappiness they deserve. It is the latter that concerns Kant. The counterpurposiveness of justice is, he says, "the bad state which the disproportion between the impunity of the depraved and their crimes seems to indicate in the world",[59] and it is the most important reason that we have to doubt the goodness of the world. He writes:

> It is remarkable that of all the difficulties in reconciling the course of world events with the divinity of their creator, none imposes itself on the mind as starkly as that of the semblance in them of a lack of *justice.* If it comes about (although it seldom happens) that an unjust, especially violent, villain does not escape unpunished from the world, then the impartial spectator rejoices, now reconciled with heaven. No purposiveness of nature will so excite him in admiration of it and, as it were, make him detect God's hand in it. Why? Because nature is here moral, solely of the kind we seldom can hope to perceive in the world.[60]

There is, Kant claims, an asymmetry between the absence of happiness for the good and the happiness of the wicked: only the latter is a matter of *injustice.* Believing that God is benevolent, we must presume that he has

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so arranged things in this world as to further our happiness. At the same time, we are also subject to the requirements of morality. In fulfilling those requirements we keep God's law, as we are obliged to do, but we do not thereby create a claim on God. So belief in divine benevolence creates, if you will, a *hope for,* or even an *expectation of,* happiness on the part of good people, yet it does not create an *entitlement* to it. In contrast, it is *wrong* that the bad go unpunished:

> The lament over the lack of justice shown in the wrongs which are the lot of human beings here on earth is directed not at the well-being that does not befall the good, but at the ill that does not befall the evil (although if well-being occurs to the evil then the contrast makes the offence all the greater). For under divine rule even the best of human beings cannot found his wish to fare well on God's beneficence, for one who only does what he owes can have no rightful claim on God's benevolence.[61]

Such punishment is *not,* let us note, something that bad people owe as compensation to other individuals—those whom they have wronged—or even to the whole community. It is, as Kant makes very clear, something that we should think of as good in itself:

> . . . punishment in the exercise of justice is founded in the legislating wisdom in no way as mere means but as an end: trespass is associated with ills not that some other good may result from it, but because this connection is good in itself, i.e. morally and necessarily good.[62]

When it comes to punishment, Kant is the purest of pure retributivists. What leads us to religion is not the thought that good people deserve to be rewarded with happiness by a just God, but that there is something intolerable about a world in which the wicked go unpunished. As Kant remarks in a chilling footnote at the end of the *Metaphysics of Morals,* "it is from the necessity of punishment that the inference to a future life is drawn."[63]

Kant's vision of justice in a future world, with its emphasis on the primacy of punishment, was hardly a cheerful prospect. If we look at the end of the *Metaphysics of Morals,* it is evident that Kant himself is profoundly disturbed by the consequences of his own argument. Having explained and endorsed the idea that the ancients too gave primacy to retribution and

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saw justice (like fate) as "[pronouncing] on right in accordance with an iron, inevitable necessity which we cannot penetrate further", above even the power of Jupiter.[64] Kant acknowledges that such an unyielding understanding of justice is hard to reconcile with the principle that God should be both just *and* loving:

> For in view of the eventual multitude of criminals who keep the register of their guilt running on and on, punitive justice would make the *end* of creation consist not in the creator's *love* (as one must yet think it to be) but rather in the strict observance of His *right* (it would make God's right itself, located in His *glory,* the end). But since the latter (justice) is only the condition limiting the former (benevolence), this seems to contradict principles of practical reason, by which the creation of a world must have been omitted if it would have produced a result so contrary to the intention of its author, which can only have love for its basis.
>
> From all this it is clear that in ethics, as pure practical philosophy of internal lawgiving, only the moral relations of *men to men* are conceivable by us. The question of what sort of moral relation holds between God and man goes completely beyond the bounds of ethics and is altogether inconceivable for us. This, then, confirms what was maintained above: that ethics cannot extend beyond the limits of men's duties to one another.[65]

And with this Kant closes the book! The austere slogan of retributivism was always: let justice be done although the world perishes (*fiat justitia, pereat mundus*). Kant's position is even harsher—let justice be done even if we have to create a hell for it to be done in.

The Euthyphro Dilemma

Let me now turn to the Euthyphro dilemma. It might seem hard for us to take the dilemma particularly seriously for two reasons. First, very many fewer people nowadays share the confident belief in a benevolent and omnipotent creator-god against whose background the dilemma is formulated. Second, it would seem on the face of it that the best arguments are (as Plato himself, of course, believed) against the view that what is good is good

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because it is loved by the gods (or by a single God). After all, why should the affirmative attitude of a being, however powerful, make something *good,* absent a reason to believe that that being was not just powerful but also good—which, of course, begs the question? As Wittgenstein put it in a conversation with his friend Drury:

> If I thought of God as another being like myself, outside myself, only infinitely more powerful, then I would regard it as my duty to defy him.[66]

However, although the Euthyphro dilemma originated in theistic form, it arises, perhaps even more intensely, if we don't look at morality from the perspective of a divine Creator. What if morality is a human artefact, a product of our life in society? In that case, it would appear to be something that we human beings have chosen to live by. But if we have chosen it, can't we just as easily un-choose it? What binding force could it have to override our choices? For those reasons the pull towards the Platonic side of the Euthyphro dilemma seems to be even stronger in the absence of a theistic framework.

Yet there is an argument to be made in the other direction. If morality is a transcendent feature of ultimate reality, then it threatens to become just another fact—an eternal and unchanging fact, perhaps (like the truths of mathematics and logic) but a fact nonetheless. From which point of view, surely, it is an open question whether I see it as binding on me. The Euthyphro dilemma threatens morality with alienation in both directions: if we make morality a matter of choice (God's or our own) its binding force becomes dependent on the force of that choice (God's or ours); if it becomes a feature of objective reality, transcending even God, then it becomes hard to see why morality is not a matter of ultimate indifference to us.

On which side of the dilemma does Kant come down? According to Beiser, God drops out of the picture: ethics becomes "anthropocentric" and it is the human will that "creates" moral values. Certainly, this represents a not uncommon way of reading Kant, especially among those—for example, Iris Murdoch[67]—who hold Kant responsible for what they find distasteful about modernity (generally: the substitution of an abstract individualistic voluntarism for God, tradition and community). But a more interesting interpretation can be found in the writing of the greatest of the modern advocates of Kantian moral philosophy: John Rawls.

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At several places in his writings after the *Theory of Justice,* Rawls expounds and endorses a distinctive interpretation of the Kantian idea of autonomy that he calls, famously, *constructivism.* As Rawls himself presents it, Kant's "moral constructivism" is to be understood by contrasting it with what he calls "rational intuitionism"—the moral view (as Rawls believes) of Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world, of Leibniz and Wolff among Kant's immediate predecessors, and of Sidgwick, Moore and Ross in the English tradition. "The distinctive thesis [of rational intuitionism] for our purposes", Rawls writes in his essay "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy", is that "first principles . . . are regarded as true or false in virtue of a moral order of values that is prior to and independent of our conceptions of person and society, and of the public social role of moral doctrines."[68] What is wrong with rational intuitionism? For Kant, Rawls claims, rational intuitionism in whatever form is "heteronomous". For rational intuitionism, he writes:

> . . . basic moral concepts are conceptually independent of natural concepts, and first principles as grasped by rational intuition are viewed as synthetic a priori, and so independent of any particular order of nature. They give the contents of an ethics of creation, so to speak: the principles God would use to ascertain which is the best of all possible worlds. Thus it may seem that for Kant such principles are not heteronomous.[69]

But, to follow Rawls, they are indeed heteronomous:

> Yet in Kant's moral constructivism it suffices for heteronomy that first principles obtain in virtue of relations among objects the nature of which is not affected or determined by our conception of ourselves as reasonable and rational persons (as possessing the powers of practical reason), and of the public role of moral principles in a society of such persons . . . Heteronomy obtains not only when these first principles are fixed by the special psychological constitution of human nature, as in Hume, but also when they are fixed by an order of universals, or of moral values grasped by rational intuition, as in Plato's realm of forms or in Leibniz's hierarchy of perfections. Thus an essential feature of Kant's moral constructivism is that the first principles of right and justice are seen as specified by a procedure of

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> construction . . . the form and structure of which mirrors our free moral personality as both reasonable and rational.[70]

Here then we have an account of Kant that responds to the Euthyphro dilemma in a highly original way: morality neither transcends human beings, nor is it, in the obvious way, a matter of human choice. The objects of morality are, as Rawls very elusively expresses it, "affected or determined by our conception of ourselves as reasonable and rational persons", yet they are not just *chosen* or *created* by us either. Is this account coherent? And is it Kant? I think that the answer to both of these questions is "no".

To represent Kant as opposed to "rational intuitionism" is, of course, to stretch his text away from his own vocabulary—a perfect example of the kind of prolepsis in historical interpretation that Skinner and the Cambridge School of intellectual history deplore. For me, however, there is nothing wrong in principle with an interpretation that projects a text into a theoretical space that the author himself did not share. The test, rather, is how well we can use the pattern that this brings out to guide our understanding of the texts. Although there are evident practical difficulties in its application, I think that we *can* see quite clearly where Kant stands on the Euthyphro dilemma. The most extensive discussion of the issue that I know comes in the *Lectures on Ethics.* I shall quote the passage in full:

> Can we, even without presupposing God's existence and His *arbitrium,* derive all obligations from within? *Responsio:* not merely in the affirmative, for this, rather, is *ex natura rei,* and we conclude from this to God's choice.
>
> From the *arbitrium divinum* I cannot myself obtain the relevant concepts of the good, unless the concept of the morally good be assumed beforehand; apart from that, the sheer *arbitrium* of God is god merely in a physical sense. In short, the judgement as to the perfection of God's *arbitrium* presupposes the investigation of moral perfection.
>
> Supposing the *arbitrium* of God to be known to me, where is the necessity that I should do it, if I have not already derived the obligation from the nature of the case: God wills it—why should I? He will punish me; in that case it is injurious, but not in itself wicked; that is how we obey a despot; in that case the act is no sin, in the strict sense, but politically imprudent; and why does God will it? Why

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> does He punish it? Because I am obligated to do it, not because He has the power to punish. The very application of the *arbitrium divinum* to the *factum,* as a ground, presupposes the concept of obligation; and since this constitutes natural religion, the latter is a part, but not the basic principle, of morality. It is probable that, since God by His *arbitrium,* is the ground of all things, this is also the case here; He is indeed the ground of it, but not *per arbitrium,* for since He is the ground of possibility, He is also the material ground (since in Him all things are given) of geometrical truths and morality. In him there is already morality, therefore, and so His choice is not the ground.
>
> The quarrel between reformers and Lutherans over *arbitrium divinum* and *decretus absolutus* is based on the fact that even in God morality must exist; and every conception of the divine *arbitrium* itself vanishes, if morality is not presupposed; this cannot, however, be demonstrated from the world (where it is merely possible), since the good things of the world may merely be physical consequences. How dreadful, though, is a God without morality.[71]

I think that this passage establishes two things: first, that Kant is passionately exercised by the Euthyphro dilemma, and, second, that he comes down firmly on Plato's side. You might argue, if you are a Rawlsian, that the latter is not quite so clear as the fact that he rejects theological voluntarism. Nevertheless, I don't think that this passage leaves us in any doubt about one thing. Contrary to Rawls's assertion, morality, as Kant describes it here, does indeed give an "ethics of creation"—in fact, it has force even for God. Note that the priority and independence of human morality is presented epistemically: we can *know* morality without recourse to God, but this certainly does not mean that morality is a human *creation* or, as Rawls more cautiously (and elusively) claims, that morality is a matter of human "*construction*".

But what weight should we give to the passage I have just cited? Although it is striking, it comes from lectures given by Kant, not a publication. Moreover, those lectures were given between 1762 and 1764, nearly twenty years before the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* and the note-taker was none other than Johann Gottfried Herder—not, you might think, the most impartial spectator of Kant's thought. Perhaps this was just Kant while he was still slumbering in the enchanted castle of dogmatism. If that is what you believe, however, I have another passage for you:

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> It was the moral ideas that gave rise to that concept of a Divine Being which we now hold to be correct . . . it is these very laws that have led us, in virtue of their *inner* practical necessity, to the postulate of a self-sufficient cause, or of a wise Ruler of the world, in order that through such agency effect may be given to them. We may not, therefore, in reversal of such a procedure, regard them as accidental and derived from the mere will of the Ruler, especially as we have no conception of such a will, except as formed in accordance with these laws. So far, then, as practical reason has the right to serve as our guide, we shall not look upon actions as obligatory because they are the commands of God, but shall regard them as divine commands because we have an inward obligation to them.[72]

It seems to me evident that this passage takes just the same position. Morality is not to be seen as a product of God's will because of his power of command; it is as valid for God as it is for human beings. And this passage comes, not from some possibly dubious lecture notes from Kant's early years, but from the central text of the whole corpus of the "Critical Philosophy": the *Critique of Pure Reason,* as published in 1781 and revised in 1787.

Thus, for Kant, God does play a very important role—but Kant's God is, to put it in Nietzsche's language, a *Socratic* God. That is, he is a God whose goodness is required to be intelligible to us—not an inscrutable agent who creates goodness through his divine power to command. Morality, as Kant sees it, is "in us", certainly, but morality is not binding on us because it is something that we ourselves either create or "construct" any more than because it has been brought into being by God's will. We need to postulate a transcendent God, not in order to have a source for morality—on the contrary, it is our independent knowledge of morality that leads us to God—but to deal with the fact of injustice: the discrepancy that exists between morality (desert) and happiness. Kant would endorse Seneca's epigram: "I do not obey God, I agree with him."

Ideological History

How helpful is this "idealist", LILO perspective in understanding broader historical processes, however?

For Hegel, it will be recalled, philosophy is pre-eminent in the understanding of history because history is, essentially, the sequence of shapes

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through which *Geist* passes on the way to self-knowledge and it is in philosophy that *Geist* shows itself most clearly and explicitly. Yet that, of course, is a part of (a very central part of) Hegel's metaphysical idealism. Without it, the place of philosophy in relation to history more broadly becomes an open question. On the view adopted here, the wider force of philosophy will come from its proximity to religion—"religion" understood in the broader, Nietzschean sense that includes also those apparently non-religious "forms of life" that help to reconcile human beings to their situation.

So, to return to the question posed in the epigraph to this chapter, how many divisions *does* the Pope have? One is tempted to answer: more than Stalin! Stalin and the Bolsheviks are now no more than a historical memory, while, whatever its difficulties, the papacy remains an immensely powerful institution, as it was already (in Macaulay's resonant description) "when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre".[73] And who can forget the role played by the Catholic Church—specifically, by John Paul II, the "Polish Pope"—in the movement that contributed so much to the end of Soviet-bloc communism? Such evidence is impressionistic, it must be admitted. Still, let me conclude this chapter with what seems to me a powerful example.

Anyone who has thought about it at all—if only from reading Lytton Strachey's classic *Eminent Victorians*—must be struck by the way in which the Victorians were, well . . . so very *Victorian*. In its formality and rectitude, its fervent religiousness (and the spiritual agony of so many of those who lost it) it was an age that seems as remote from the one that preceded it as it does from the one that followed. How and why this transformation in culture and society took place is, surely, a puzzle.

Certainly, the French Revolution gave the upper strata of British society an enormous shock. Looking across the Channel, they saw a libertine ruling class that had paid no more than lip-service to established religion facing the rage of its social inferiors without any moral authority by which to defend itself. So self-interest—the basic need for self-preservation—would have given the ruling class a strong incentive to mend its ways. But that external motivation applies to the rulers of society; the new moral identity was much more widespread and carried conviction with those who were ruled over as well as those ruling.

In his monumental *The Making of the English Working Class,*[74] the Marxist historian, E. P. Thompson, documents how the development of

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Victorian industry was accompanied by the spread of intensely disciplined forms of religion (chiefly, Methodism) and argues that they played an indispensable role in stabilizing and legitimating the disturbing new realities of industrial capitalism. But this, as it stands, is a bare functionalist explanation: a new, highly disruptive, economic order requires stabilization, and a new kind of disciplined religion appears, as if by magic, that responds to that need. Despite Thompson's own (admirable) commitment to writing history that does justice to the experience of those who lived through great historical changes, there is, it seems, an explanatory gap: why should that new religiosity appear and succeed so wildly?

It is at this point that one sees the significance of the narrative developed in Boyd Hilton's extremely illuminating book on Britain in the early nineteenth century, *The Age of Atonement*.[75] Hilton's book is—though he himself might not welcome the label—a work of ideological history. It traces the appearance and strengthening in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of a family of religious beliefs, all centred around the Christian doctrine of the fallenness of humanity. This was not, however, merely a reversion to an Augustinian picture of human beings marooned in a world cut off from divine benevolence except insofar as it points to the world beyond. As Hilton explains it, the contemporary emphasis on human sinfulness brought with it convictions about the divine character of self-control and retribution as part of a proper order in this world.

There is a familiar, "Whig" story of how the providentialism of Locke, Paley and Smith in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was inherited by the liberal progressivism of the nineteenth century. Hilton, however, brings to the surface another, darker tradition of social theology, whose emblematic figures were Bishop Butler (the Bishop Butler of *The Analogy of Religion*) and Malthus. To look at the natural world, according to Butler, is to see virtue (foresight and self-control) rewarded and vice (profligacy and indulgence) punished, and in this way, he claimed, it mirrors the religious doctrine of divine justice. Add in the weight of Malthus and the prime example of "vice" becomes sexual incontinence, whose consequences in the form of over-population Malthus so grimly depicts.

Here the relationship between religion and economic life comes to the foreground. Capitalism, or so it was believed, represented a kind of moral school that, in rewarding frugality and foresight, while punishing idleness and self-indulgence, mirrored in this world the principles of divine justice.

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With its hostility to pleasure and its unbending retributivism, it is easy to see this as a joyless and repellent creed (also, one that, it must be said, strikingly resembles Kant). Yet, as Hilton establishes, it clearly was very persuasive to many people at that time who thought about the place of human beings in society. Indeed, we can see its outlines spread through the full spectrum of religious belief, from evangelism and non-conformism, through the Church of England even to nineteenth-century Catholicism. Thus an intelligible connection can be traced between a religious narrative and the embrace of capitalism through a religiously inspired cultural transformation.

This is not to return to a form of Discursive Transcendentalism. Discursive Transcendentalism supposes that there exists a single framework that sets limits to what is even thinkable within a society. But the culture of retributive Christianity was not incontestable. It worked, rather, as a set of cultural practices as well as a low-level theory of justice, establishing a coincidence between the will of the Creator and human social institutions. There are indeed other, very different, ideological tales to tell about nineteenth-century Britain: ones that centre, for example, on "philosophic radicalism"—Bentham, Mill, Lewes, George Eliot and the Westminster Review; the Christianized idealism of T. H. Green; the anti-democratic Romanticism of Carlyle; the biological evolutionism of Darwin and Huxley; Marxian socialism; and so on.[76] But these are not different perspectives on a single, underlying ideological framework; they are, in fact, contending ideologies. Hilton's achievement is to have recovered the ideas of some (to modern philosophers and political theorists, at least) much less well-known and less congenial thinkers and, through them, to have helped us to understand why this was an age in which Christianity was not—or, at least, not just—in retreat before the advance of science but was also transforming and asserting itself in powerful ways.

Hilton himself disclaims any attempt to draw general conclusions about social theory from his book. His is, he says, "not a theoretical work" and it does not "pretend to solve the problem posed by spiritual chickens and terrestrial eggs".[77] Less cautiously, I think that we can see from it that there are good reasons not to underestimate the power of philosophical and theological self-understandings or reduce them to mere epiphenomena of underlying economic processes or stratagems in this-worldly struggles for the advancement of self-interest.

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Chapter 3

Kant's Anti-Determinism

> I regard Kant's doctrine of the coexistence of freedom and necessity as the greatest of all achievements of the human mind.
>
> —SCHOPENHAUER

> Kant's theory of freedom . . . resembles an unskilful performance of the three-card trick rather than a serious philosophical argument.
>
> —C. D. BROAD

Desert and Punishment

Chapter 2 argued that, for Kant, the link that morality establishes between God and man is not dependent on revelation from the divine to the human. God's identity, as Kant puts it, lies in his being the *lawgiver, governor* and *judge* of the world (*Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:131), but he exercises these sovereign functions as, if you will, an enlightened despot—governing according to reason, not exercising his overwhelmingly superior power arbitrarily.

An intelligibly just God must judge and punish human beings in ways that they can rationally accept as justified. One central consequence of this is that human beings must have the kind of agency that would make it proper for them to be held to account for their actions. Explaining how Kant thinks that this can be so will be the subject of this chapter.

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For the mainstream of modern Kant interpreters, justifying the idea of human beings being held to account before a divine seat of judgement holds no importance. If Kant is best understood as the founder of a secular, humanistic ethics based on respect for persons and the defence of moral rights, such an account of responsible agency is not necessary. Thus Christine Korsgaard tells us that:

> Kant's theory of the freedom of the will involves neither extravagant ontological claims nor the unyielding theory of responsibility which seems to follow from those claims.[1]

According to Allen Wood, "We should believe we are practically free—but we are not justified in holding any beliefs about the noumenal world in connection with this." While Wood acknowledges the existence of Kant's "lapses into supernaturalism", he believes that "no positive doctrine about noumenal freedom has any place in Kantian ethics". It should, indeed, be "quarantined from Kantian ethics just as strictly as if it carried the plague". In expunging the doctrine of noumenal freedom, we are, in fact, being faithful to Kant's own central commitment: "No rationalist—and rationalism is the very heart of Kantian ethics—should have the least patience with it."[2]

Views that deny the relevance of deep questions of philosophical principle to morality are familiar in modern philosophy. Human beings, it is said, share certain "reactive attitudes" that are essential to their interactions with one another.[3] These attitudes serve to enforce and reinforce norms of behaviour. And they are not optional for us—we could not imagine living as human beings in society without them. So, whatever physics or psychology or even metaphysics might tell us about the determinants of human behaviour does not ultimately matter: the reactive attitudes associated with the practice of morality will remain an indispensable part of our lives. In denying that metaphysical issues about determinism or the distinction between appearances and things in themselves play a significant role in Kant's account of the moral life of human beings, commentators like Korsgaard and Wood are attributing a similar view to Kant.

The reason why these interpreters believe that the "ontological extravagance" of a doctrine of noumenal freedom is unnecessary is expressed very succinctly in the title of Korsgaard's essay from which I have just quoted:

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"Morality as Freedom". If we operate within the perspective of morality as articulated by Kant, we must see ourselves as practically free and that is sufficient for us to *be* free in any sense that matters.

That interpretation is given apparent support from the following famous passage from the *Groundwork:*

> . . . every being that cannot act otherwise than *under the idea of freedom* is just because of that really free in a practical respect, that is, all laws that are inseparably bound up with freedom hold for him just as if his will had validly been pronounced free also in itself and in theoretical philosophy.[4]

On the most common reading, Kant's point is that the fact that we necessarily act under the idea of freedom is as much as we need to say about freedom.

But this is not all. That we necessarily act under the idea of freedom is, it would seem, all that we *can* say about freedom, for Kant also asserts quite explicitly that we cannot *explain* how freedom is possible:

> . . . reason would overstep all its bounds if it took upon itself to *explain how* pure reason can be practical, which would be exactly the same task as to explain *how freedom is possible.*[5]

Roger Scruton, for example, in his introduction to Kant, writes that Kant's solution to the problem of freedom, "referring as it does to a transcendental perspective, is such that we can only comprehend its incomprehensibility".[6]

Such interpretations of Kant run counter to the picture of Kant presented in this book. While I agree with Wood that rationalism is at the heart of Kant's project, it is, I am arguing, a religious rationalism—or a rationalistic religion.[7] If our own sense of freedom and responsibility is no more than a product of our human vantage-point—even if that vantage-point is not one that we finite beings could ever step outside—the question whether we *deserve* reward or punishment from the ultimate, divine standpoint remains in doubt. This chapter, then, sets itself the tasks of explaining why, the two passages from the *Groundwork* notwithstanding, a theoretical account of freedom is both necessary for Kant and, in his view, possible, and giving a convincing reconstruction of what Kant's account is.

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Fatalism

One thing that is undeniable is that Kant does indeed have a lot to say about the metaphysical issues surrounding freedom. There are, to my knowledge, five extensive discussions of the freedom of the will in Kant's mature works. These are, to take them in chronological order, the Third Antinomy in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 1787), Section III of the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), the "Critical Elucidation of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason" in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1787), a discussion in the Vigilantius transcript of the *Lectures on Ethics* (1793) and Part One of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793, 1794). (I omit the *Metaphysics of Morals* as containing no extended discussion of freedom of the will in relation to natural necessity, although it does indeed contain some very significant remarks about the difference between *Willkür* (the power of choice) and *Wille* (the rational will), and what it means for the will to be "self-determining".)

In all of these works, with the apparent exception of the *Groundwork,* Kant is concerned to present his conception of freedom as a response to "fatalism" and "Spinozism" and to do so with reference to the central doctrines of transcendental idealism. As he writes in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (Ak. 5:101–102), "If this ideality of time and space is not adopted, nothing remains but Spinozism."

That Kant should regard responding to "Spinozism" as pressing is, of course, no more than to be expected, given the time at which he was writing (he was also concerned to respond to the "genuine fatalist", as he called him, Joseph Priestley).[8] In the 1780s, the German intellectual community was pre-occupied with what came to be called the *Pantheismusstreit*—the dispute between Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn about whether (and if so, in what sense) Lessing had been a Spinozist. The issues at stake were (of course) complex, but, behind them, as everyone knew at the time, was the identification of Spinozism with a view of human agency that seemed obviously incompatible with orthodox religious faith and that led, at best, to pantheism, if not outright atheism. However reluctant Kant was to allow himself to be drawn into the polemical battles, he could not fail to be aware that this issue was at the front of his readers' minds.

In the discussion of freedom in the *Critique of Practical Reason* there is no sign that Kant is trying to defend belief in human freedom by insu-

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lating the (indispensable) perspective of human agency from the potentially corrosive force of the perspective of natural causation—quite the contrary. Kant makes it clear that human beings' belief in their own freedom is not self-validating: the "consciousness of [the agent's] own spontaneity" might turn out to be "mere delusion".

> A human being would be a marionette or an automaton, like Vaucanson's, built and wound up by the supreme artist; self-consciousness would indeed make him a thinking automaton, but the consciousness of his own spontaneity, if taken for freedom, would be mere delusion inasmuch as it deserves to be called freedom only comparatively, because the proximate determining causes of its motion and a long series of their determining causes are indeed internal but the last and highest is found entirely in an alien hand. Therefore I do not see how those who insist on regarding time and space as determinations belonging to the existence of things in themselves would avoid fatalism of actions.[9]

The "comparative" conception of freedom that Kant is considering and explicitly rejecting in this discussion is something very much like what is now called "compatibilism". On this view, I am free if something lies "within my power"—that is, my action is free if it is caused by me rather than by something external to me, just as a clock might be said to move its hands "freely" if there is nothing impeding them, even though, of course, the clock's movement is the entirely predictable, necessarily determined, effect of a set of mechanical causes. Thus:

> The actions of the human being, although they are necessary by their determining grounds which preceded them in time, are yet called free because the actions are caused from within, by representations produced by our own powers, whereby desires are evoked on occasion of circumstances and hence actions are produced at our own discretion.[10]

This is, however, Kant says, a "wretched subterfuge", by whose means some philosophers "think they have solved, with a little quibbling about words, that difficult problem on the solution of which millennia have worked in vain".[11]

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It makes no difference, Kant continues, whether the causality in question is within the subject or outside him, mechanical or psychological, intuitive or rational. If "these determining representations have the ground of their existence in time and indeed in the antecedent state", then, when the subject is to act, the necessitating conditions are in past time and thus "no longer in his control". This may bring about "psychological freedom (if one wants to use this term for a merely internal chain of representations in the soul)",[12] Kant says, but such psychological freedom remains, nevertheless, in fact, "natural necessity". Those who adhere to a conception of psychological freedom "therefore leave no *transcendental freedom,* which must be thought as independence from everything empirical and so from nature generally, whether it is regarded as an object of inner sense in time only or also of outer sense in both space and time".[13]

Transcendental freedom is what matters. If the freedom of our will were "psychological and comparative but not also transcendental, i.e. absolute", then "it would at bottom be nothing better than the freedom of a turnspit, which when it is once wound up, also accomplishes its movements of itself."[14]

Plainly then, in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* at least, Kant places far stronger requirements on a conception of freedom than the interpretation suggested initially. We cannot avoid dealing with ontological claims (whether "extravagant" or not) just by focusing on the necessity of believing that we are, practically, free. The passages discussed establish that:

(1) Kant is exercised by "fatalism" with regard to actions and believes that it must be opposed philosophically, and that this requires our acceptance of the central doctrine of transcendental idealism: the distinction between appearances and things in themselves.
(2) Freedom must not just be "psychological" (restricted to the internal perspective of the agent) or "comparative" (defined in terms of the contrast between causes that are internal to an organism and those that are external). It must be "transcendental i.e. absolute".[15]
(3) There is no way to insulate the claim that we are free from the threat posed by natural necessity by restricting ourselves

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> to the way that subjects necessarily see themselves—the agent's "consciousness of his own spontaneity" may turn out to be "mere delusion".[16]

Thus there are, to my mind, four possibilities:

(1) The texts that I have just cited are misleading or the interpretation that I have given of them is wrong.
(2) Kant changed his mind drastically about the nature of freedom in the two years between the publication of the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*.
(3) Kant's views on freedom were grossly inconsistent.

Or:

(4) We should go back and look again at the passages from the *Groundwork* quoted earlier.

Everything points in the latter direction.

Practical and Theoretical Freedom

The first thing to note is that the passage in the *Groundwork* in which Kant asserts that a "being that cannot act other than under the idea of freedom is just because of that really free" goes on to say that that being is really free "*in a practical respect,* that is, all laws that are inseparably bound up with freedom hold for him just as if his will had validly been pronounced free also in itself and in theoretical philosophy."[17] But saying that acting under the idea of freedom is to be free "in a practical respect" is not the same as saying that to act under the idea of freedom is to be truly free.

As I read him, Kant is not saying that we do not have to concern ourselves with questions of noumenal freedom and fatalism or asserting that the practical standpoint of moral agency gives us all that we could require from a concept of freedom. All that he is saying is that thinking that you are free is sufficient for you to be bound by the laws "inseparably bound up" with freedom. There still remains the further question: whether you are, in fact, to be "validly . . . pronounced free" by theoretical philosophy.

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Indeed, Kant adds a footnote to the sentence just quoted that runs as follows:

> I follow this route—that of assuming freedom sufficiently for our purpose only as laid down by rational beings merely *in idea* as a ground for their actions—so that I need not be bound to prove freedom in its theoretical respect as well. For even if the latter is left unsettled, still the same laws hold for a being that cannot act otherwise than under the idea of its own freedom as would bind a being that was actually free. Thus we can escape here from the burden that weighs upon theory.[18]

Note that Kant says that the question of freedom in its theoretical respect is "left unsettled"—not that it is made redundant by the fact that acting under the idea of freedom is inescapable for us. The important word is "here"—"we can escape *here* from the burden that weighs upon theory." There is no reason to think that we do not have to take up that burden elsewhere. The best way to read this text is as saying that acting under the idea of freedom is sufficient to establish freedom *practically*—that is, to meet the relatively restricted purposes of the *Groundwork*—not as claiming that it resolves (or dissolves) the problem of freedom more generally. The fact that I necessarily act under the idea of freedom does not settle that further problem or make it superfluous.

Later, in the third section of the *Groundwork,* Kant presents the apparent conflict between freedom and necessity as a choice between two routes. There is, on the one hand, he says, the "more travelled" road of natural necessity. Natural necessity is "confirmed by experience and must itself unavoidably be presupposed if experience, that is coherent cognition of objects of the senses in accordance with universal law, is to be possible."[19] On the other hand, it is necessary for us to take the "footpath of freedom" in order to make use of reason in our conduct. Each standpoint is independently forceful. But we cannot confine ourselves to the standpoint of freedom, excluding the standpoint of necessity, or simply move between the two as the occasion requires. On the contrary, Kant asserts, "this seeming contradiction must be removed in a convincing way, even though we shall never be able to comprehend how freedom is possible."

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Unless we find a way to do so, Kant says, freedom will have to be given up, however much we are drawn to it on practical grounds. "For if even the thought of freedom contradicts itself or contradicts nature, which is equally necessary, it would have to be given up altogether in favour of natural necessity."[20] It is not up to the philosopher:

> . . . whether he wants to remove the seeming conflict or leave it untouched; for in the latter case the theory would be *bonum vacans* [unoccupied goods] into possession of which the fatalist could justifiably enter and chase all morals from its supposed property, as occupying it without title.[21]

For this reason, Kant goes on, resolving this conflict is "an indispensable task of speculative [note the word!] philosophy" (Ak. 4:456). This "speculative" task is essential. Although it is not being carried out in the *Groundwork,* it is far from being made redundant by adopting the standpoint of practical freedom. But if the speculative task of defending freedom is necessary (in Kant's view), is it possible? After all, he writes that "we shall never be able to comprehend how freedom is possible" (Ak. 4:456) and that reason would "overstep all its bounds" if it were to try to "explain how freedom is possible" (Ak. 4:459).

Yet it would be a misinterpretation to infer that Kant is telling us here that philosophy can contribute nothing to resolving the problem of the apparent conflict between natural necessity and freedom. Yes, the possibility of freedom cannot be *explained,* but explanation (as Kant immediately goes on to say) involves reducing "to laws" what can be "given in some possible experience". On this narrowly defined conception of "explanation", explanation actually plays very little role at all in philosophy. Only science is able to reduce things to laws that can be given in some possible experience. "[Where] determination by laws of nature ceases, there all *explanation* ceases as well, and nothing is left but defence."[22] Nevertheless, "defence" is indeed the proper business of philosophy. In short, on my interpretation, even the *Groundwork* itself shows clearly that Kant believes that a theoretical *defence* of freedom is both necessary ("an indispensable task of speculative philosophy"[23]) and possible, although such a defence is not undertaken in that book. It is to the structure of that defence that I now turn.

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Transcendental Idealism

Kant, it will be recalled, maintains that the solution he offers in response to fatalism and Spinozism depends on transcendental idealism—the claim that our knowledge of the physical world is knowledge of appearances rather than of things in themselves and, associated with that, the denial that space and time are things in themselves. Let us use this idea as our guide.

Transcendental idealism does not deny the existence of a determinate and complete causal order. On the contrary, it is, Kant asserts, "confirmed by experience and must itself unavoidably be presupposed if experience, that is coherent cognition of objects of the senses in accordance with universal law, is to be possible" (Ak. 4:455). What transcendental idealism does, however, is to put explanations based on natural necessity into a wider context. When we ask why nature is subject to the particular laws that it is, part of the transcendental idealist answer is that, were nature *not* systematic and law-like we would not be able to have the coherent and self-conscious experience that we do—to sum up in a brief phrase, the content of that central part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* contained in the "Transcendental Deduction", "Second Analogy" and (in the second edition) "The Refutation of Idealism".

But, if we persist and ask: why does nature have *just these* laws (when another possible set would also meet the requirement of giving us the conditions for coherent and self-conscious experience)?, then the transcendental idealist's answer, in referring to things in themselves, points to the limits of human explanation. To say that things are given to us in virtue of the way that they are in themselves is, in a certain way, a non-answer. Why did the butter melt?, we may ask. Because it was warmed, we may answer. Why does butter melt when it is warmed? Of course, chemistry and physics will explain this, but, ultimately, when we ask why just those laws hold, we will get back to a bedrock explanation to which the only response is: that is the way that things are in our world. At this point we are, in effect, gesturing. Things in themselves are standing for a kind of bedrock of givenness that explains why, however much we must attribute an active role to the human mind in constituting reality as we experience it, the way that the world is is not, finally, just up to us.

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Consider now a similar question in the realm of human action. Why did the knave of hearts steal the tarts? Because the knave of hearts is a thief, we might answer. Which is to say: the character of the knave of hearts is such that, when subjected to a conflict between self-interest and the rights of property in a particular set of circumstances, the knave of hearts will not respect the rights of property. The knave of hearts' actions are explained by his character just as the melting of the butter is explained by the laws of physics, and, for the transcendental idealist, each of these is explained in turn by saying that they result from the way that things are in themselves. But there is a difference, of course. We don't hold physical things to be *responsible* for what inevitably follows from the laws governing them. If a slate falls off a roof and hits a professor of philosophy on the head, we don't *blame* the slate. But we do, it seems, blame the knave of hearts for what he does in accordance with the laws of his character. Isn't this just as ridiculous as blaming the slate?

Ah!, says the transcendental idealist, but that is where things are different. For transcendental idealism denies that space and time are things in themselves. So, while the knave of hearts' actions are fully determined by his character and the circumstances in which he finds himself in empirical reality, we should view that character as something that emerges from the knave of hearts' timeless, noumenal self and it is this that we make the object of judgements of responsibility. Those who take seriously Kant's attempts to connect freedom of the will with the distinction between appearances and things in themselves characteristically interpret him in this way.

Schopenhauer, for example, explains it as follows:

> With his unalterable inborn character that is strictly determined in all its manifestations by the law of causality, here called motivation as acting through the medium of the intellect, the individual is only the *phenomenon.* The *thing-in-itself* underlying the phenomenon is outside space and time and free from all succession and plurality of acts; it is one and unchangeable. Its constitution *in itself* is the *intelligible character,* which is equally present in all the actions of the individual and is stamped on every one of them, like the signet on a thousand seals.[24]

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Freedom, says Schopenhauer, is not a matter of what someone *does*—that is determined inevitably by his character—but by what he *is:*

> In his *esse* (what he is), however, the freedom lies. He could have *been* a different man, and guilt or merit lies in what he is.[25]

But, Schopenhauer's endorsement notwithstanding, this resolution does not look to be very appealing. We seem to be back to two standpoints. From the practical standpoint, we are tied to the perspective of moral agency by which (to cut a long story short) the knave of hearts must see himself as subject to moral laws that are binding on him and to which he *can,* practically, respond. He must believe, therefore, that he had a real choice at this particular point in time about stealing the tarts. From the theoretical standpoint, however, we have to admit that, as a matter of psychological fact, the knave of hearts could not but have stolen the tarts, given the character that he has. So that practical belief is mistaken and there is really no effective difference between the knave and the slate.

The knave of hearts is, nevertheless, blameworthy, according to Schopenhauer, because, in some timeless way, he chose to have his character. He quotes a passage from Porphyry, interpreting Plato, and calls it "an allegory of the great and profound knowledge advanced by Kant in its abstract purity as the doctrine of the intelligible and empirical characters":

> For all that Plato means seems to be as follows. Souls, before they enter bodies and the different forms of life, have freedom of will to choose one form of life or another, which they then carry into effect through a suitable life and through a body appropriate to the soul. (For he says that it is open to the soul to choose the life of a lion or that of a human being.) That freedom of will, however, is abolished as soon as the soul has slipped into any one of such life forms. For after the souls have passed into bodies, and from free souls have become living beings, they have only that freedom peculiar to the nature of the living being in question. Thus they are often very intelligent and full of movement, as in a human being; or, on the other hand, have little movement and are simple, as in the case of almost all other living beings. But this kind of freedom depends on the nature and disposition in each case, since, though it certainly becomes

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> evident through itself, it is guided according to the disposition that springs from the organism.[26]

Schopenhauer, with his leanings towards oriental and Platonic ideas of metempsychosis, might find intelligible (and even attractive) the idea that we timelessly choose our characters although, in the empirical world, they are fixed once and for all, but, if that is the best that transcendental idealism can do in response to fatalism, then it is not, I think, surprising that modern Kantians like Korsgaard and Wood want nothing to do with it.

Yet I have what I think is a better reconstruction of Kant's theory to propose. To present it, let me turn to what Kant has to say about freedom in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* In the Third Antinomy, he considers the example of someone who tells a lie. When we explain why someone did what they did we proceed in the first instance like empirical scientists:

> . . . we trace the empirical character of the action to its sources, finding these in defective education, bad company, in part also in the viciousness of a natural disposition insensitive to shame, in levity and thoughtlessness, not neglecting to take into account the occasional causes that may have intervened.[27]

Yet, oddly enough, *unlike* the natural scientist, we do not, Kant believes, say that the event *had to* happen. We make the agent responsible and:

> Our blame is based on a law of reason whereby we regard reason as a cause that irrespective of all the above-mentioned empirical conditions could have determined and ought to have determined, the agent to act otherwise.[28]

Note that Kant is not saying here just that the agent *cannot help but think* that she could have acted otherwise, nor that she could have had a different empirical character. The explanation points to a "law of reason" by which reason, acting as a cause, could actually have caused things to be otherwise than they were in fact. How could this be so? It is not that the initial explanation given of the action is in some way incomplete. Kant clearly excludes that possibility. He writes at A550, B578 that "if we could exhaustively investigate all the appearances of men's wills, there would not be found a single human action which we could not predict with certainty and recognize as proceeding necessarily from its antecedent conditions."

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So we are forced to the possibility that, although explanation is *complete,* the conditions do not necessitate the event in question in such a way that they exclude the possibility that it could have been otherwise. This is easy enough to say, but what might it mean?

A first step is to understand that, from the transcendental idealist point of view, what allows us to see all actions as determined is not some mechanism underlying the will. The general explanations that we give of actions are not more "real" and "fixed" than the particular actions which we perform themselves. Rather, they form an explanation framework surrounding the actions. They are necessary, not because they are to be regarded as antecedently determinate but because we have philosophical reasons to believe that such conditions *must* be discoverable.

Here the important parallel between transcendental idealism about the causal relations of physical objects and transcendental idealism about actions becomes apparent. Transcendental idealism about the causal relations of objects argues that, in order for an event to be perceptible as an *event* at all, it must be possible to fit it into a systematic context of antecedent determination according to rules—to put it bluntly, it must have a cause. What transcendental idealism does in this case is to vindicate a *realistic* attitude which we naturally take with regard to causal processes: we naturally think that for everything that we see happen there was some mechanism because of which it *had* to happen.

But transcendental idealism does not tell us this. What it in fact says is that, unless we could fit appearances into a systematic context of explanation, we would not be able to determine our perceptions as perceptions of events at all. And this, it is clear, amounts to something less than the idea that whatever happens happens because there is a mechanism necessitating that it should do so. Nevertheless, the two ideas give us an equivalent account of natural necessity in practice. They both support the claim that every event follows necessarily from another according to a rule—that is, it has a cause.

The difference between transcendental idealism and the belief that everything is determined by mechanism becomes crucial, however, when it is a matter not of the causal relations of objects but of the systematic determination of actions. For in this latter case it is important to be able to leave room for the idea that the action *could* have happened otherwise. Transcendental idealism does not carry with it the idea that whatever hap-

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pens is compelled to happen by some fixed and inexorable necessity; it only amounts to the idea that whatever happens must be seen as happening in a context of systematic laws. In the case of physical events, we can be sure of the existence of systematic connections between them despite the fact that we are unable to observe whatever mechanisms there might be that sustain them, because otherwise we would lack a guarantee that the requirements of continuous self-consciousness would be met. In the case of agency, we can be sure of the existence of systematic connections that enable us to explain them even if we have independent reasons to reject the existence of a compulsive mechanism behind them at all.

This is, as I said, a first step towards a sympathetic reconstruction of Kant's position, but only a first step. For it is all very well, one might say, to claim to defend the freedom of the will by saying that the existence of systematic structures of conditions that we can use to explain human actions does not mean that there is a *mechanism* connecting those conditions with what they explain. But if, despite that, it is possible to predict in advance from a set of antecedent conditions what will happen, surely this is just as destructive of the common belief in freedom as if there had been a mechanism and we are forced back, at best, into Schopenhauer's interpretation: our actions are determined by our characters, but our characters are somehow, timelessly and transcendentally chosen.

But who says that our characters have to be seen as antecedently fixed? All that the transcendental idealist is committed to is that whatever happens must be explicable in the context of an explanation-framework. Yet that is quite compatible with the idea that, in advance of the performance of some particular action, what that framework is is actually *open.* Consider some agent at a moral "crossroads"—the knave of hearts in front of the tart tray. All his actions up to now will fit into an explanation-framework; they will be consistent with his character. But what *is* that character?

In fact, the psychological explanation which corresponds to his actions until now (which gives the right derivations of what he has done) will not be unique. In particular, there will be *both* explanations (descriptions of the knave of hearts' character) which will predict that he will take the tarts and explanations which will predict that he will not. Say that he takes the tarts. Then we will, perhaps, see the knave of hearts as a villain (well, that is strong language for someone who has only stolen some tarts—let's say a rogue) who is continuing on down the path to moral ruin. But if he doesn't,

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then perhaps he will be understood as someone who is capable of reforming himself. One of the sets of explanations that we have for his actions will be confirmed, another refuted.

In explaining actions we have then something like the underdetermination of theory by data. It is the action that we perform in fact which enables the observer to settle which of two rather similar sets of covering laws were applicable. And this openness continues. Exactly the same issue applies at the knave of hearts' next point of decision, and so on. Now the fatalist can always say that this is just an epistemic matter. The knave of hearts' character is fixed, and all that we are doing is using the evidence of his actions to *discover* what that character as a matter of fact always was. But we do not have to take matters that way, and, in fact, it is the open texture of explanation that makes freedom and the necessary existence of an explanatory framework compatible with one another.

Initiating a Series of Appearances

This interpretation gets its force from an apparently mysterious claim that is argued for in Kant's Third Antinomy: the idea that we may regard actions as *initiating* series of appearances. Having argued that we must at least entertain the idea of an origin of the world, this allows us to infer, or so Kant claims in the Observation on the Thesis of the Third Antinomy, that particular spontaneous origins in the course of the world's process are also possible:

> But since the power of spontaneously beginning a series in time is thereby proved (though not understood), it is now also permissible for us to admit within the course of the world different series as capable in their causality of beginning of themselves, and so to attribute to their substances a power of acting from freedom. And we must not allow ourselves to be prevented from drawing this conclusion by a misapprehension, namely, that, as a series occurring in the world can only have a relatively first beginning, being always preceded in the world by some other state of things, no absolute first beginning of a series is possible during the course of the world. For the absolutely first beginning of which we are here speaking is not a beginning in time but in causality. If, for instance, I at this moment arise from my chair, in complete freedom, without being necessarily

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> determined thereto by the influence of natural causes, a new series, with all its natural consequences *in infinitum,* has its absolute beginning in this event, although as regards time this event is only the continuation of a preceding series. For this resolution and act of mine do not form part of the succession of purely natural effects, and are not a mere continuation of them. In respect of its happening, natural causes exercise over it no determining influence whatsoever. It does indeed follow upon them, but without arising out of them; and accordingly, in respect of causality though not of time, must be entitled the absolutely first beginning of a series of appearances.[29]

If we think of the knave of hearts, his decision to take the tarts creates a series that, we might say, "follows upon" the antecedent course of his life without "arising out of" it; for, if he had not taken them, that series too would have followed upon antecedent events. Hence we can say with Kant that natural causes exercise over the event "no determining influence whatsoever". So, *pace* Schopenhauer, our actions, which follow from our characters, are not fixed in advance because those characters are not fixed once and for all.

In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (although, admittedly, only in footnotes) Kant makes a contrast between "determinism" (the thesis that everything is explicable through sufficient reasons) and "pre-determinism" (the idea that the relevant "determining grounds" precede the event in time).[30] In the same work, Kant gives a revealing discussion of the nature of character and the fact that, he believes, we must see it as being capable of change. According to Kant, when we act we face a series of sensuous impulses (the "inclinations") that present themselves to us as possible motivations for action. Behind our inclinations, however, there are the principles on which we choose to act—what Kant calls our "maxims". These, he believes, are always a matter for which we can be held morally responsible.

Typically, those of us who have a "bad" character will manifest this in two ways. We will have undesirable inclinations but we will also act on bad principles. How then can a bad person become good? "Yet duty commands that he be good, and duty commands nothing but what we can do."[31] What is required is a "revolution" in our characters. "If by a single and unalterable decision a human being reverses the supreme ground of his maxims by which he was an evil human being (and thereby 'puts on the new man'), he is to this extent, by principle and attitude of mind,

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a subject receptive to the good."[32] We cannot observe this, but God can. "For him who penetrates to the intelligible ground of the heart (the ground of all the maxims of the power of choice [*Willkür*]), . . . i.e. for God, this is the same as actually being a good human being (pleasing to him); and to this extent the change can be considered a revolution."[33]

In short, radical changes of character are possible in the course of an individual human life, even though we, as empirical observers, may not find them easy to identify. Still, they are available to the observer who *really* matters for Kant—who is, of course, as this book is arguing, God. We have, then, a picture of human agency by which human beings take real choices—not just ones that they have to think of as real from the limited, human point of view. This picture has been *defended*—shown to be consistent with natural necessity when the latter is understood in the framework of transcendental idealism—but not *proved.* As far as what we observe goes, there is nothing that could not be accommodated from a psychological fatalist perspective—although we cannot but *think* that we have real choices, it may be, for all that we can observe, that our actions are the necessary results of our fixed characters.

The interpretation of Kant's defence of free will presented in this chapter stands in opposition to a very great deal of established scholarship on Kant—perhaps, indeed, to all of it. It maintains that (*pace* Scruton) a philosophical defence of free will is possible; that (*pace* Korsgaard) Kant believes that more is required for such a defence than just adopting the standpoint of morality; that (*pace* Wood) a defence of free will that connects it with transcendental idealism is not inconsistent with the fundamental motivation of the Kantian project (actually, quite the contrary); that (*pace* Schopenhauer) it does not lead to a kind of noumenal fatalism that cannot accommodate the sense that human beings are making decisions that are truly open at the time they decide; and, finally (*pace* Broad) that it is a subtle and ingenious, if in many respects counter-intuitive and hard to grasp, piece of philosophy—far from one on which it is "needless to waste much time".[34]

This defence is an essential part of the Kantian account of freedom, for without it we should only have the "freedom of the turnspit". But it is only a part. To be fully free, we must be *autonomous,* and it is to this that we shall turn in Chapter 4. It is Kant's idea of freedom as autonomy that resonates so powerfully through the work of his German Idealist successors.

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Chapter 4

Freedom without Arbitrariness

that strictly (and how) scientific
land of supernod
where freedom is compulsory
and only man is god.

—E. E. CUMMINGS

Positive Freedom

A just God will not punish individuals for actions that only seem to be free because of the limitations of the human perspective: since human suffering is real, choice must be too. The last chapter explained how Kant mobilizes the central doctrines of transcendental idealism to argue that freedom sufficient for human beings to be held accountable for their actions is possible. But is that all that we should properly understand by human freedom?

The Third Section of the *Groundwork* starts as follows:

> Will is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and *freedom* would be that property of such causality that it can be efficient independent of alien causes *determining* it, just as *natural necessity* is the property of the causality of all nonrational beings to be determined to activity by alien causes.

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> The preceding definition of freedom is *negative* and therefore unfruitful for insight into its essence; but there flows from it a *positive* concept of freedom, which is so much the richer and more fruitful.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to present this "richer and more fruitful", positive conception of freedom.

The passage just quoted then continues:

> Natural necessity was a heteronomy of efficient causes, since every effect was possible only in accordance with the law that something else determines the efficient cause to causality: what, then, can freedom of the will be other than autonomy, that is, the will's property of being a law to itself?[2]

This conception of freedom as autonomy is perhaps the most vital thread of continuity between Kant and his German Idealist successors. It is also the key to Kant's understanding of divine freedom. God is connected with human beings (and all other rational beings, of whom Kant apparently thought that there were a large number) by the knowledge they have of the laws he prescribes to them. Yet the moral law is not to be thought of as the outcome of an act of choice on God's part. As Kant writes in *The Metaphysics of Morals:*

> A law that binds us a priori and unconditionally by our own reason can also be expressed as proceeding from the will of a supreme lawgiver, that is, one who has only rights and no duties (hence from the divine will); but this signifies only the Idea of a moral being whose will is a law for everyone, without his being thought as the author [*Urheber*] of the law.[3]

If the moral law can be thought of as independent of the divine will in this way, however, does that not limit God's freedom? Kant's response is that, once divine freedom is understood from the perspective of autonomy, the answer is "no".

Of the importance of the concept of freedom for the later German Idealists there can be no doubt. Statements to that effect are abundant. Fichte describes his philosophy as one long investigation into the concept of freedom;[4] Schelling writes that the concept of freedom is "the Alpha and

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Omega of philosophy";[5] the author of the *Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism* (who may possibly have been Schelling, Hegel or Hölderlin—all that is indisputable is that the text exists in Hegel's handwriting) writes that "The first Idea is of course the representation of my self as an absolutely free being";[6] while, according to the mature Hegel, "Philosophy teaches that all the qualities of *Geist* exist only through freedom; that all are but means for attaining freedom; that all seek and produce this and this alone."[7]

Autonomy and Arbitrariness

Famously, the idea that freedom consists in being subject to a self-given law had already been expressed by Rousseau in the *Social Contract.* Rousseau writes there:

> the impulse of appetite alone is slavery, and obedience to a law that one has prescribed to oneself is freedom.[8]

But how can the idea that the freedom of the self involves giving a law to oneself escape the *paradox of autonomy*?[9] Surely a self that has the power to make law also has the power to release itself from that law. In order for a law that it made to be binding on it, the self would have to abandon part of its sovereignty in the act of law-making—tie itself to the mast, as it were. Perhaps we *were* at one time free to adopt the law or not, but, once we have committed ourselves to the law, then we are no longer free. How can such a law be said to be precisely a fulfilment of freedom?

Autonomy can be thought of as having two parts: *autos* and *nomos,* self and law. Any conception of freedom as autonomy must explain how these two ingredients, *autos* and *nomos,* come together. The difficulty I have just presented lies on the side of the *nomos.* It is the difficulty of conceiving how a sovereign self could create binding law for itself by its own act of choice or commitment. Now, as we have seen, Kant is firmly committed to the Platonic side of the Euthyphro dilemma. So the thought of us "choosing" to be bound by a moral law by an act of will is beside the point: morality, in Kant's view, is not something chosen—by us or even by God. Yet in that case the problem with "autonomy" switches flanks. Instead of

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being a problem about the *nomos* (how we can create a law that is binding on ourselves) it becomes a problem about the *autos.* How can a law that is binding be thought of at the same time as an expression of the freedom of the *self*?

The central claim of this chapter is that what motivates the connection between freedom and law in the Idealist conception of freedom as *autonomy* is the idea that freedom must be opposed to *arbitrariness.*

The English word "arbitrary" comes, of course, from the Latin *arbitrium,* one of the two Latin words for "will" (the other is *voluntas*). To say that something was "arbitrary" meant at one time only that it was at the will of an individual (thus an arbitrator is an individual whose will is dispositive in a dispute). But there is another, more modern, sense, which emerged some time between the mid-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It seems to have been then that the idea of something being arbitrary (in the sense of something at the choice of an individual) came to mean in English that it was also something capricious or random. (Perhaps modern ideas of necessity and probability were required for the emergence of this modern idea of "arbitrariness".) On this modern understanding, it makes sense to say that a choice was voluntary but nevertheless arbitrary.

To see the problem posed by the idea of arbitrariness, let us look at a simple argument that is often raised in relation to libertarianism (there is a version, for example, in A. J. Ayer's well-known essay "Freedom and Necessity").[10] This is the argument that:

(1) if actions are free in the way that libertarians suppose, then they are undetermined,
(2) but, if they are undetermined, then they are arbitrary,
(3) hence they are random and unintelligible.

This argument is supposed to show that, even if libertarianism is true, it fails to provide us with, as Daniel Dennett puts it, a form of free will worth wanting.[11] It is my claim that it is precisely because the German Idealists feel the force of this argument that their concept of freedom takes the form it does: freedom, for the Idealists, must be freedom without arbitrariness. Indeed we can go further. Not only do the German Idealists believe that the objection to arbitrariness rules out certain familiar conceptions of free will, but they see that similar considerations can be brought to bear against determinism.

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This may seem surprising, but consider the following argument:

(1) What if determinism is true? In that case, all our actions as human beings are determined by the conjunction of a set of laws and by the initial conditions under which those laws first applied.
(2) But those laws just happen to be the particular ones that they are; those initial conditions just happened to be the ones that they were at the outset of the causal story.
(3) So, although the explanation of actions lies almost inconceivably further back in time, the situation of the agent in a deterministic universe is the same as in the case of the objectionable forms of libertarianism: the explanation of actions lies in something that is ultimately arbitrary.

The need to provide a conception of action that escapes arbitrariness thus motivates the Idealist conception of freedom at the level of the individual in two ways: it requires both the rejection of determinism and of certain sorts of libertarianism.

A Two-Stage Account of Freedom

In the discussion at the beginning of Section Three of the *Groundwork* already quoted from, Kant gives an argument for the connection between freedom and the concept of law:

> Since the concept of causality brings with it that of laws in accordance with which, by something we call a cause, something else, namely an effect, must be posited, so freedom, although it is not a property of the will in accordance with natural laws, is not for that reason lawless but must instead be causality in accordance with immutable laws but of a special kind; for otherwise a free will would be an absurdity [*ein Unding*].[12]

The connection comes, Kant is here claiming, through the concept of causality: free agency must be causally effective; causally effective agency requires laws; these laws must be "immutable . . . but of a special kind". Yet this argument does not seem to work. The knave of hearts exercises

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causality when he opts for one or the other of the available principles for his action, and his action is therefore not lawless (it fits into a comprehensive explanation-framework). But that does not mean that the knave of hearts' *choice itself* is subject to laws. We should say rather that the knave of hearts, in choosing to act, determines, in an act of spontaneity, which laws apply to him.

Indeed, as has been noticed from the time of the publication of the *Groundwork,* the conception of freedom as self-determination leads, potentially, to a serious problem for Kant. If only those principles are, as Kant asserts, free that follow the "special", "immutable" laws of freedom, what about where the knave of hearts strays from the moral path and does not choose according to such laws? Does that mean that he failed to choose freely at all? If freedom consists in acting in conformity with the dictates of reason, then it is hard to see how a Kantian can accommodate the idea that we are responsible for our bad deeds. For if responsibility requires freedom, and if freedom consists in rational action, and if rational action requires adherence to the moral law, then actions which deviate from the moral law are not free and, hence, we are not responsible for them.

Kant's solution to this problem, which he presents particularly clearly in two later works, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793) and *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), involves a distinction between two levels of willing: the *Willkür* and the *Wille.*[13] The translation of these terms into English is difficult, since both seem best rendered by "will". While the sense of *willkürlich* is equivalent to the English "arbitrary", in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at least, the nominal form, *Willkür,* carried the sense of the power of choice but left it open whether that power of choice is arbitrary or not.

Kant certainly did not make the distinction between the two clearly enough in his early writings on freedom and morality. In those writings, as Lewis White Beck points out, although Kant never says *Willkür* when he means *Wille,* he often says *Wille* when he means *Willkür.*[14] So it is understandable that the distinction has often been overlooked, particularly by Anglo-American readers of Kant and those who focus too narrowly on the *Groundwork.* However, once grasped, it is clear. The *Willkür* is the power of choice, the *Wille* what it is that gives the power of choice its principle. As Kant says in the *Metaphysics of Morals:* "From *Wille* there arise laws; from *Willkür* maxims."[15]

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The distinction between *Willkür* and *Wille* is so important because it shows that Kant has a two-stage theory of freedom. On the one hand, human beings are free—sufficiently free to be held responsible for their actions—so long as they exercise *Willkür,* the power of choice, without causal constraint. But we are only fully free—"spontaneous"—if our power of choice is determined by a principle that is itself the product of the *Wille,* a law of reason, namely, the categorical imperative:

> Freedom of *Willkür* is this independence from being *determined* by sensuous impulses; this is the negative concept of freedom. The positive concept of freedom is that of the ability of pure reason to be itself practical. But this is not possible except by the subjection of the maxim of every action to the condition of its qualifying as universal law.[16]

Negative freedom—freedom at the level of the *Willkür* alone—is sufficient for responsibility, Kant argues. For such freedom it must be true that the *Willkür* is capable of determining us to action without itself being determined by causal conditions—a set of laws and initial conditions that are, so far as we are concerned, arbitrary. But even if our *Willkür* is free in that negative way, that is not sufficient for us to be fully free. Unless the *Willkür* is determined by a principle that is intrinsically rational, whatever motive happens to determine the will—even if it is uncaused—will again be arbitrary. Responsibility embodies one part of the concept of freedom, we might say—the idea that to be free we must be capable (other things being equal and in the right circumstances) of doing otherwise—but lacks the other part: that what we do is not arbitrary.

But is Kant's two-stage theory coherent? Recall that Kant makes two claims. First, that, to the extent that an agent acts under the influence of something that is arbitrary, he or she is not free. Second, that an agent whose *Willkür* is free is, for that reason, sufficiently free to be held to be responsible for his or her actions. But, on reflection, it becomes apparent that these two claims are in conflict with one another. If the first claim really holds—and, as we have seen, it is fundamental to Kant's position—then surely it undermines the force of the claim that actions performed according to the *Willkür* are sufficiently free to justify holding the agent responsible for them.

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The argument against causal determinism was that actions which merely emerged from the disposition of the universe—its laws and its initial conditions—were not free because such actions were rooted in contingency. But the *Willkür* is also (when it follows its inclinations, not the moral law) rooted in contingency. So why should the actions of the *Willkür* be counted as free—free, of course, not in the full, positive sense but nevertheless free enough to allow judgements of responsibility—when causally determined actions are not?

If we leave Kant behind for a moment, it seems as though an obvious answer presents itself. Actions performed on inclination—even if they are not good actions—are, provided that they are not the outcome of a prior causal process, nevertheless *mine.* Since they are part of me then, however contingent they may be, I should take responsibility for them in a way that I should not be expected to take responsibility for what are merely the consequences of inevitable causal processes outside me. But the logic of the Kantian approach removes the possibility of just this argument. It is true, of course, that the inclinations on which I act form part of my procedure of practical reasoning, that the actions which they led to are performed by my body. But are they, for that reason, in a full and emphatic sense *mine*? From the point of view of true freedom, they are simply contingent features of reality: it is as contingent in relation to my agency that I should have an overwhelming desire to steal tarts, as it is that I have a passion for skiing, like to eat lobster, was born male or that I am 178 cms tall. These are all, in one sense, features of me, but, from the Kantian point of view, are they truly part of my self?

The Kantian answer—or so it seems—is that they are simply features of the environment within which willing takes place—some of the many facts which I must take into account as I decide how to act. But, in that case, what is part of my self—except my pure moral agency? The agent has apparently disappeared, or shrunk into a mere nodal point with no individual characteristics whatsoever. If Kant has given us an account of freedom, it is not clear that it is an account of the freedom of the concrete human individual. Because freedom is opposed to arbitrariness, all of the individual human being's contingent characteristics lie outside that transcendental kernel in which his or her freedom consists. This is the deep, deep dilemma at the heart of the Kantian conception of freedom: freedom must be under law if it is to be intelligible; but if so is it still *me*?

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Divine Freedom

The problem of conceiving freedom without falling into arbitrariness reappears when we consider the freedom of an agent with no contingent characteristics at all: God, the Creator of the Universe.

If God is really God, then he is omnipotent, not subject to some higher power. Yet, if the character of what God creates is free in the sense that it is constrained only by his arbitrary fiat, then an important link between man and God is broken. There is no possibility of insight into the goodness of God's creation by mere human reason, for what makes this particular creation good is not something which reason can discover. The goodness of creation is secondary to its emergence from the divine will. It is this that leads Kant to choose the Platonic side of the Euthyphro dilemma: reason must be capable of connecting us to God's goodness. But, although such a creator would act in a way that was not arbitrary, would he still be free in the common sense that he would be capable of doing otherwise? This, apparently, is the dilemma posed by the idealist conception of freedom in relation to God. So Kant's conception of freedom must resolve problems on two levels: in showing how human beings can act freely without acting arbitrarily, it must defend the idea that our actions are both free and intelligible; by showing how God creates freely yet not arbitrarily, it must defend the Socratic idea that the goodness of the divine creation is accessible to human understanding.

Kant is so confident of his solution to the question of divine freedom that he does not, or so he says, consider the problem to be a serious one at all:

> To reconcile the concept of freedom with the idea of God as a *necessary* being raises no difficulty at all: for freedom consists not in the contingency of the act (that it is determined by no grounds whatever) i.e. not in indeterminism (that God must be equally capable of doing good or evil if his actions are to be called free) but rather in absolute spontaneity. Such spontaneity is endangered only by predeterminism, where the determining ground of the act is *in antecedent time,* with the result that, the act being no longer in *my* power but in the hands of nature, I am irresistibly determined; but since in God no temporal sequence is thinkable, this difficulty vanishes.[17]

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At first sight, the argument that Kant presents in this passage appears to be a poor one, however. Spontaneity, he claims, is endangered only "where the determining ground of the act is in antecedent time". This seems to be the exact opposite of what most of us would naturally think about freedom.

Consider a prisoner in her cell. What matters to her is not that she was previously locked into that cell, but that she cannot now leave it as she wishes to. In other words, the temporally antecedent event (the locking of the door) explains why the state that conflicts with her freedom (the inability to leave her cell) obtains at just this time. Now what Kant is here supposing is that an agent—God—is subject to law without that law being the result of an antecedent event. But the fact that there is no antecedent event is irrelevant, it seems, to the question whether that law limits freedom.

For Kant, however, what threatens spontaneity is not the mere fact that the "determining ground" of an action is antecedent in time but rather what he presents as following from that fact: namely, that such a determining ground, being in the past, is not "in my power". Trying to make sense of this is difficult. How are we to conceive of something being in one's power or not when there is neither an exercise of arbitrary will—which, by assumption, is not the case for God—nor a temporal sequence of events within which that "power" is exercised?

The solution is formulated by (of all people!) Spinoza. In a letter to Schuller, Spinoza draws a contrast between what he calls "free necessity" and "free decision" to give the following definition of freedom (although, of course, for Spinoza, it is a freedom that can be ascribed to God alone):

> I say that that thing is free which exists and acts solely from the necessity of its own nature; but that that thing is under compulsion which is determined by something else to exist, and to act in a definite and determined manner. For example, God, although He exists necessarily, nevertheless exists freely, since He exists solely from the necessity of His own nature. So also God freely understands Himself and absolutely all things, since it follows solely from the necessity of His own nature that He should understand everything. You see, therefore, that I do not place freedom in free decision, but in free necessity.[18]

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For the Idealists (explicitly for the later German Idealists and implicitly for Kant) we must distinguish between two kinds of necessity, two kinds of "determination". On the one hand, there is an "external", constraining kind of necessity. This is the kind of necessity associated with mechanical, causal processes: a set of laws to which the sequence of events is subject. On the other hand, there is an "internal" necessity in which the connection between what necessitates and what is necessitated is not extrinsic but intrinsic—it is necessary but, at the same time, free and "spontaneous".

This brings us to the heart of the Idealist conception of freedom. It seems as though any law—even a "self-given" one—must be a limitation on our freedom. If freedom requires the ability to do otherwise, then the mere existence of law excludes freedom: to the extent that such a law is binding upon us, we cannot do otherwise than conform to it. But this apparent argument is not, if we follow the German Idealists, convincing. Let us note the metaphor I have used—the law is, I said, *binding* on us. And that, so the Idealists believe, refers only to laws of a certain kind: ones that derive their force from the compulsion they exercise. There is also—or so they think—law of a different kind: law that derives its force from its ability to elicit our assent, not by command, force or constraint, but by insight. If the self-given law that realizes our freedom is *our* law, then it is ours not because we have chosen it by an act of arbitrary will: it is a law into which we have insight. It is the fact that our insight can (in the human case) and must (in the case of God) coincide with our will that makes this law a law of freedom.

From this point of view, we can see the common character of the Idealist solution to the problem of human freedom and the problem of divine freedom. As far as human beings are concerned, we must find a law into which we can have insight and, inasmuch as we act according to such a law, we may be said to be free without that freedom being condemned as arbitrary. For the divine will, the solution is the same. If God creates according to a law that is truly rational, then he is not constrained, for there is no sense in which he is *compelled* to create as he does in fact create. Were he to do otherwise it would violate his own nature. But the reason why he "could not" do otherwise does not lie in some constraint outside himself. The idea of freedom as self-given law thus provides the common thread that connects the conceptions of freedom—different as they are in individual cases—that run through German Idealism from Kant to Hegel.

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The Metaphysics of Freedom

Inasmuch as there can ever be such a thing as "common sense" in metaphysics, it suggests that there are—at most—two kinds of necessity: the logical necessity that is exemplified in deductive reasoning—which allows us to infer from the proposition "all bachelors are unmarried" that Immanuel, being a bachelor, is unmarried—and the natural necessity that connects causes with effects. Now Kant, it might be thought, departs from that received view to the extent that he, famously, denies that we can have knowledge of any kind of metaphysically independent causal necessity and claims that even causal necessity is to be understood subjectively, in terms of the rule-governed character of the succession of the manifold of perception.[19] So for Kant, causal necessity, like deductive necessity, becomes a matter of moving from general rules to particular instances thereof.

But if necessity, in Kant's hands, becomes transferred to the side of the subject, it also undergoes an important change. As well as the "analytic" necessity of deductive inference, there is also the "synthetic" a priori necessity that is (as Kant believes) indubitably present in mathematics and lies behind the a priori reasoning of transcendental philosophy. Such a conception of synthetic necessity is at work too in Kant's moral philosophy. As J. B. Schneewind puts the point in his *The Invention of Autonomy:*

> Kant . . . saw that Leibniz's analytic necessity would be unsuitable for explaining the kind of necessity involved in morality. It was not until he worked out the idea of a priori synthetic necessity that he could think he had what he needed. The moral law, he could then say, constitutes a synthetic necessity in all rational wills, God's as well as ours.[20]

How exactly to understand this, however, is an open question. On one interpretation, the necessity apparent in the demonstrative reasoning of mathematics leads to the necessity that is present in the conceptual reasoning of transcendental philosophy, which leads in turn to the necessity present in human moral reasoning, from which we draw an inference to the nature of the divine will. From this point of view, the connecting thread is the nature of reasoning: from the mathematical to the theoretical-philosophical to the moral (whether human or divine).

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For the later German Idealists, however, the key was agency. By drawing our attention to the existence of the distinctive kind of necessity that connects the free agent with his or her action, Kant had identified a metaphysical fact of the greatest possible significance. This fact is, in a sense, fundamental or primitive: it is not to be explained on the basis of phenomena of another kind. The essential point about the necessity of free action is that it is unlike any other possible kind of necessity. Once appreciated, however, it can be seen at work, quite literally, everywhere—from the basic processes of nature to something as remote from human experience as one could imagine anything to be: the relationship between an omnibenevolent divine creator and the universe it creates.

The need for a radical conception of agency connects with a basic theme of post-Kantian German Idealism as it developed through Reinhold and Fichte. To summarize very briefly a complex story, Reinhold, for reasons that were partly institutional and contingent, was in the late 1780s and early 1790s very widely understood as the spokesman for Kant's theoretical philosophy. Thus the criticism of Kant that Reinhold put forward—that Kant's theoretical philosophy remained incomplete and that a principle must be found (the *Grundsatz*) that would be foundational for the critical philosophy without itself being a part of it—had a great deal of resonance, with Fichte not least. What brought Fichte to his own philosophical position was, as he imagined, the breakthrough insight that would enable him to respond to Reinhold's challenge. As he put it in a famous passage of his "*Aenesidemus* Review":

> The initial incorrect presupposition, and the one which caused [Reinhold's] Principle of Consciousness to be proposed as the first principle of all philosophy, was precisely the presupposition that one must begin with a fact. We certainly do require a first principle which is material and not merely formal. But such a principle does not have to express a *fact;* it can also express an *act.*[21]

Thus, for Fichte and his German Idealist successors, the idea of agency became the key to breaking out of the impasse of theoretical philosophy—how can a principle expressed as a mental representation be foundational for the system of mental representations as a whole? This agency is not the capriciously choosing self of *Willkür* but one that combines necessity with the freedom of rational insight. The idea of freedom in this

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sense thus permeates the whole of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre.* Here is a typical example:

> Freedom (or what is the same thing) the immediate action of the I is, as such, the point where ideality and reality are united. The I *is* free inasmuch as and because it posits itself as free or sets itself free inasmuch as it is free. Specific determinations and being are [here] one and the same. The I acts in the very decision to act, and by acting it determines itself.[22]

Friedrich Schelling gives an account of the distinctive necessity associated with freedom in his *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809).[23] He starts with a definition of freedom that takes up the Rousseauian idea of freedom as self-determination in a way that cannot fail to remind us of Spinoza:

> Only that is free which acts according to the laws of its own essence and is not determined by anything else either within or outside it.[24]

This is no accident, of course, given the deep influence that Spinoza had on Schelling.

The conception of freedom as acting according to the laws of one's own essence is as much opposed, according to Schelling, to the "inconsistency of the contingent"[25] as it is to that form of necessity that is "empirical and resting on compulsion".[26] The latter, indeed, he says (making explicitly the point I made earlier in this chapter) is itself "only disguised contingency". How, then, should we understand this "inner necessity of the essence" and its connection with freedom? I cannot do better than quote Schelling himself, for his answer is, I think, as clear as one could wish:

> This is the point at which necessity and freedom must be united if they can be united at all. If this essence were a dead being and, with regard to man, a mere datum, then, since action would only follow from it with necessity, responsibility and all freedom would be removed. But just this inner necessity is itself freedom; man's being is essentially his own deed. Necessity and freedom interpenetrate as *one* being which only appears as one or the other when seen from different perspectives—in itself it is freedom but, formally regarded, it is necessity.[27]

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Once we have seen this, a very puzzling feature of German Idealism becomes more comprehensible, the "primacy of the practical" as it is often called. As the author of the *Oldest System-Programme* puts it, "In the future, the whole of metaphysics falls within morality."[28] For the German Idealists, or so I claim, the connection between free human action and divine agency is a very close one: God shows in perfect form the kind of creative agency—at once spontaneous and necessary—that the individual also realises, inasmuch as he or she succeeds in acting according to rational moral principles. Having announced that the first Idea is that of the self as a free, self-conscious being, the author of the *Oldest System-Programme* continues: "With the free, self-conscious being a whole world emerges—from nothing—the only true and thinkable creation from nothing."[29] Freedom, in other words, is a fundamental metaphysical principle.

Hegelian Free Necessity

I have claimed that the basic concept of freedom that we find in Kant represents a common thread running through German Idealism. To illustrate this, I should like to present in conclusion some of the most important features of Hegel's account of freedom and the will. The similarities of his position to that of Kant are far more significant, in my opinion, than the differences.

This assertion is at odds with a great deal of received opinion regarding the relationship between Kant and Hegel, according to which Hegel's whole practical philosophy rests on a rejection of the "abstract" character of the Kantian picture of agency and freedom. Certainly, Hegel does make such criticisms of Kant—and make them fiercely. But his criticism is focused principally on Kant's presentation of the categorical imperative. As I see it, Hegel agrees with Kant that a free will is one that is determined by rational laws, but the two philosophers disagree—and disagree radically—regarding the character of those laws. Hegel, like Kant, understands freedom as requiring a particular kind of necessity—a necessity that is unlike (and is indeed fundamentally opposed to) the necessity that is at work in the causal processes of nature. Consider, for example, the following passage from the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences:*

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> . . . nature is not free but is only necessary and contingent. For necessity is the inseparability of different terms which yet appear as indifferent towards each other; but because this abstract state of externality also receives its due, there is contingency in nature—external necessity, not the internal necessity of the notion [*des Begriffs*].[30]

In the light of the argument of this chapter, this passage no longer needs to seem mysterious: the claim that nature is both necessary and contingent is not, as one might think, a gross oxymoron or exercise in dialectical double-think. Freedom, for Hegel as for Kant, requires necessity and excludes contingency or arbitrariness. But natural necessity is not the necessity of freedom. It is an inferior kind of necessity: an "external", that is, contingent one.

The closeness of Hegel's views to Kant's is also apparent in one of Hegel's most extensive discussions of human agency (the other comes in the Introduction to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*) at the beginning of the *Philosophy of Right.* Hegel presents his account of the will in three stages. First, there is the stage of abstract universality—the indeterminate freedom of a detached will—then that of particularity—the determinate actions that come from following this or that impulse—and then, finally, that of concrete universality: a self-determining will. Behind this dialectical schema, however, Kant's distinction between *Wille* and *Willkür* is playing an important role. Just like Kant, Hegel denies that *Willkür* can be true freedom and for the same reason: that it is arbitrary:

> *Willkür* implies that the content is made mine not by the nature of my will but by chance. Thus I am dependent on this content and this is the contradiction lying in *Willkür.* The common man thinks that he is free if it is open to him to act arbitrarily but his very *Willkür* implies that he is not free.[31]

As we have seen, for Kant, the *Willkür* is a domain of arbitrariness in relation to the *Wille:* a set of contingent impulses which threaten to lose connection with the self altogether. Hegel sees the domain of particular drives and desires as part of freedom, but only a subordinate part: the free self must determine itself in such a way that it remains "*bei sich*" in its determinacy. He gives an example of the will as it operates at the level of feeling—in friendship, or in love:

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> Here we are not inherently one-sided; we restrict ourselves gladly in relating ourselves to another, but in this restriction know ourselves as ourselves. In this determinacy a man should not feel himself determined; on the contrary, since he treats the other as an other, it is there that he first arrives at the feeling of self-hood. . . . Freedom is to will something determinate, yet in this determinacy to be by oneself and to revert once more to the universal.[32]

With this, it seems that Hegel has reversed the forces that led the self to threaten to disappear: rather than detaching itself from everything contingent, the self re-establishes itself as part of the concrete and the everyday. That, certainly, is part of Hegel's intention (and it is, surely, too, a part of the reason for the enduring appeal of his practical philosophy). Yet we must not misunderstand what is going on. While Hegel wishes to reassert the need for action and embodiment as part of freedom, the standpoint from which this assertion is made is—for Hegel every bit as much as for Kant—the standpoint of reason. As for Kant, so too for Hegel, it is the universal requirements of moral action, not the particularities of individual personality and subjectivity, that give free action its content:

> When I will what is rational, I am acting not as a particular individual but in accordance with the concepts of *Sittlichkeit* in general: in an ethical action I do not assert myself but the matter in hand. Men allow their particularity to come to the fore most when they perform wrong actions. What is rational is the high road on which everyone travels and no one is conspicuous.[33]

In short, the Idealist conception of freedom as autonomy has to reconcile two elements: the *autos* and the *nomos.* If we have *autos* without *nomos,* the result is mere arbitrariness—a freedom that is capricious and incapable of being the subject of rational insight. Whatever we may think of such an account of freedom at the individual level, it cannot possibly satisfy the Socratic demand for a conception of divine freedom that links God to human beings by the requirement of intelligibility.

But what about the *autos*? Does not the fact that we are subject to law bind and constrain us? It is here that the Spinozan distinction between internal and external necessity plays such a fundamental role. I am constrained only by determinations that are external to my essence. Which

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determinations *are* internal to my essence? It is easy enough to answer this question in the case of God; according to Spinoza, he must include all determinations within himself. But what about human beings? Is everything into which we have rational insight just for that reason to be seen as part of "me"—as forming part of my "practical identity" (to use Christine Korsgaard's phrase)? Or, to put it in Hegelian language, is rational insight sufficient for me to remain "at home in otherness"?

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Chapter 5

Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Kant

> Oh, is there not one maiden breast
> which does not feel the moral beauty
> Of making worldly interest subordinate to sense of duty?
>
> —W. S. GILBERT

> Mookie: C'mon, what, what?
> Da Mayor: Always do the right thing.
> Mookie: That's it?
> Da Mayor: That's it.
> Mookie: I got it. I'm gone.
>
> —SPIKE LEE

The Appeal of Kantian Ethics

What is this "law that binds us a priori and unconditionally by our own reason"? It is, of course, the moral law, the Categorical Imperative.

Has any other piece of modern philosophy been the subject of more interpretation? Before presenting what will be a radical challenge to received understandings of it, it will be helpful to ask why that is so. Certainly, Kant's moral philosophy is difficult: much of Kant's terminology is novel and the structure of his argument is elusive. But a great deal of past philosophy is hard to understand. What is unusual is that Kant's moral philosophy still engages contemporary readers with pressing urgency. That

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engagement is both positive and negative: for some interpreters, Kant is an inspiration; for others, a provocation.

It is partly the desire to have an answer to what is taken to be Kant's guiding question—What ought I to do? (*Was soll ich tun?*)[1]—that draws his modern advocates to him. That is a question that utilitarianism, for example, also seems to answer clearly enough: bring about the greatest amount of overall happiness. Yet the answer that the interpretation of Kant promises to give is, for many readers, plausible in a way that utilitarianism is not. The distinguished Kant scholar Onora O'Neill, explaining what drew her to Kant's moral philosophy in the Preface to *Acting on Principle,* her first book, expresses the point very clearly:

> I first came to think about acting on principle on the rebound from a brief and strong enthusiasm for utilitarianism. I was impressed with the scope, fertility and precision of that ethical theory; then distressed by its strong and implausible premises. The very precision which had beguiled me now seemed spurious and hence dangerous. But I remained sure that a moral theory which was not fruitful, which could not guide action, was pointless.[2]

Hence O'Neill's interest is to examine various universality tests for "their fertility or capacity to guide action", to ask whether such a test can act as a "decision procedure for picking out morally acceptable principles".[3]

What modern Kantians like O'Neill find wanting in utilitarianism is not (or not just) utilitarianism's association with an apparently over-simple hedonism—Bentham's view of mankind as being "under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure".[4] There are, after all, many non-reductive versions of consequentialism and "ideal utilitarianism" on offer. A more profound obstacle is utilitarianism's essential commitment to aggregation. If all that matters is some independently valuable end, any re-distribution that leads to a greater net amount of that end (or brings people closer to it) will be justified, no matter the cost to particular individuals. In this way, utilitarianism allegedly neglects (as O'Neill's teacher, John Rawls, famously objected) the "distinction between persons"—the idea that persons are morally significant in their own right, not just as means towards states or bearers of things that are otherwise valuable.[5]

But that is not all. It is not enough that a moral theory should be determinate and match solidly held moral convictions. It should tell us not just

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what to do but *why* it is right to do it. As O'Neill's title (*Acting on Principle*) makes clear, if moral judgement is to be seen as an expression of, in Kant's phrase, "practical reason", it should be able to show that its judgements are based upon principles that are themselves persuasive. In that sense, it should be "systematic", capable of making the whole project of morality intelligible. The hope of embodying those aspirations in a theory that remains fruitful as a guide to action explains why, for so many contemporary interpreters, the study of Kant's ethical thought is also the search for a Kantian ethics.

The reader familiar with the literature will recognize in the last sentence the titles of two books by Allen Wood.[6] "Kantian ethics", according to Wood, "is answerable not to textual accuracy or exegetical standards of Kant interpretation but to the right standards of thinking about ethical theory and ethical issues."[7] Yet Wood's book, he concedes, also looks very much like yet another contribution to the interpretation of Kant's writings: "This is because I do not think that the most defensible version of Kantian ethics needs to depart as far from what Kant thought and wrote as most recent practitioners of Kantian ethics do. What is needed instead, in many cases, is only a better understanding of Kant's own thoughts."[8] O'Neill writes similarly:

> . . . my interest is less in exegesis than in argument. It is only because I believe I have found in Kant's ethics a theory which is fruitful and detailed and useful that I think I have a good reason for writing a book on ethics.[9]

For commentators like Wood and O'Neill, interpretation and defence are closely allied.

It is not only such positive ambitions that have drawn philosophers to the interpretation of Kant, however. For others, it is repulsion. Kant's moral philosophy embodies, it is alleged, a modern conception of agency that is deeply problematic. The view is vividly expressed by another former student of Somerville College, Iris Murdoch, in her lecture "The Sovereignty of Good":

> The centre of this type of post-Kantian moral philosophy is the notion of the will as the creator of value. Values which were previously in some sense inscribed in the heavens and guaranteed by God

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> collapse into the human will. There is no transcendent reality. The idea of the good remains indefinable and empty so that human choice may fill it. The sovereign moral concept is freedom, or possibly courage in a sense which identifies it with freedom, will, power. This concept inhabits a quite separate top level of human activity since it is the guarantor of the secondary values created by choice. Act, choice, decision, responsibility, independence are emphasized in this philosophy of puritanical origin and apparent austerity.[10]

On the face of it, Murdoch's lonely voluntarist could hardly be further from O'Neill's rationally guided practical reasoner. And yet it has been argued that the two go together. So Alasdair MacIntyre maintains in *After Virtue.* Once the agent has become deracinated in the way that Murdoch describes, cut off from the kind of community within which the practice of morality can be intelligible, there arise, so MacIntyre argues, natural and understandable—but doomed—attempts to repair the gap by bringing the secular, universalist methods of Enlightenment reason to bear on moral questions. Kant is a prime example of such Enlightenment universalism. Hence modern moral philosophy is condemned to oscillate in a dialectic between scepticism (voluntarism, expressivism) and rationalism (whether Kantian or utilitarian).[11]

On one thing, however, Kant's critics and the advocates of "Kantian ethics" are agreed: to the extent that Kant invokes a view of the self as a noumenal agent, independent of the empirical world, this must be rejected. Allen Wood expresses the point vehemently:

> . . . unfortunately, in some places it appears that Kant himself wants to make positive use of noumenal freedom—as yet another proof of transcendental idealism, or as some sort of intimation (or even *cognition*) of our membership in a supernatural world beyond the natural world of sense. Apparently Kant also found it morally fitting that as often as we think of human beings as having absolute worth or dignity, we must also think of them as having some supernatural (or noumenal) destiny, setting them apart from all those lesser beings whose fate is to be merely a part of nature. Such a notion still appeals to some people today. But no rationalist—and rationalism is the very heart of Kantian ethics—should have the least patience with it. The only moral emotion it excites in me is *outrage*—that anyone

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> could think supernaturalist superstition a necessary condition for moral decency. I completely agree with those who, thinking that the notion of noumenal freedom is indispensable to Kantian ethics, find this an insuperable obstacle to its acceptance. I add only that no positive doctrine about noumenal freedom has any place in Kantian ethics either. Whatever Kant himself said on the subject, his flirtations with supernaturalism regarding freedom are flights of transcendent metaphysics, inconsistent with the basic epistemological strictures of the critical philosophy.[12]

And John Rawls takes the same position, although his language is milder:

> Kant's view is marked by a number of dualisms, in particular, the dualisms between the necessary and the contingent, form and content, reason and desire, and phenomena and noumena. To abandon those dualisms as he meant them is, for many, to abandon what is distinctive in his theory. I believe otherwise. His moral conception has a characteristic structure that is more clearly discernible when these dualisms are not taken in the sense he gave them but reinterpreted and their moral force reformulated within the scope of an empirical theory. One of the aims of *A Theory of Justice* was to indicate how this might be done.[13]

The account of Kant that will be presented in this chapter is very different.

Both families of Kant interpretation just introduced see Kant as a fundamentally secular thinker. For Wood, O'Neill, Rawls and the many others who approach Kant similarly, Kant has developed a conception of moral reasoning that does not depend on any premises concerning God or the noumenal realm, even if, regrettably, Kant at times allowed such ideas to obscure his fundamental insight. For Murdoch and MacIntyre, likewise, the message of Kant's thought is radically anthropocentric: an image of human beings creating their own values in a world from which overarching forms of moral community have been banished.

On my interpretation, by contrast, the connection between the human and the divine is essential for Kant. Morality must be such that it makes human beings apt to be held to account (and, where necessary, punished) by an all-seeing and absolutely just judge. This means, as we have seen in

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the preceding chapters, that human beings must have the kind of freedom necessary for responsibility, and the law to which they are subject should not be imposed on them from the outside by an act of authority that bypasses their moral agency. Morality and freedom are connected through the concept of autonomy.

I shall argue that "Kantian ethics", understood as a formal account of moral reasoning—a "CI procedure", as Rawls inelegantly calls it—that generates determinate (and plausible) answers to moral questions, does not succeed.[14] It is impossible, of course, to demonstrate this negative claim any more than one could demonstrate that a certain chess strategy is bound to fail. In a finite universe, let alone in a single book chapter, it is not possible to exhaust the myriad interpretative strategies that have been mobilized to defend it. Instead I shall give a broad account of the task of Kantian ethics; present the possibilities of interpretation, as I see them, and the various objections—most of them, in principle, rather familiar—that such interpretations face; look at the various responses to these objections by the philosophers whom I consider to be the most creative and penetrating of those who have taken up the task of Kantian ethics (chiefly, Onora O'Neill and Christine Korsgaard); and explain why I conclude that, nevertheless, its difficulties are so severe as to be insuperable.

Am I then joining the ranks of Kant's critics—Hegelians such as Bradley and MacIntyre in one direction, consequentialists such as Mill and Hare in another—who argue that Kant's project is, in its own terms, a failure? Not quite. I shall present a radically different picture of Kant's moral theory that starts from the idea of the absolute value of transcendentally free human agency. On my account, at the heart of Kant's picture of moral duty are the different ways in which free (but embodied) moral agents must show respect towards free (but embodied) moral agents—respect, that is, towards themselves and respect towards others. Is that another way of solving the problem from which Rawls and his students start? Again, not exactly, for it does not embody a procedural account of moral reasoning. Thus it returns to an earlier strand of Kant interpretation (one might mention H. J. Paton, A. R. C. Duncan, T. C. Williams, and Rawls's own teacher, T. M. Greene) who have, in different ways, emphasized the role of "intuition" in Kant's account of moral judgement.

What conclusion should we draw from this? Both the advocates of Kantian ethics and critics such as Murdoch, Anscombe or Bernard Williams

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see Kant—for better or for worse—as the paradigmatically *modern* ethical thinker. My interpretation, on the other hand, brings out the distance that separates him from modern moral philosophy. This is apparent not just because it explains why Kant adheres so fiercely to elements of his moral thought (retributivism and the absolute prohibition on suicide, for example) that modern liberals find repellent. More deeply, I shall suggest, to look to find in Kant a "decision procedure for ethics"[15] is to enlist him in a project that is ours, not his.

The Groundwork: *An Outline*

In the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Kant writes:

> There is . . . only a single categorical imperative and it is this: act only in accordance with that maxim which you can at the same time will as a universal law.[16]

He then explains that "all imperatives of duty can be derived from this single imperative as from their principle" (*alle Imperativen der Pflicht als aus ihrem Prinzip abgeleitet werden können*) and goes on, as he puts it, to "enumerate" ("*herzählen*") some of them. In fact, Kant gives four examples, to correspond to the four different types of moral duty that emerge from his division of duties along two axes: duties to others and duties to oneself, and those duties that he calls "strict" in contrast with "wide" ones.

The four duties are the duty not to make a promise without the intention of keeping it and the duty not to take one's own life (strict duties); the duty to help others in need and to cultivate one's own talents (wide duties). In none of these cases, Kant claims, can we will the "maxim" (subjective principle of action) that would negate the presumed duty as a universal law, although the reasons differ as between strict and broad duties.

> Some actions are so constituted that their maxim cannot even be *thought* without contradiction as a universal law of nature, far less could one *will* that it *should* become such. In the case of others that inner impossibility is indeed not to be found, but it is still impossible to *will* that their maxim be raised to the universality of a law of nature because such a will would contradict itself. It is easy to see

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> that the first is opposed to strict or narrower (unremitting) duty, the second only to wide (meritorious) duty . . . [17]

And that, or so you might think, would be that. But Kant does not leave it there. A few pages later, he approaches the issue from another angle. He returns to the claim with which the *Groundwork* opens, the unrestricted goodness of the good will.[18] What, he asks, if there is something "the existence of which in itself has an absolute worth"?[19] Then "in it, and in it alone, would lie the ground of a possible categorical imperative, that is, of a practical law."[20] Each human being, inasmuch as he or she is rational, exists as "an end in itself, not merely as a means to be used by this or that will at its discretion".[21]

In this way, Kant brings us to another, equally famous, formulation of the categorical imperative:

> So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.[22]

After which, he returns to his previous examples, but this time explains that each of the actions in question is a duty, because to do otherwise would involve treating others or oneself as "means only". Suicide and false promising make use of persons (oneself or others) "merely as means", Kant says. Failing to develop one's powers, on the other hand, is a violation of the duty to treat oneself as an end.

Finally, Kant adds a third formulation, one that goes beyond the idea that human beings must act under universal law and treat themselves and others as ends to give expression to the idea that rational beings should live together in "a systematic union . . . through common laws"—as Kant calls it, a "kingdom of ends".[23] This too forms part of the "complete determination" of the principle of morality: "all maxims of one's lawgiving are to harmonize with a possible kingdom of ends."[24]

Perhaps significantly, however, Kant does not return to his four examples in the light of this third formulation. To the contrary, he points us back to the first formulation. In moral appraisal ("*Beurteilung*"), he says, "one does better always to proceed . . . by the strict method and put at its basis the universal formula of the categorical imperative: act in accordance with a maxim that can at the same time make itself a universal law."[25]

This much will, I hope, be agreed by all readers of the *Groundwork*.

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Four Issues for Kantian Ethics

The advocate of Kantian ethics thus faces four issues:

(1) Do Kant's formulations of the categorical imperative give determinate answers to the question what one ought to do?
(2) Do they give the same answers?
(3) Are the answers that they give plausible?
(4) Are the answers that they give Kant's own?

The first issue is, of course, crucial and has rightly been the principal focus of interpretation, but, before turning to it, it is worth noting the force of the others.

The second is, arguably, not very significant. If Kantian ethics can give determinate and persuasive answers to the basic questions of ethics drawing on only one of the three formulae, it would nevertheless be a very profound achievement, even if the other two do not support it (and, as we have seen, Kant himself recommends concentrating on the Formula of Universal Law for the purposes of "*Beurteilung*").

But the importance of issues (3) and (4) should not be lost from view. The vast majority of the advocates of Kantian ethics (many of them pupils of John Rawls) are modern liberals and hold the corresponding family of views about personal and public morality. What are we to make of the fact that in many cases the ethical beliefs that they take to be supported by Kantian ethics differ so sharply from some of Kant's own? The advocate of Kantian ethics apparently faces a dilemma. Either Kant is wrong about the derivation of his own ethical judgements from his basic principle, or he is right and many of the ethical judgements that flow from that principle are ones that his modern would-be followers find repellent.

Kant's views on matters of sexual morality are well known and seem to almost all of his modern readers implausible, even outrageous. Here, for example, is one such passage among many:

> There is no case where a human being would already be determined by nature to be the object of another's enjoyment, save this, of which sexual inclination is the basis. This is the reason why we are ashamed of possessing such an impulse, and why all strict moralists, and those who wish to be taken for saints, have sought to repress and dispense with it. . . . Since the sexual impulse is not an inclination that one

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> human has for another, *qua* human, but an inclination for their sex, it is therefore a *principium* of the debasement of humanity, a source for the preference of one sex over the other, and the dishonouring of that sex by satisfying the inclination. The desire of a man for a woman is not directed to her as a human being; on the contrary, the woman's humanity is of no concern to him, and the only object of his desire is her sex.[26]

Carnal pleasure is, he says, in principle "cannibalistic": men's sexual desire "consumes" women and women's sexual desire consumes men.[27] As for "intercourse *sexus homogeneii*", by its very practice, "[I] discard my person, and so degrade myself below the beasts, and dishonour humanity."[28]

Still, it is possible to argue that such pronouncements are peripheral to Kantian ethics, that their fundamental motive is the laudable one of protecting human beings from degradation in their sexual relationships, and that Kant's assumption that sexuality debases humanity owes more to the experience (or lack of it) of an elderly bachelor living in a repressive society than to fundamental philosophical principles.

Less easily dismissed, however, is the absolutism with which Kant prohibits certain actions, whatever the circumstances. The two best known are suicide and lying. No one could think that either of these cases is peripheral to Kant's account of moral duty, and each costs his modern advocates much trouble and ingenuity.

Yet finally, and most crucially for my argument in this book, there is Kant's retributive view of the justice of punishment. Kant's commitment to the death penalty was not in any way unusual for his time, but his adherence to it has nothing whatsoever to do with instrumental considerations of social well-being. Even if society were to dissolve, murderers must be put to death.[29] Nor is this just a matter of the extreme crime of murder but follows from his general embrace of a radical and uncompromising retributivism. Here is Kant's view of punishment, succinctly and unambiguously expressed:

> The principle of punishment is a categorical imperative, and woe to him who crawls through the windings of eudaemonism in order to discover something that releases the criminal from punishment or even reduces its amount by the advantage it promises, in accordance with the Pharisaical saying, "It is better for *one* man to die than for

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> an entire people to perish." For if justice disappears, there is no longer any value in men's living on earth. . . . But what kind and what amount of punishment is it that public justice makes its principle and measure? None other than the principle of equality (in the position of the needle on the scale of justice), to incline no more to one side than to the other. Accordingly, whatever undeserved evil you inflict upon another within the people, that you inflict upon yourself. If you insult him, you insult yourself; if you strike him, you strike yourself; if you kill him, you kill yourself. But only the *law of retribution* (*ius talionis*)—it being understood, of course, that this is applied by a court (not by your private judgement)—can specify the quality and quantity of punishment; all other principles are fluctuating and unsuited for a sentence of pure and strict justice because extraneous considerations are mixed into them.[30]

For Kant, then, desert is pre-eminent in justice—above all the requirement that the wicked should pay the price of their misdeeds. We should remember the hair-raising footnote at the end of the *Metaphysics of Morals:* "it is from the necessity of punishment that the inference to a future life is drawn."[31]

If Kant's retributivism is taken seriously (and, surely, no one reading the quoted passage could fail to do that) it must be apparent that Kant's moral theory is irreconcilable with any version of consequentialism. We can concede to Derek Parfit that, if Kant had abandoned his conception of desert, his ideal would still have been a world in which we were all virtuous and happy.[32] True enough, no doubt—but in that case he would be Parfit, not Kant.

Universal Law

Let us start by examining Kant's first formulation of the categorical imperative, the so-called Formula of Universal Law. As will be recalled, Kant distinguishes between two different kinds of contradiction: what are usually called by interpreters "contradictions in conception" and "contradictions in will". As he says of the first, "some actions are so constituted by their nature that their maxim cannot even be *thought* without contradiction

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as a universal law of nature."[33] He says of his example of someone who borrows money with no intention to repay it:

> It would make the promise and the end one might have in itself impossible, since no one would believe what was promised him but would laugh at all such expression as vain pretence.[34]

Where does the contradiction lie? The problem, it appears, is that the institution of promising could not subsist without the presumption that promises would normally be kept. In response, critics of Kant have raised what I shall call the Open Question Objection.

Yes, the critic argues, if no one kept promises (or was expected to) the institution of promising would be impossible. But the same could be said of other institutions. What about bribery or duelling, say? If no one took a bribe or accepted the challenge to a duel, the institutions would likewise collapse from within. But would that be a bad thing?

Kant's criterion of universalizability is, on this reading, a necessary condition at most. It does not settle the issue of whether the preservation of the institution under consideration is valuable or not. For that, something further is needed—a test for the value of practices and institutions. Variations of this objection can be found in two otherwise completely opposed families of ethical thought—utilitarianism and Hegelianism.[35]

Yet the Kantian has a reply to this objection.

The contradiction, the defender of Kantian ethics will point out, does not lie just in the existence or non-existence of institutions but in how they relate to the purposes of the people participating in them. A person making a lying promise depends on the existence of the institution of promising for her purpose to succeed. On the other hand, if you don't want to take part in duels, you can steer clear of duelling and achieve your purpose even if the institution of duelling will disappear.

A reading along these lines has been called the Practical Contradiction Interpretation of the categorical imperative by Christine Korsgaard: "According to proponents of the practical contradiction interpretation, the maxim's efficacy in achieving its purpose would be undercut by its universalization."[36]

How well does the Practical Contradiction Interpretation serve as a guide to understanding the Universal Law formulation of the categorical imperative?

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It appears to do very badly indeed when applied to Kant's other example of "narrow" or "strict" duty—the prohibition of suicide. What is the potential suicide's "maxim" that we should consider from the point of view of its becoming a universal law of nature? Not, of course, that we should all put an end to our lives immediately! Kant does not suggest as much. The maxim, rather, as Kant describes it, says that "from self-love I make it my principle to shorten my life when its longer duration threatens more trouble than it promises agreeableness."[37] Surely, one might think, one can easily imagine the existence of a world where this maxim holds universally. Not so, says Kant:

> It is then seen at once that a nature whose law it would be to destroy life itself by means of the same feeling whose determination is to impel towards the furtherance of life would contradict itself and would therefore not subsist as nature; thus that maxim could not possibly be a law of nature and, accordingly, altogether opposes the supreme principle of duty.[38]

The claim is revealing. The "contradiction" in this case—such as it is—depends on a very particular interpretation of what it is to be a "law of nature"—not just something that happens everywhere regularly and necessarily, but a teleological claim about the purpose of natural phenomena: the contrast between a feeling leading to the "destruction" of life and its "determination" ("*Bestimmung*") to the "furtherance" of life.[39] Without this kind of teleology the argument would not work. If the question is whether the agent's own purposes as she understands them would be frustrated by universalization, as the Practical Contradiction Interpretation maintains, the answer is plainly "no".

In fact, the same is true if we look at one of Kant's most famous moral claims: his absolute prohibition of lying. The maxim of the person who thinks that lying can be acceptable is not "always tell a lie". (If it were, we could simply take whatever was said and reliably believe the opposite.) The sometime liar's maxim is more like: I will lie whenever that is useful to me (call this the Egoistic Maxim); or, I will lie whenever it has significant social benefits (call that the Utilitarian Maxim). Would either of these maxims undermine communication? Very obviously not, since they resemble the world in which we actually live—a world in which we have to be on our guard against mountebanks and charlatans, fake news, scammers and

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spammers, but one in which useful communication is still possible. Perhaps an ideal world of Kantian truthfulness would be better (even allowing for the odd would-be murderer at the door) but that isn't the point if the test is really whether a world embodying such a maxim could subsist.

So one may suspect that there is something particular about the first example that Kant gives—the lying promise—which apparently works much better: that it tells us more about the particular practice of promising than about how moral principles work in general.

Most people are not Kantian absolutists: they think that there are times when promises can't (indeed, shouldn't) be kept. Other things can intervene. But even in those cases, the fact that someone promised makes a difference: it gives another, independent reason to take account of. There may be a good reason to take my daughter to the park. And that reason may itself give me a reason to promise to take her. On the other hand, the fact that I have to wait for the plumber to mend a broken-down boiler may be a good reason to stay home instead. Yet her reproach "But you promised!" adds an extra ingredient to the situation—more reason to feel her disappointment, at the least. Promising is more than predicting ("I will take you to the park") or expressing a view about moral requirements ("All things considered, it would be right for me to take you to the park"); it expresses and thereby *creates* a commitment.

As Kant is envisaging it, the person under consideration in the case of the lying promise has no intention of keeping that promise in the first place. Her maxim is to give her act of promising no weight at all, not the more common maxim of being prepared to break her promise if certain excusing conditions occur. But if that is so, and the maxim really is to give promises no weight, then surely one must agree that, if it were universally adopted, the practice of promising would be fatally undermined. The condition for creating obligation—that they are believed to have made a commitment—simply won't be there among people who understand each other as having no intention to keep promises. Yet is this not just a reflection of the not-very-surprising fact that some social practices—and promising seems to be one—lose their point if there is no rational expectation of compliance?

Advocates of Kantian ethics claim that the example reveals something more deep and basic about morality, however. According to O'Neill:

> The intuitive idea behind the thought that a universality test can provide a criterion of moral acceptability may be expressed quite simply

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> as the thought that if we are to act as morally worthy beings, we should not single ourselves out for special consideration or treatment.[40]

And Korsgaard says almost exactly the same thing. Having conceded that there are problems for the Kantian approach when dealing with, for example, the prohibition on suicide, she writes:

> I do not say that Kant is unable to give us an account of these cases. But the kind of case around which the view is framed, and which it handles best, is the temptation to make oneself an exception: selfishness, meanness, advantage-taking, and disrespect for the rights of others.[41]

How is this supposed to work? It is at this point, as O'Neill explains it, that we see the importance of testing whether a maxim can or cannot be universalized and adopted by everybody. Take the example of slavery:

> . . . there is no contradiction involved in adopting the maxim of becoming a slave. But this maxim has as its universalized counterpart—the maxim we must attempt to "will as a universal law"—the maxim of everybody becoming a slave. But if everybody became a slave, there would be nobody with property rights, hence no slaveholders, and hence nobody could become a slave.[42]

Exactly the same argument applies in the other direction to slave-holding. If everyone were a slave-holder, everyone would have some property rights, so no one could be a slave—since slaves, by definition, lack property rights.

But is not this principle too sweeping? We live in a world in which resources are scarce. Those on the political left may deplore the fact that in our society people compete for resources so much, but is it always *wrong*?

I have a niece who very much wanted to attend a concert for which demand was extremely high. So I got up very early one Sunday morning and waited in line until tickets went on sale at nine o'clock. Was what I did permissible? On O'Neill's interpretation of Kant, it appears not. She writes:

> A maxim of economic progress combined with the specific intention of achieving progress merely by competitive strategies cannot be universalized, any more than the intention of looking over the heads of a crowd can be universally achieved by everyone in the crowd standing on tiptoes.[43]

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Sporting competition is permissible, according to O'Neill, only on condition that that competition is not "ancillary to an underlying intention to win":

> Competitive games must have losers. If winning is not the overriding aim in such activities, if they are played for their own sake, the activity is consistently universalizable. But to play competitively with the fundamental intention of winning is to adopt an intention that makes of one's own case a necessary exception.[44]

But my underlying intention was to buy tickets for my niece before others did—I certainly would not have stood for several hours on an unattractive pavement for its own sake. Yet I find it hard to believe that what I did was wrong.

The idea that we "should not single ourselves out for special consideration or treatment" is intuitively forceful (though hardly novel) but using the universalization of maxims as the basis to test for "contradictions in conception" as a way of articulating that idea faces two very fundamental difficulties.

First, competition is only one way that differentiation takes place. And differentiation is of the essence of social life. Can the universalizability test accommodate it even if others are not being excluded? I am learning the clarinet. But what if everyone learned the clarinet? Wouldn't that make orchestras impossible? Perhaps, then, I should revise my maxim—say that I am learning an instrument to play in an orchestra. But the chain of the argument can be extended. What if everyone learned instruments and played in orchestras? Wouldn't that exclude other worthwhile artistic projects? And, once we are heading down that road, why should everyone pursue an artistic project? What about other forms of personal fulfilment outside of paid work—say, playing sports or travelling? In the end, you might suspect, all we would be left with in the way of moral principles would be the blandest of generalities: do the right thing!

On the other hand, if what matters is mere impartiality—that we do not single ourselves out for special treatment—what becomes of the essential distinctiveness of Kantian ethics: its promise to defend the individual against inappropriate collectivism? For the most radical utilitarianism also meets the criterion of impartiality. Consider one of those macabre imaginary hospitals in which a healthy patient is painlessly put to death so that their organs may be harvested for the benefit of several others who would

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otherwise die. Is it singling anyone out for special consideration or treatment? No. The considerations are entirely objective: it is solely a matter of what leads to the greatest aggregate utility.

Wide Duty

What, then, of "wide" duty? In such cases, according to Kant, although the actions do not have the "inner impossibility" that "their maxim cannot even be *thought* without contradiction as a universal law of nature", nevertheless "it is still impossible to *will* that their maxim be raised to a universal law of nature because such a will would contradict itself."[45]

Kant gives a vivid example of the case of a talented person who nevertheless "prefers to give himself up to pleasure rather than to trouble himself with enlarging and improving his fortunate natural dispositions".[46] Kant writes:

> But he still asks himself whether his maxim of neglecting his natural gifts, besides being consistent with his propensity to amusement, is also consistent with what one calls duty. He now sees that a nature could indeed always subsist with such a universal law, although (as with the South Sea Islanders) the human being should let his talents rust and be concerned with devoting his life merely to idleness, amusement, procreation—in a word, to enjoyment; only he cannot possibly *will* that this become a universal law or be put in us as such by means of natural instinct. For, as a rational being he necessarily wills that all the capacities in him be developed, since they serve him and are given to him for all sorts of possible purposes.[47]

But would it really be so difficult to will this? The claim has to be that it is not just a matter of psychology (the life of the South Sea Islanders will sound attractive enough to many) but that "such a will would contradict itself". How?

According to O'Neill, the case is covered by what she calls the Principle of Rational Intending, by which "I am committed to willing some means to any end to which I am committed."[48] From which it follows that:

> An agent who fails to will the development, in self or others, of whatever minimal range of talents is required and sufficient for a range of actions, is committed to internally inconsistent sets of intentions.

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> Such agents intend both that action be possible and that it be undercut by neglect to develop even a minimal range of talents that would leave open some possibility of action.[49]

Does this justify Kant's claim? Surely not.

Of course, those choosing the lives of South Sea Islanders will need some skills sufficient to support their hedonistic life-style: to be able to climb trees for coconuts, make spears and catch fish, perhaps even to make drums and nose flutes. But that hardly requires the development of *all* one's capacities as Kant says that a rational being is "necessarily required" to will to do. (The very idea of which is, evidently, impossible—to develop some of our capacities to their limit necessarily means leaving some others not fully developed.) There doesn't seem to be any contradiction in the Islanders limiting themselves to the talents they need for the way they want to live and not going further. Once again, it seems, Kant is relying on an implicit teleology in his picture of human nature. Just as suicide (allegedly) contradicts a "*Bestimmung*" towards life, so talents are assumed to have been given to us for the purpose of being developed, even if they are not, strictly speaking, required for our actual projects.

Such difficulties, then, make it implausible that the Formula of Universal Law, at least as commonly interpreted, is a fruitful guide to action.

The Formula of Humanity

Let us turn now to the Formula of Humanity—the requirement to "use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."[50]

This formula contains both a "do" and a "don't" and it makes sense, at least initially, to separate them.

What it is to treat someone as a means is, it seems, quite clear. We do it all the time and social life (economic life, in particular) depends on it. The question is much more what it is to treat someone as a means *only*. There are two objections to using this as a criterion of moral rightness.

First, it is not intuitively wrong in every possible case to treat people as a "means only". Imagine that it is a windy day and a group of people are standing at the bus stop. Is it wrong for me to position myself so that they

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help shield me somewhat from the wind? Or to ride my bicycle so as to take advantage of someone else's slipstream? Or what if I set off through the dense jungle but notice that you, an hour earlier, had, fortunately for me, used your machete to cut a path for yourself, so that all that I need to do now is to follow your track?

From a non-Kantian standpoint it is easy enough to see why using people as a means only in these cases is acceptable. In each case I take advantage of other people to increase my own well-being but I do not diminish anyone else's. My profit does not come at their expense.

On the other hand, the mere fact that someone does not treat another person as a "means only" is not sufficient to make what they do morally acceptable. (The following example is taken from Frances Kamm.) What if a slave-owner allows their slaves a day of rest and worship on the Sabbath. Does that make their slave-ownership acceptable? Of course not. It is not all right to exploit another human being, just because you were in a position to exploit them even worse than you did.

The meaning of treating humanity "as an end", on the other hand, is much less clear. Ends are normally things one pursues—money, power or, indeed, the general welfare. Routes exist by which such ends may be increased, reached or, at least, approached. But to treat humanity (in one's own or another's person) *as an end* cannot be interpreted in that way: it is not something one moves towards. How best to understand it will be examined again later, as I offer my own reading of Kant's ethical thought, but, at this stage, let us look at the interpretation of the Formula of Humanity that has been made by advocates of Kantian ethics. We should, on this interpretation, test whether someone is being treated "as an end" and "not as a means" only by whether that treatment is something to which one could *consent.* Korsgaard writes:

> The question whether another can consent to your way of acting can serve as a criterion for judging whether you are treating her as a mere means.[51]

Similarly, O'Neill writes:

> It is plausible to think that when we act in ways that would *always* preclude genuine consent or dissent we will have used others. For example, if we coerce or deceive others, their dissent, and so their

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> genuine consent, is in principle ruled out. Here we do indeed use others, treating them as mere props or tools in our own projects. Even the most rational and independent cannot genuinely consent to proposals about which they are deceived or with which they are compelled to comply.[52]

Thus, for O'Neill, coercion and deception are fundamental. Korsgaard agrees:

> According to the Formula of Humanity, coercion and deception are the most fundamental forms of wrongdoing to others—the root of all evil.[53]

It may appear that this consent-based interpretation is supported by Kant's own text. In his discussion of the lying promise in relation to the Formula of Humanity, Kant writes:

> For, he whom I want to use for my purposes by such a promise cannot possibly agree to my way of behaving toward him, and so himself contain the end of this action.[54]

Yet this rests on an important misunderstanding (and mistranslation) of Kant's text. The German word that is being translated as "agree to" is "*einstimmen*". "*Einstimmen*" is indeed properly translated as "agree". But agreement between people can take more than one form. You and I can agree with one another in one way by arriving at the same judgement—just as our watches can agree with one another. By contrast, I can *agree with* you in another way by *agreeing to* something that is proposed. The former, we might say, is the agreement of coincidence, while only the latter is the agreement of consent.

"*Einstimmung*", however, means the agreement of coincidence, not the agreement of consent. That is how Kant consistently uses it throughout his writings. For instance, he describes judgements as standing in "*Einstimmung*" or "*Widerstreit*"—agreement or conflict—in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (B320). The sentence in question should properly have been translated as "*agree with*", not "*agree to*", my way of treating him. There is, in fact, a different German word which appropriately translates "consent"—*zustimmen,* which means directly "assent to". *Einstimmen* is used very rarely

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in the moral writings (the quotation above is its sole appearance in the *Groundwork*) and *zustimmen* not at all.

In any case, there are powerful objections to interpreting the Formula of Humanity through the idea of consent. Of course, we can consent to be deceived. We do so every time we go to watch a magic show. Indeed, we can also consent to be coerced—think of Ulysses having himself tied to the mast as his ship sailed past the sirens.

If Kantianism is to be interpreted through the idea of consent, it must be consent that is hypothetical—it is not some kind of tacit promise. If so, a great deal depends on the circumstances under which consent is conceived to take place—in particular, its time-horizon. Perhaps I can't (rationally) consent that you now deceive me if the condition for rational consent is that I should know right now precisely what I'm consenting to, but surely I can consent rationally to what someone might do to me in the future? Yet, in that case, why can't the defender of a utility-maximising scheme that places extreme burdens on a particular individual (the macabre hospital of the "survival lottery", to give the obvious example) also claim that this is something to which that individual *could* (if asked at the right stage) have consented? Soldiers consent to follow orders and are sent into situations of extreme danger, and so on. Subtle and ingenious solutions to such objections have been proposed, but here is not the place to pursue them.[55]

If we turn to the so-called wide duties, it is clear that Kant's own account of what it is to treat someone as an end rather than as a means only has nothing to do with consent in this case. Discussing the case of our duties to ourselves (the example of the person who neglects his talents) he writes:

> [It is] not enough that the action does not conflict with humanity in our person as an end in itself; it must also harmonize with it. There are in humanity dispositions to greater perfection, which belong to the end of nature with respect to humanity in our subject: to neglect these might admittedly be consistent with the *preservation* of humanity as an end in itself but not with the furtherance of that end.[56]

The dependence of Kant's argument here on teleology is evident in its language. Our actions must go beyond mere consistency to *harmonize* with

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"humanity in our subject", and we must *further* the *dispositions to greater perfection* that belong to the *end of nature* in humanity.

In short, there is no textual support for a consent-based interpretation of the Formula of Humanity, its substantive difficulties apart.

Does Kantianism Require a Determinate Decision Procedure?

Clearly, the objections discussed so far are not exhaustive, and it is possible that some of them may be met in ways not considered. If accepted, however, they look very damaging to the project of Kantian ethics, inasmuch as it regards the categorical imperative as a determinate procedure for moral choice to compete with utilitarianism. Yet, surprisingly perhaps, the leading contemporary advocates of Kantian ethics actually appear to concede this. Allen Wood writes, for example:

> On the conception of ethical theory we find exemplified in Kant, . . . the function of a fundamental principle of morality is not to tell us what to do, but instead provide a basic framework, or value-oriented background, for justifying, modifying, and applying the more particular rules or precepts of morality that do tell us this . . . which, as we shall see presently, they can do only to a limited extent.[57]

Similarly, Barbara Herman (another Kant scholar originally taught by John Rawls) argues that the "Categorical Imperative procedure" should be restricted to "the derivation of principles of deliberative presumption":[58]

> If actual maxims are not the input of the CI [Categorical Imperative] procedure when viewed this way, neither are duties its output. We can think of what is rejected by the CI procedure—a kind of action for a kind of reason—as setting a deliberative principle in the form of a presumption. The deliberative presumption can be rebutted by reasons (justifications) of a different sort.[59]

Indeed, even Onora O'Neill, in later writings, contrasts the role of the categorical imperative with the Principle of Utility in being less than a fully determinate guide to conduct:

> The Categorical Imperative is *nowhere proposed as a principle that will by itself generate or entail a universal moral code.* It is *not a moral algo-*

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> *rithm* (unlike the Principle of Utility) but (supposedly) a criterion of moral action for agents who act freely, and so may start with various possible proposals for action. The common assumption is that there is some way by which agents can filter these initial proposals to check whether they are morally acceptable.[60]

In restricting the categorical imperative to giving "a basic framework or value-oriented background", creating "principles of deliberative presumption" or providing a "criterion of moral action" that is nevertheless not a "moral algorithm", modern advocates of Kantian ethics appear to be returning to an earlier stream of Kant interpretation, associated particularly with T. M. Greene, H. J. Paton, A. R. C. Duncan and T. C. Williams.[61]

Williams summarizes their views by means of a contrast between two ways in which the categorical imperative may be thought to be "practically useful". On traditional interpretations, as Williams calls them, the categorical imperative is taken to be in some sense "a precise logical criterion or test of the moral worth of proposed actions by reference to the logical form of their maxims".[62] Nevertheless, "there is general agreement, even among supporters of this interpretation, that the principle is, in fact, incapable of practical application in this way."[63] Hence—Williams, Paton and Duncan believe—we should understand the categorical imperative as practically useful only "in the looser sense of a statement which leads to an understanding of the nature of moral action and which allows an agent to adopt an attitude of will which is conducive, not to say essential, to moral living".[64] In other words, we should not look to the categorical imperative as a determinate procedure for moral choice at all.

Is that not to abandon what gave Kant's moral philosophy its interest in the first place? Was not the earlier O'Neill right when she said that "it is a waste of time and effort to pursue the justification of principles which are not known to be helpful in guiding moral choice"?[65] But there is a case to be made in the other direction on textual and, as I shall go on to argue, broader interpretive grounds.

We know, of course, of Kant's engagement with Rousseau's work and the debt that he felt to Rousseau in curing him of his scholarly elitism and contempt for the vulgar masses. Who can forget his remark in a famous note addressed to himself that "Rousseau corrected me"?[66] Now here is a quotation from Rousseau's *Letter to D'Alembert* (*Lettre à d'Alembert sur les*

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spectacles) in which Rousseau expresses a very striking view about the nature of moral judgement:

> The heart of man is always right about everything that does not relate personally to him. In those quarrels towards which we are purely spectators we immediately take the part of justice, and there is no act of evil that does not occasion in us a lively indignation, so long as we draw no profit from it. But when our interest is mixed in, our sentiments are soon corrupted, and it is only in this way that we prefer the bad that is useful to us over the good that nature makes us love.[67]

Moral judgement is shared by everybody, in other words, except in cases where judgement is obscured by self-interest.

Let us call this view *moral unanimism.* For the moral unanimist, the problem is not to find out from some external source—moral philosophy—what we ought to do, but to establish conditions under which people can see what, in a sense, they already know. Moral unanimism may seem very remote to us nowadays. Yet was Kant, like Rousseau, a moral unanimist?

In this connection, the last few pages of Section I of the *Groundwork* are instructive.

On page 402, Kant introduces the idea of a moral law whose principle is "mere conformity to law as such" ("*die bloße Gesetzmäßigkeit überhaupt*"). He gives a formulation of that law that corresponds closely to the later presentation of the Formula of Universal Law and illustrates it with the example of false promising. This is not just a law for philosophers, however. "Common human reason [*die gemeine Menschenvernunft*]", says Kant, "also agrees completely with this principle and *always has this principle before its eyes.*"[68]

Kant indeed repeats the claim of the coincidence between "common human reason" and the "principle" of "moral knowledge":

> Thus, then, we have arrived, within the moral knowledge of common human reason, at its principle, which it admittedly does not think so abstractly in a universal form but which it actually always has before its eyes and uses as the standard for its appraisals. Here it would be very easy to show how common human reason, with this compass in hand, knows very well how to distinguish in every case that comes up what is good and what is evil, what is in conformity with duty or

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> contrary to duty, if without in the least teaching it anything new, we only, as did Socrates, make it attentive to its own principle; and that there is, accordingly, no need of science and philosophy to know what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and even wise and virtuous.[69]

The idea that "*die gemeine Menschenvernunft*" does not need "science and philosophy" to be able to tell what is good from what is evil brings Kant, apparently, very close indeed to Rousseau's position. Is there any need for moral philosophy at all? Kant himself raises just this challenge very pointedly:

> Would it not therefore be more advisable in moral matters to leave the judgement of common reason as it is, and, at most, call in philosophy only to present the system of morals all the more completely and apprehensibly and to present its rules in a form more convenient for use (still more for disputation), but not to lead common human understanding, even in practical matters, away from its fortunate simplicity and to put it, by means of philosophy, on a new path of investigation and instruction?[70]

But there are dangers in relying on "common human reason" alone, he replies:

> There is something splendid about innocence; but what is bad about it, in turn, is that it cannot protect itself very well and is easily seduced.[71]

What "seduces" the innocence of common human reason is the unacknowledged presence of "self-interest" in human character:

> Man feels within himself a powerful counterweight to all the commands of duty, which reason represents to him as so deserving of the highest respect—the counterweight of his needs and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums up under the name "happiness".[72]

So, for Kant, exactly as for Rousseau, the danger to moral life lies not in ignorance of what to do but in the perversion of ordinary moral judgement by the effect of self-interest. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant

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identifies what he calls a "natural dialectic" in the domain of theoretical reason, the result of the natural human tendency to "speculation"—its propensity to try to extend knowledge beyond the "bounds of sense". Similarly, he claims in the *Groundwork,* the inherent conflict between duty and self-interest generates a "natural dialectic" in the moral sphere. This conflict leads to a disposition ("*Hang*") to "rationalize" ("*vernünfteln*") against the strict laws of duty. It is the need to counter this—the permanent temptation to subscribe to false moral principles motivated by unacknowledged self-interest, rather than a genuine inability to decide what to do when faced with moral dilemmas—that creates the need for moral philosophy.

Yet Kant is not Rousseau—or, at least, not quite.

For Rousseau, moral judgement is a matter of feeling—the "heart", purged of self-interest, simply opens itself to its natural feeling of sympathy (*pitié*) and reacts accordingly. For Kant, morality, even when practised by the ordinary, not especially well-educated individual, is a matter of "common human reason" ("*die gemeine Menschenvernunft*") and "moral knowledge" ("*die moralische Erkenntnis*"). Behind this moral knowledge is a "principle", which *die gemeine Menschenvernunft,* although it "does not think so abstractly in a universal form", nevertheless "always has before its eyes and uses as the standard for its appraisals". How best, then, to interpret Kant's view of moral judgement? There is, we can see, a spectrum of possibilities.

At one end is the assumption that, for Kant, moral reasoning is very like reasoning in other areas—science, mathematics or, particularly, law. Fastening on Kant's own references to the "universality" and "formality" of the principle of morality and, above all, to the idea of "contradiction", with its associations with logic, interpreters read Kant's theory as a kind of extended practical syllogism or an exercise in "public reason" whose main task is to bring an underlying general moral principle, the categorical imperative and the principles behind particular actions into consistency with one another. What makes it distinctive is its "autonomy"—that it does not apply to ends given heteronomously, as purely instrumental kinds of practical reasoning do. At the other end of the interpretive spectrum, T. C. Williams emphasizes what he calls the "intuitionist" aspect of Kant's view of moral judgement—"the doctrine of the spontaneous creative activity of pure practical reason in working on the 'content' of the agent's experience and making known to him through the 'feelings' of 'respect' and 'obligation' how he *ought* to act."[73]

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Williams cites John Rawls's Princeton teacher, Theodore M. Greene's, introductory essay to his translation of Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* as a precursor of his own interpretation. Greene writes there:

> . . . moral intuition, the immediate and irresistible apprehension of moral value, takes the place of, or at least constitutes an essential supplement to, sensuous intuition, and "practical" reason, whose law (the moral law) is the analogue to the categories of the understanding, organizes blind moral intuition into a rational moral apprehension.[74]

The arguments of this chapter so far—the accumulated weight of the objections to "universalizability test" interpretations of the categorical imperative and Kant's restriction of the role of philosophy to combating the philosophical ideologies of self-interest rather than helping to inform or correct "common human reason"—point strongly towards Williams's and Greene's end of the spectrum. But it requires, I think, some qualification.

"Intuition" is something you either grasp directly or you don't. Yet Kant emphasizes the role of reasoning in morality, even when he is talking about "*die gemeine Menschenvernunft*":

> But in practical matters it is just when common understanding excludes all sensible incentives from practical laws that its faculty of appraising first begins to show itself to advantage. It then becomes even subtle, whether in quibbling tricks with its own conscience or with other claims regarding what is to be called right, or in sincerely wanting to determine the worth of actions for its own instruction.[75]

Moreover, if we interpret moral judgement as a matter of "intuition", what becomes of the systematic, principled character of morality? As Kant points out throughout his work, if we make some aspect of human thought and experience into a matter of shared responsiveness, feeling or attitude, whatever universality it has becomes something merely psychological, not truly necessary.

Inner, Unconditioned Value

The project of Kantian ethics was to use the categorical imperative as a test for decisions that generates convincing first-order moral judgements while connecting them back to a persuasive general picture of moral action. In

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what follows, I shall offer an alternative interpretation by approaching Kant's texts from the opposite direction: not as a matter of applying a distinctive kind of moral reasoning but of responding to a distinctive kind of moral value.

Section I of the *Groundwork* opens with a very famous assertion:

> It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a good will.[76]

Almost equally well known is the following passage, in which Kant divides the domain of values into two: dignity and price:

> In the kingdom of ends everything has either a *price* or a *dignity*. What has a price can be replaced by something else as its *equivalent;* what on the other hand is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity.
>
> What is related to general human inclinations and needs has a *market price;* that which, even without presupposing a need, conforms with a certain taste, that is, with a delight in the mere purposeless play of our mental powers has a *fancy price;* but that which constitutes the condition under which something can be an end in itself has not merely a relative value, that is, a price, but an inner value, that is *dignity*.
>
> Now, morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, since only through this is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity.[77]

Evidently, Kant is committed in these passages to the claim that there exists a very distinctive kind of value and that only one thing possesses it. Let us take that as our starting-point.

The terminology that Kant uses to express this conviction varies somewhat.

In referring to the bearer of this special kind of value, he moves (as we see in the passages just quoted from the *Groundwork*) between "the good will", "morality" and "humanity insofar as it is capable of morality". He also refers to "duty", "humanity in one's person" and sometimes simply

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Persönlichkeit (the word is translated in the Cambridge Edition as "personality", but it should be translated as "personhood"). Here, for example, is a passage from the *Metaphysics of Morals:*

> Humanity itself is a dignity; for a man cannot be used merely as a means by any man (either by others or even by himself) but must always be used at the same time as an end. It is just in this that his dignity (personhood [*Persönlichkeit*]) consists . . . [78]

We could say that this kind of special value (dignity) refers to morality as a whole: it includes the moral law itself, the claim it makes ("duty") and the dimension of agency to which it is directed ("personhood", "humanity in one's person").

Moreover, there is also a duality between morality *realized* (its commands when actually followed by the good will) and morality as a mere *capacity* present in all moral beings—the good, the bad and those who are neither fully the one nor the other. This is the same duality as we find in the contrast between the freedom of the *Willkür*—the bare capacity to choose without being determined by external forces—and the full freedom that comes from being determined by something non-arbitrary, the moral law. (The parallel is, clearly, no accident.) Just as Kant is committed to the claim that the agent who does not fully realize her freedom by moral action is still free, so he is committed to the claim that moral agency itself—susceptibility to the claims of the moral law—contains a unique kind of value, whether its bearers achieve such goodness themselves or not.

Likewise, even confining oneself to the *Groundwork,* Kant uses a very varied vocabulary to characterize the value that he gives to morality. The good will, he says, is good "*ohne Einschränkung*" (without restriction). It is the "highest good" ("*das höchste Gut*"). In characterizing the "dignity" of morality he writes that it is an "inner", "internal" or "intrinsic" ("*innern*") value that is "absolute" ("*absolut*"), "unconditioned" ("*unbedingt*"), incomparable ("*unvergleichbar*") and "in itself" ("*an sich*").

Significantly too, in the passage from Ak. 4:434–35, quoted above, Kant uses the word "*erhaben*": something that is "*über allen Preis erhaben*" has, he writes, "a dignity". This is standardly translated as "raised above all price", but "*das Erhabene*" is the German for "the sublime", so the use of the word "*erhaben*" to apply to dignity gives it an important aesthetico-religious dimension. To this we can add, of course, the familiar but puzzling phrase

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from the Formula of Humanity, that humanity in one's person should be treated "as an end" ("*Zweck*"), and that moral agents are to see themselves as part of a "kingdom of ends" ("*Reich der Zwecke*").

Behind this vocabulary are a variety of distinct but connected claims.

Evidently, the good thing is good *non-instrumentally:* as an end, not a means. It is also good *objectively.* It may seem strange to think of personhood and agency as "objectively" valuable—what could be more subjective? But that, one might say, is just a matter of *where* the objective value is located (in a subject). Personhood and agency are *objectively* valuable because their value does not depend on *being seen as* valuable from any particular agent's perspective or on *being given* value by any act of choice or will. The good thing is also—that is implicit in the contrast between "dignity" and "price"—*not fungible.* It cannot be traded off or substituted for. Indeed, it cannot be compared at all. Beyond that, it is good *under all circumstances.* That is the theme of Kant's argument at the beginning of the *Groundwork,* in which he contrasts the unrestricted value of the good will (that it is good "*ohne Einschränkung*") with happiness.

Putting these claims together gives a picture of the "absoluteness" of morality that makes it appear to be, if not transcendent in the sense of belonging to a realm beyond, at least something inert—like one of the noble gases, a basic element in reality that does not combine with other elements.

Yet this would be wrong. For, as plainly as Kant asserts that the value of the good will is radically independent of all circumstances, it is not itself inactive, he claims. On the contrary, Kant describes it as the *condition* of other values:

> Thus the vocation of reason must be to produce a will, not so much as a means to other purposes, but good in itself . . . This will need not indeed be the sole and complete good, but it must be the highest good *and the condition of every other,* even of all demands for happiness.[79]

Similarly, Kant calls dignity "that which constitutes the condition under which alone something can be an end in itself".[80]

In short, the good will is a value that is itself unconditional but is the condition for all others.

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Inner, Unconditional Value as a Guide to Action?

Yet this confronts Kantian moral theory with huge difficulties. In introducing his discussion of the Formula of Humanity, Kant writes:

> But suppose there were something the existence of which in itself has an absolute value, something which as an end in itself could be a ground of determinate laws; then in it, and in it alone, would lie the ground of a possible categorical imperative, that is, of a practical law.[81]

If what has absolute value is impervious to human action, how could this thing possibly be the "ground" of determinate laws? If "humanity in one's person" can't be increased, come closer to or be protected from destruction by human efforts, how should we act towards it? What is it to treat it "as an end"? It is as if, in choosing to try to scale the Kantian mountain from this angle, we have come up against a sheer rock wall.

Plato, for whom what is truly good is timeless and eternal, faces a similar problem. His solution is that human beings are capable of *knowing* the good, and that, in knowing the good fully, we, as it were, internalize that knowledge, transforming ourselves, purging and elevating our nature. In this way, the timeless realm of truth and the empirical world are connected. Does Kant too have an answer? I believe so—but it is a different one.

We have noted that Kant's use of the word "*erhaben*" (sublime) connects his account of the moral law to the aesthetic-theological theme of *awe.* Two things, famously—the starry heavens above and the moral law within—fill the mind "with ever new and increasing wonder and reverence"—"*Bewunderung*" and "*Ehrfurcht*".[82] Persons, as ends in themselves, are, he says, an object of respect (*Gegenstand der Achtung*).[83] Taking this aspect of Kant's thought very seriously—not throwing it aside as a "flirtation with supernaturalism"—leads to the idea of *respect for* the moral law.

Yet that might seem to do no more than kick the can down the road in front of us. To respect a law means, in the first instance, to keep it—we respect the speed limit by driving below it. We might distinguish between keeping the law out of respect (just because it is the law) and keeping it from fear of the consequences of breaking it. Still, the mere idea of respect does not, it seems, give the law a content, tell us what to do.

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This is quite true. Nevertheless, if we encounter something that has absolute value, it is plausible to think that it is proper to treat it in a certain way—to *give it respect.* In the first place, this is a matter of certain kinds of "reactive attitude"—the "respectful" attitudes of awe and reverence, for example. Yet there are also ways of behaving—ways that can be said to "show respect". Is this the way to understand how we can treat personhood "as an end"? If so, then it seems we are left with something much closer to the "intuitionist" reading of Kant we find in Greene and Williams than the determinate, principled decision procedure that Kantian ethics looked to find in the categorical imperative. On the other hand, such an interpretation does, at least, offer a response to the apparently insuperable difficulty of how to behave towards something that cannot be affected for good or ill by one's behaviour. And it also seems to fit well with Kant's own moral judgements.

Korsgaard is admirably candid about the difficulty of extending the universalizability-test approach she favours to Kant's claim that suicide is a fundamental violation of duty.

> Kant's argument depends on a teleological claim: that the instinct whose office is to impel the improvement of life cannot universally be used to destroy life without contradiction. But as I understand the contradiction in conception test, teleological claims have no real place in it. What matters is not whether nature assigns a certain purpose to a certain motive or instinct, but whether everyone with the same motive or instinct could act in the way proposed and still achieve their purpose. There is simply no argument to show that everyone suffering from acute misery could not commit suicide and still achieve their purpose: ending that misery.[84]

Nevertheless, such claims about duties to oneself are, she maintains, peripheral to Kant's approach to moral duty:

> The kind of case around which the view is framed, and which it handles best, is the temptation to make oneself an exception: selfishness, meanness, advantage-taking, and disregard for the rights of others. It is this sort of thing, not violent crimes born of despair or illness, that serves as Kant's model of immoral conduct. I do not think

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> we can fault him on this, for this and not the other is the sort of evil that most people are tempted by in their everyday lives.[85]

In fact, however, Kant states that duties to oneself are primary. He is particularly explicit about this in his *Lectures on Ethics:*

> So far from these duties being the lowest, they actually take first place, and are the most important duties of all; for even without first explaining what self-regarding duty is, we may ask how, if a man degrades his own person, anything else can be demanded of him?[86]

Self-regarding duties set limits to our freedom, and these limits flow from the need to act in ways that honour our humanity:

> The *principium* of the self-regarding duties does not consist in self-favour, but in self-esteem; our actions, that is, must be in keeping with the worth of humanity . . . All such duties are founded on a certain love of honour consisting in the fact that a man values himself, and in his own eyes is not unworthy that his actions should be in keeping with humanity. To be worthy in his eyes of inner respect, the treasuring of approval, is the essential ingredient of duties to oneself.[87]

Kant's vocabulary does not focus here on requirements of universality and consistency in willing—the apparatus of rationality with which Kant's moral philosophy is generally identified nowadays—so much as *respect, esteem* and the "*love of honour*". Failure to honour the inner value that each of us carries within ourselves makes us unworthy of respect. We do not have to bring the dignity of humanity into being or stop it from being destroyed, but we *do* have to find ways of acting that express esteem for it. If we act in ways that express our esteem for the inner value that we carry within ourselves, we are entitled to respect: our own self-respect and the respect of others.

Suicide is therefore a central case for Kant. It is, he says, "the supreme violation of the duties to oneself".[88] Defenders of the permissibility of suicide commonly appeal to one (possibly both) of two principles, each of which Kant rejects. First, they may argue that people have a right to end their own lives, should they so wish, in virtue of their own "self-ownership".

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Kant strongly disagrees. "Humanity in our person" prevents us from owning ourselves in the way that we might own a material object, he says, and likewise forbids us from making use of our bodies as things:

> He is indeed the *proprietarius* of it, i.e., he governs and rules over it, but as over a person, i.e. insofar as he would dispose over it as a thing, the phenomenon appears restrained by the noumenon.[89]

Secondly, the defender of the permissibility of suicide may appeal to the idea that the possibility of suicide diminishes human suffering. This too Kant rejects. The argument that someone may, by committing suicide, escape from suffering reduces our duty to the humanity in our person to a matter of "inclination" or "prudence" (*Klugheit*) when, in fact, it is a matter of acting in such a way that we do honour to it. "Nobody is harmed", he admits, by violations of duties to oneself, "yet it is a dishonouring of the worth of humanity in one's own person":

> Self-regarding duties . . . are independent of all advantage, and pertain only to the worth of being human. They rest on the fact that in regard to our person we have no untrammeled freedom, that humanity in our person must be highly esteemed, since, without this, man is an object of contempt, which is an absolute fault, since he is worthless, not only in the eyes of others, but also in himself. The self-regarding duties are the supreme condition and *principium* of all morality, for the worth of the person constitutes moral worth.[90]

We are the embodiments of a transcendent value—humanity in our persons—and this requires that we act in ways that are respectful of that value, even though there will be no advantage for us or for others in doing so.

Indeed, in the Vigilantius lectures, Kant goes so far as to speak of the "inviolable holiness" of humanity in one's person. Suicide, he says there, is an action that is "contrary to the concept of the right of humanity in my own person; and humanity is in itself an inviolable holiness, wherein my *personhood* (*Persönlichkeit*), or the right of humanity in my person, is no less inviolably constrained."[91] This is why we may not dispose of our own lives, despite having overwhelmingly strong material or psychological reasons to want to do so.

Korsgaard, however, offers a different argument on Kant's behalf:

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> However obvious it may seem that a "tolerable condition" is a good thing, it is good only because of the value conferred upon it by the choice of a rational being. Destroy the rational being, and you cut off the source of the goodness of this end—it is no longer really an end at all, and it is no longer rational to pursue it.[92]

But if value is really conferred by "the choice of a rational being", as Korsgaard says, what about the value of that choosing being itself? Either the choice made by a rational being must have value because of its own choice (which looks like a vicious circle) or there must be at least one thing whose value is not a product of the choice of a rational being.

Contrast Korsgaard's "voluntarist" account of value with the reading of Kant that I am advocating. On this view, the choices of rational agents have value (when they do—which is not always) because rational agents have value in themselves; they do not derive that value from choices that they make.

If Korsgaard is right, then, for Kant, the contradiction in suicide is that, in ending one's life, one is destroying the "rational being" which is the source of the goodness of particular ends. Yet we can establish clearly from the texts that this is not Kant's view. What has intrinsic, absolute value, for Kant, is not our *lives* as rational beings but our personhood—"humanity in our persons"—and (odd though it may sound to us today) our personhood and our lives are not the same thing, for Kant.

It is for that reason, as Kant makes clear in his *Lectures on Ethics,* that "in and for itself, life is in no way highly to be prized, and I should seek to preserve my life only insofar as I am worthy to live".[93] In some circumstances the honour due to "humanity in our person" will, in fact, require us to give up our lives:

> Humanity in our person is an object of the highest respect and never to be violated in us. In the cases where a man is liable to dishonour, he is duty bound to give up his life, rather than dishonour the humanity in his own person. For does he do honour to it, if it is to be dishonoured by others? If a man can preserve his life in no other way than by dishonouring his humanity, he ought rather to sacrifice it. He then, indeed, puts his animal life in danger, yet he feels that, so long as he has lived, he has lived honourably. It matters not that a man lives long (for it is not his life that he loses by the event, but

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> only the prolongation of the years of his life, since nature has already decreed that he will some day die); what matters is that, so long as he lives, he should live honourably, and not dishonour the dignity of humanity. If he can now no longer live in that fashion, he cannot live at all; his moral life is then at an end. But moral life is at an end if it no longer accords with the dignity of humanity.[94]

Since a person, for Kant, is not to be identified with her physical existence, what is wrong with suicide cannot be that, as Korsgaard says, in ending our lives we "destroy the rational being" that is the source of value. It is prohibited, rather, because it fails to honour humanity in our persons.

A similar difference of interpretative approach applies to that other stumbling-block for advocates of Kantian ethics: Kant's absolute prohibition of lying. Lying, it was argued above, does not fit the universalizability-test approach to the understanding of the categorical imperative, since neither the Egoistic Maxim nor the Utilitarian Maxim is excluded by it. Lying, of course, is deceptive communication, so it would seem to be a model of a "strict duty to others". So it is very striking that, when we look at what Kant has to say about lying in the *Metaphysics of Morals,* he identifies it as a violation of duty towards oneself:

> The greatest violation of man's duty to himself regarded merely as a moral being (the humanity in his person) is the contrary of truthfulness, *lying*.[95]

In ethical life, there is no "authorization derived from harmlessness". Even an internal lie—a lie to oneself—is strictly prohibited:

> By an external lie a man makes himself an object of contempt in the eyes of others; by an internal lie he does what is still worse. He makes himself contemptible in his own eyes and violates the dignity of humanity in his own person.[96]

Once again, we can see that the basis for Kant's absolute prohibition is the claim that to act otherwise would be to fail in showing the respect we owe to the absolute value we embody.

On the interpretation advanced here, Kant's "rigourism" is not a bug; it's a feature.

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Morality as a System

What becomes of the *systematic* character of morality, however, if the imperative to treat "humanity in one's person" as an "end in itself" is interpreted as the requirement to act in ways that show proper respect towards something that is of absolute value? If one thinks that for morality to be systematic there must be a publicly specifiable decision procedure, it will fall short. Yet it evidently does give a single focus to morality: the good will as the "highest" (but not "complete") good.

Can it also give an account of how this absolute value can be, as Kant says, the "condition" of other values so that we can see it as a focal point from which all of the parts of moral life radiate? Here is a brief account of how I take Kant to see the issue.

As we have seen, Kant is extremely concerned about the pervasiveness of injustice—specifically, the impunity of the "wicked"—as an objection to theodicy. At the beginning of the *Groundwork,* he claims that "an impartial rational spectator can take no delight in the uninterrupted prosperity of a being graced with no feature of a pure and good will, so that a good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition even of worthiness to be happy."[97] In other words, injustice cancels the value of something that would otherwise be good—the happiness of a human being. Likewise, punishment is to be carried out irrespective of whether it leads to suffering, since "if justice were to come to an end, there is no longer any value in human beings living on earth."[98]

Yet what of a world, not of injustice, but one without freedom at all? Let us imagine a universe that is fully deterministic but in which no complex creatures with agency exist. There are, instead, some very simple beings that have only the property of reacting with pleasure—let's say to a warm temperature. Would such a world have value? Hedonism, as we find it in classical utilitarianism, believes that pleasure is of intrinsic value, so utilitarians are, it seems, committed to the answer "yes" in this case. But another view is possible, namely that the pleasure of such a universe simply does not matter.

Let us now complicate the example a little. The universe is no longer fully deterministic, but there are creatures susceptible to pleasure who also have the capacity to behave in ways that are unpredictable, governed by

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caprice in their choice of which desires to follow. Would that introduce value into the world? Again, it seems at least credible to answer "no" on Kant's behalf. It is only if there is true freedom—a world containing beings capable of acting in ways that are rationally self-determined—that there is real, objective value. That is why the "highest good" is the goodness of a good (that is, fully free) will. If we live in such a world—as Kant, of course, believes fervently that we do—the subsidiary values can, as it were, spring to life.

How these subsidiary values relate to the moral agency that animates them is not clearly prescribed. Nevertheless, it would not be right to say that Kant's account of morality, when it descends from the abstractness of the intrinsic value of the good will, is piecemeal or haphazard.

In the Introduction to the Doctrine of Virtue (*Tugendlehre*) of the *Metaphysics of Morals,* Kant asks: What are the ends that are also duties? To which he gives a succinct answer: "They are: one's own perfection—the happiness of others."[99] To make another's happiness one's end is not just to have regard for their pleasure. Happiness, says Kant, "is the state of a rational being in the world in the whole of whose existence everything goes according to his wish and will".[100] In other words, furthering other people's happiness requires respect for their choices. On the other hand, as we have seen, "perfection", for Kant, requires the development of one's character in accordance with the ends and principles that are contained within it—its "determinations" (*Bestimmungen*). But such perfection, for Kant, requires a human being to be able to "set his end in accordance with his own concepts of duty", so it is self-contradictory to try to pursue it on behalf of others.[101]

To this teleological element in human beings' duties we can add the equality that derives from their having a share in moral agency and the requirement to act in ways that express or demonstrate respect for intrinsic value. The "dignity of humanity within us" prohibits servility and prescribes certain attitudes and ways of conducting oneself:

> Be no man's lackey. Do not let others tread with impunity on your rights. Contract no debt for which you cannot give full security. Do not accept favours that you could do without, and do not be a parasite or a flatterer or (what really differs from these only in degree) a beggar. Be thrifty so that you will not become destitute.

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> Complaining and whining, even crying out in bodily pain, is unworthy of you, especially if you are aware of having deserved it. Thus a criminal's death may be ennobled (its disgrace averted) by the resoluteness with which he dies. Kneeling down or prostrating oneself on the ground, even to show your veneration for heavenly objects, is contrary to the dignity of humanity, as is invoking them in present images. For you then humble yourself, not in front of an *ideal* presented to you by your own reason, but before an *idol* of your own making.[102]

Above all, agency requires *responsibility.* We must acknowledge the value of the choices people make to the point of appreciating that their transgressions should be punished as a "categorical imperative". Yet, at the same time, the agency that we carry within us is not ours to dispose of. Hence, Kant's apparently strange combination of belief in the obligatoriness of capital punishment and in the impermissibility of suicide.

We can see, then, how Kant's account supports, or so he believes, a range of subsidiary kinds of value: happiness, choice, self-perfection, self-respect and responsibility. Many correspond to what he calls "wide duties". Although Kant denies that duties can ultimately conflict, wide duties, he says, make claims which may need to be "limited" by one another—"for example, love of one's neighbour in general by love of one's parents".[103] Together they radiate from the central value of the good will, even though they are not derived from it by an impersonal, determinate procedure.

Conclusion

To argue, as I have done in this chapter, that Kant is, essentially, a moral unanimist will be extremely disappointing to many. Ours is an age of moral perplexity and disagreement. The promise that has drawn so many interpreters to Kant is that, in answering what he himself presents as the central question of moral philosophy: What ought I to do?, he will give us an objective method to resolve such disagreements. It is not that people do not, in most cases, have strong opinions about what they ought to do, yet they know that, all too often, others have equally strong convictions in the opposite direction. To respond, as Kant does, to follow the interpretation of this chapter: "You know that yourself—or you would do if you listened

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to your innate moral reason and did not let yourself be seduced by self-interest" seems to offer no help.

Yet what is so natural and obvious to us about our own moral situation may cut us off, not just from Kant, but from the dominant tradition of thought about ethics before his time.

At the conclusion of his first book, *Reasons and Persons,* Derek Parfit writes as follows:

> Belief in God, or in many gods, prevented the free development of moral reasoning. Disbelief in God, openly admitted by a majority, is a recent event, not yet completed. Because this event is so recent, Non-Religious Ethics is at a very early stage. We cannot yet predict whether, as in Mathematics, we will all reach agreement. Since we cannot know how Ethics will develop, it is not irrational to have high hopes.[104]

This is not just implausible—in fact, it inverts history. We live in a world whose empirical nature is in many ways very remote from us, and, for the religious believer, there may be good reasons that God should have made the "Book of Nature" so hard to read that we need particle accelerators, magnetic resonance imaging and an elite of highly trained specialists to do it.[105] But surely that could not be so of ethics: what believers think of as the word of God addressed to human beings to govern their conduct. If God is just in rewarding and punishing human beings, then it must be for actions about whose significance they were properly informed. And, if God's judgement applies to all of mankind, moral knowledge—knowledge of the laws that he requires human beings to keep—must be shared by all of mankind too.

This, *pace* Parfit, is, in fact, just what the dominant tradition of Western thought about morality believed in the millennia before Kant. The Romans were polytheists who accommodated a variety of different local gods within their empire. But they were not, for that reason, moral pluralists. Roman law recognized a *jus gentium*—a common thread of basic moral principles running through the laws of different peoples. For the Jews, before the famous handing down of the tablets of the law on Mount Sinai, there existed what are often called the Noachide Commandments: the seven laws given by God to Noah. The particular significance of these laws is that Noah (whose family were the sole survivors of the Flood) was, as it were, the second father of mankind as a whole. Only with Abraham would

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human beings be divided between Jews and Gentiles. Thus the Noachide Commandments are thought of as universally binding.

For Christianity, as St Paul puts it, the moral law is "written in the hearts" of the Gentiles too, in the form of conscience (Romans 2:14–15). Even Augustine, with his picture of human beings dependent on grace, channelled through the Church, for their salvation, follows St Paul in believing in the conscience of mankind. Human beings are cut off from salvation through the dominance of the evil principle over the human will, but they are not wholly cut off from moral knowledge.

Of course, in such a long history, there are some apparent counter-instances. God, after all, commanded Abraham to commit one of the most dreadful crimes imaginable—to kill his own son. But this is not to say that filicide is right because God commands it; rather that the awful force of the divine command must override even human conscience of right and wrong. Likewise, in the New Testament, Christ on the cross says of his executioners, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). But this can be read, not as saying that those who put Christ to death did not know that killing an innocent man was wrong, but that they did not know that the man they were executing was the Son of Man, the redeemer of mankind.

In short, the main stream of moral thought before Kant believes that morality is, to a significant degree, universal. Contrary to Parfit, it is far more plausible to see moral diversity and fundamental disagreement as a characteristically modern phenomenon that emerged with the decline of religion than as a permanent problem that "Non-Religious Ethics" is finally able to address without prejudice.

What makes Kant stand out from his predecessors is that he does not believe that the universality of morality is founded in divine commands or a shared conscience, implanted mysteriously in human beings by the divine hand. Nor is it, as seventeenth- and eighteenth-century thinkers would come to argue, grounded upon common moral sentiments. Yet neither, to follow the interpretation of this chapter, is "*die gemeine Menschenvernunft*"—common human reason—the kind of procedural, argumentative reasoning that we find mathematicians (or, indeed, lawyers) using. It is something that is within the grasp of every single human being, regardless of education or culture—as, of course, it must be if it is to be the basis of judgement by a just God.

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Chapter 6

From Heaven to History

> Der Weltgeist ist, aber ist keiner.
> (The World-Spirit exists, but it is no such thing.)
>
> —THEODOR W. ADORNO

"Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht"

That the history of the world ("*die Weltgeschichte*") is the Last Judgement ("*das Weltgericht*") is one of the most famous ideas in all of Hegel's work. It also seems to support a familiar, deeply unsympathetic, image of Hegel's philosophy. If the Last Judgement is not carried out by an omniscient, omnipotent and (above all) just creator-god but left to the verdict of history, then it looks as if critics are right and that Hegel is, as Benjamin once called him, a "*Gewaltmensch*"—a "man of violence" who believes that the World Spirit fights on the side of the big battalions.[1] Whatever we might think of the picture of God exercising divine justice over human beings in a Last Judgement, surely no decent person could believe that history—that "tableau of crimes and misfortunes", as Voltaire so rightly called it—should take its place.

Hegel does not use the sentence "*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*" exactly, although it is often wrongly attributed to him.[2] It comes, in fact, from a poem, *Resignation: A Fantasy,* by Friedrich Schiller, first published in 1786. Reference to that sentence does appear unmistakably, however,

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although without acknowledgement of its source, towards the very end of the *Philosophy of Right,* at the point at which Hegel discusses the relationship between different states. He writes there:

> It is through this dialectic [between individual *Volksgeister*] that the *universal Geist,* the *World-Spirit* produces itself in its freedom from all limits, and it is this *Geist* which exercises its right—which is the highest right of all—over finite *Geister* in *world history* as the Last Judgement.[3]

The argument of this chapter is that, although the German Idealists do indeed find ideals in secular history that correspond to what had previously been the prerogative of a transcendent deity, the passage from the one view to the other is more than just the transfer to history of God's erstwhile role as the distributor of rewards and punishments. Their position is more complex (and less obviously morally outrageous). As we shall see, thinkers of the period developed a variety of views of what I shall call "historical immortality" and differed too whether such conceptions were to be seen as complementary to or an alternative to orthodox religious doctrines of personal immortality. To begin, let us remind ourselves of the view of Kant that is being argued for.

Kant and the "Highest Good"

The idea of God as an omniscient, just judge is, it has been the argument of this book, central to Kant's Socratic reconciliation of the apparent evil in the world with divine goodness. Kant's answer is developed around the idea that the goodness of the world lies in freedom, not happiness. But Kant is not a kind of libertarian Stoic—someone who believes that the goodness of the world consists in human freedom, and that pleasure and pain don't matter at all.

At the very beginning of the *Groundwork,* Kant is engaged in advocating the claim that only a good will can be considered to be good "without limitation" (*ohne Einschränkung*).[4] He remarks in support of that claim that happiness, by contrast, is not always good because "an impartial rational spectator can take no delight in seeing the uninterrupted prosperity of a being graced with no feature of a pure and good will, so that the good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition even of

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worthiness to be happy."[5] At first sight, this seems to be a very bad argument. What fails to "delight" the "impartial spectator" about the prosperity of the person who lacks a good will is precisely that a *good* thing is going to a *bad* person. Which presupposes that happiness *is* intrinsically good—if not, why should we be upset at seeing it distributed inappropriately? In short, the argument seems to establish just the opposite of what Kant claims! But Kant's claim makes better sense once one interprets him as saying that what is bad when seen from the point of view of the impartial spectator is not happiness itself but the relational state in which happiness is being inappropriately distributed.

Thus it is apparent even in the *Groundwork* that the interpretation of Kant as a "libertarian Stoic" is not quite right. As he writes there, although the good will is not "the sole and complete good", it is "the highest good and the condition of every other, even of all demands for happiness".[6] The correct proportion between moral worth and happiness is that "complete good". Between the *Groundwork* (published in 1785) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Kant's use of the phrase "highest good" changed. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* the "highest good" is now used to refer, not to the good will alone, but to the proportional relationship between happiness and moral worth. Although this is a change in terminology, it does not appear, however, to represent any substantial change in the structure of Kant's thought.

The highest good in this sense is a proper object of religious hope, as he there explains:

> The moral law commands me to make the highest possible good in a world the final object of all my conduct. But I cannot hope to produce this except by the harmony of my will with that of a holy and beneficent author of the world; and although in the concept of the highest good, as that of a whole in which the greatest happiness is represented as connected in the most exact proportion with the greatest degree of moral perfection (possible in creatures), *my own happiness* is included, this is nevertheless not the determining ground of the will that is directed to promote the highest good; it is instead the moral law (which, on the contrary, limits by strict conditions my unbounded craving for happiness).
>
> For this reason, again, morals is not properly the doctrine of how we are to *make* ourselves happy, but of how we are to become *worthy*

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> of happiness. Only if religion is added to it does there also enter the hope of some day participating in happiness to the degree that we have been intent upon being not unworthy of it.[7]

Kant, in other words, is making the claim that it is reasonable for virtuous people to *hope* to be happy as a result of their virtuous actions, although, had the hope of such happiness been the motive for their actions, that would have destroyed those actions' virtuousness. Not surprisingly, such an apparently convoluted claim has put off readers since the beginning. In his essay "Theory and Practice" (1793), Kant presents a response to Christian Garve, who had raised this very objection. Kant quotes Garve as follows:

> "For my own part, I confess that I very well conceive this division of ideas in my *head,* but that I do not find this division of wishes and strivings in my *heart,* and that it is even inconceivable to me how anyone can become aware of having detached himself altogether from his desire for happiness and hence aware of having performed his duty quite unselfishly."

In reply, Kant concedes that, no, one cannot have knowledge of one's own inner state sufficient to determine the worth of one's own actions:

> I readily grant that no one can become aware with certainty of *having performed his duty quite unselfishly;* for that belongs to inner experience, and to this consciousness of his state of soul there would have to belong a perfectly clear representation of all the associated representations and considerations attached to the concept of duty by imagination, habit, and inclination, which cannot be required in any case; and, in general, the nonexistence of something (and so too of a covertly thought advantage) cannot be an object of experience.[8]

Nevertheless, he continues to maintain that actions, to have true moral worth, must be performed for the sake of duty alone, and that that must be possible:

> . . . that the human being *ought to perform* his duty quite unselfishly and that he must altogether separate his craving for happiness from the concept of duty, in order to have this concept quite pure: of that he is aware with the utmost clarity, or, should he believe that he is not, it can be required of him that he be so, as far as he can; for the

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> true worth of morality is to be found in this purity, and he must therefore also be capable of it.[9]

By this time, Kant had already published "On the Failure of All Philosophical Attempts at Theodicy" (1791). Here (as was explained in Chapter 2) he is very explicit about the significance of the contrast between the two different ways in which moral worth and happiness might be out of proportion with one another. To be morally good is no more than to do our duty, so it is no objection to belief in God if God should fail to give virtue some reward beyond itself by making the virtuous happy. On the other hand, for the wicked not to pay for their crimes—here Kant's pitiless retributivism comes to the fore—would be a violation of justice: thus "it is from the necessity of punishment that the inference to a future life is drawn."[10]

To summarize: God can justly judge human beings because:

(1) They have knowledge of the moral law: there is no need for religious revelation or philosophical education for them to know it.
(2) They have the freedom required to be held responsible for their actions. (This is something that they have compellingly strong practical reasons to believe and that can be defended philosophically against fatalism and "Spinozism".)

Even though:

(3) They do not have the capacity to make fully accurate judgements of their own moral worth.
    (i) This is because they cannot tell introspectively whether their actions done in conformity with the moral law have true merit by being performed for the sake of the moral law alone.
    (ii) Nevertheless, human beings can tell when they or others have broken the moral law and thus deserve punishment.

*Kantian "***Recht***" and the "Church Invisible"*

For Kant, then, the idea of justice points us towards God and a world beyond. But not only to the world beyond. Justice, defined as it is by Kant as the appropriate proportion between well-being and moral worth, does

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not wholly transcend human capacities. It is true that, since moral worth requires that we act for the sake of duty alone, and since our moral self-knowledge can never confirm such purity of motivation, we can never be sure of the existence of true moral goodness in ourselves (let alone in others). But the requirements of morality are clear to us and their transgression is likewise plain. Moreover, human beings have the capacity to confront wrongdoers and punish them. So, while perfect justice may be unattainable, the pursuit of justice—the attempt to allocate pleasure and pain in accordance with desert—is indeed a viable human project. Justice is not just something that must wait for God's intervention or a future life: it is something that human beings can work towards in this world. Indeed, it is what gives history its point and purpose.

Kant is often represented as the founder of modern liberal political philosophy. Michael Sandel, who takes this view, sees "Kantian liberalism" as a political philosophy that seeks a "framework neutral among ends" that does not depend on any "preferred way of life" or "conception of the good" and that does not "presuppose the superiority of one way of life over others".[11] There is a good deal in Kant's texts to support this "anti-perfectionist" understanding of Kant's political thought if one focuses only on those writings by Kant that are commonly classed as "political".[12] Thus in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant gives a succinct definition of *Recht* ("law", "the right"):

> Right is therefore the sum of the conditions under which the will [*Willkür*] of one can be united with the will [*Willkür*] of another in accordance with a universal law of freedom.[13]

As he explains:

> The concept of right, insofar as it is related to an obligation corresponding to it (i.e. the moral concept of right), has to do, *first,* only with the external and indeed practical relation of one person to another, insofar as their actions, as deeds, can have (direct or indirect) influence on each other. But, *second,* it does not signify the relation of one's choice [*Willkür*] to the mere wish (hence also to the mere need) of the other, as in actions of beneficence or callousness, but only a relation to the other's *choice* [*Willkür*]. *Third,* in this reciprocal relation of choice [*Willkür*] no account at all is taken of the matter of choice [*Willkür*], that is, of the end each has in mind with

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> the object he wants; it is not asked, for example, whether someone who buys goods from me for his own commercial use will gain by the transaction or not. All that is in question is the form in the relation of choice [*Willkür*] on the part of both, insofar as choice [*Willkür*] is regarded merely as free, and whether the action of one can be united with the freedom of the other in accordance with a universal law.[14]

The structure of Kantian *Recht* is not to be derived from the pursuit of broader goals, whether those are conceived of individually ("happiness" or "virtue") or collectively ("community"). Its sole affirmative value is the *Willkür*—the power of choice whose freedom is, according to Kant, merely "negative"—and its guiding principle is the need to find a system within which such choices can be integrated. But Kant, as has been argued, is not a voluntarist or a contractualist in his moral theory. He is not an agnostic about human well-being, nor, unlike those modern thinkers whom Sandel calls "Kantian liberals", does he view political life through the lens of moral pluralism. Thus, alongside the *Willkür*-based conception of *Recht* as a neutral framework for political order, we also find in Kant a much more perfectionist conception of moral community, one that develops through time.

A particularly clear (and, indeed, stirring) statement of this idea is to be found in the *Lectures on Ethics* (Collins Transcript of 1784–85):

> The final destiny [*Bestimmung*] of the human race is moral perfection, so far as it is accomplished through freedom, whereby man, in that case, is capable of the greatest human happiness. God might already have made men perfect in this fashion, and allotted to each his share of happiness, but in that case it would not have sprung from the inner *principium* of the world. But that inner principle is freedom. The destiny of man is therefore to gain his greatest perfection by means of his freedom. God does not simply will that we should be happy, but rather that we should make ourselves happy, and that is the true morality. The universal end of mankind is the highest moral perfection; if only everyone were so to behave that their conduct would coincide with the universal end, the highest perfection would be thereby attained. Every individual must endeavour to order his conduct in accordance with this end, whereby he makes his contribution such that, if everyone does likewise, perfection is attained.[15]

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This is a very revealing passage. Divine benevolence, in Kant's view, consists in God ordaining a world of justice—that is, the co-operation of happiness and freedom—rather than in happiness alone. Justice is not to be understood as being out of reach because of human beings' mortality and physical frailty. On the contrary, the "highest human happiness" *is* attainable. But to achieve it is a collective endeavour that requires human beings to work together. It is not enough for one or a few of us to do our duty; every individual must make his or her contribution. Yet, however remote the achievement of justice may be, it remains a viable *political* ideal.

Kant's conception of the highest good brings religion and politics together in the idea of an ethical community, so it is not surprising that it is articulated most clearly in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone.* As he writes there:

> This highest moral good will not be brought about solely through the striving of one individual person for his own moral perfection but requires rather a union of such persons into a whole . . . toward a system of well-disposed human beings . . . a universal republic based on the laws of virtue.[16]

Although the attainment of such a republic of virtue is, in principle, within human powers, it requires *universal* co-operation. For this reason, the duty of working towards it "will need the presupposition of another idea, namely, of a higher moral being through whose universal organization the forces of single individuals, insufficient on their own, are united for a common effect".[17] In other words, if human beings are to come together sufficiently to achieve justice as an ideal, we must also think of God as working with us *in* history (though this does not exempt us from the obligation to try to bring justice about through our own efforts):

> To found a moral people of God is, therefore, a work whose execution cannot be hoped for from human beings but only from God himself. Yet human beings are not permitted on this account to remain idle in the undertaking and let Providence have free rein, as if each could go after his private moral affairs and entrust to a higher wisdom the whole concern of the human race (as regards its moral destiny). Each must, on the contrary, so conduct himself as if everything depended on him. Only on this condition may he hope that a

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> higher wisdom will provide the fulfilment of his well-intentioned effort.[18]

It is this conception of human beings working together under providential guidance that leads Kant to describe his ideal as the *church invisible:*

> An ethical community under divine moral legislation is a *church,* which, inasmuch as it is not the object of a possible experience, is called the *church invisible* (the mere idea of the union of all upright human beings under direct yet moral divine self-governance, as serves as the archetype of any such governance to be founded by human beings). The *church visible* is the actual union of human beings into a whole that accords with this ideal.[19]

Kant's concern with justice as the "highest good"—that virtue should be rewarded and (most especially) wickedness punished in proportion to desert—thus leads in two directions: towards a belief in the Last Judgement and an afterlife but also towards the "foundation of a kingdom of God on earth", a "universal republic based on the laws of virtue" as a goal of history.[20] In contrast with the redemptive hopes of traditional religious faith (the opening of graves, lions lying down with lambs and so on) the realization of justice, we should note, is a project that is not incompatible with the facts of nature and science, however remote such a world may be from society as it is at present; justice can, in principle, be realized in this world without the need for miraculous divine intervention. It can be a matter of "general", not "particular", providence.

What we can take from Kant, then, are the outlines of a possible vision of history as moving towards justice as human beings come to act virtuously together, not the ugly and reprehensible idea that I canvassed at the beginning of this chapter that whatever happens in history *is* just.

Schiller

At this point, I return to Schiller's poem *Resignation: A Fantasy,* first published in 1786. *Resignation* depicts a soul who has come to the end of his life and now, as he believes, stands on the threshold of the Day of Judgement. In life, he has sacrificed himself for duty and kept faith with reli-

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gion in the face of the scorn of the world. Now, surely, must come his reward. But as he makes his claim a voice replies to him. The last three stanzas containing that reply read as follows:

'Mit gleicher Liebe lieb' ich meine Kinder!'
Rief unsichtbar ein Genius.
'Zwei Blumen,' rief er, 'hört es, Menschenkinder,
Zwei Blumen blühen für den weisen Finder,
Sie heißen *Hoffnung* und *Genuß.*

'Wer dieser Blumen *eine* brach, begehre
Die andre Schwester nicht.
Genieße, wer nicht glauben kann. Die Lehre
Ist ewig, wie die Welt. Wer glauben kann, entbehre!
Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.

'Du hast *gehofft,* dein Lohn ist abgetragen,
Dein *Glaube* war dein zugewognes Glück.
Du konntest deine Weisen fragen,
Was man von der Minute ausgeschlagen,
Gibt keine Ewigkeit zurück.'

And here is a translation:

"With equal love I love each child of mine!"
A genius hid from sight exclaimed.
"Two flowers," he cried, "ye mortals, mark the sign,
Two flowers to greet the Searcher wise entwine,-
Hope and Enjoyment they are named."

"Who of these flowers plucks one, let him ne'er yearn
To touch the other sister's bloom.
Let him enjoy, who has no faith; eterne
As earth, this truth!-Abstain, who faith can learn!
The world's long story is the world's own doom."

"Hope thou hast felt,-thy wages, then, are paid;
Thy faith 'twas formed the rapture pledged to thee.
Thou might'st have of the wise inquiry made,-
The minutes thou neglectest, as they fade,
Are given back by no eternity!"[21]

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Thus, in its original context, "*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*" ("World history is the Last Judgement"—rather more fancifully translated above) denies the prospect of there being any reward in a future life: it is true that whoever chooses hope in this world must abstain from the world's satisfactions, but that hope is its own reward. *Resignation* appeared at the time that the "*Pantheismusstreit*" between Mendelssohn and Jacobi about Lessing's "Spinozism" was taking place in Germany, although before Schiller had come to take notice of and engage with Kant's thought.[22] His position is almost the exact opposite of Kant's. For Kant, belief in a future life is compelling, although hope in a future life would undermine itself if it were to become one's motive for action; for Schiller, action from hope is valuable, even though it may not correspond to anything real, for the benefits it brings in this life.

Clearly Schiller's idea of "hope for hope's sake" is unstable. How can it be sustained, whatever its psychic and social benefits, if the content of our hope (a place of individual reward) is not credible? Once the corrosive, rationalistic forces of doubt erode belief, hope will be eroded too. History itself, however, understood not as a judge that rewards and punishes individuals as they deserve, but as offering the prospect of progress towards a society of justice, does seem like a reasonable alternative object of hope, and this is what we find in Kant.

It is important to see that the idea of history as moving towards justice that I have been presenting contrasts with more familiar ways of connecting God and history. The eighteenth century was packed with accounts that presented history as a progressive unfolding of God's providence—that "temporalized", as A. O. Lovejoy put it, the "chain of being".[23] Yet, if, like Turgot, to name a single example, we were to see history as being moved from a turbulent arena of violent passions to a calm scene of civilized interaction, how are we to understand it as an expression of divine benevolence and omnipotence? Perhaps a good outcome is produced in the end by all of this turmoil, but how can we judge as good a process in which, in Herder's words, "all preceding generations [were made] properly for the last alone, which is to be enthroned on the ruined scaffolding of the happiness of the rest."[24] "Do you", asked Alexander Herzen, "truly wish to condemn the human beings alive today to the sad role of caryatids supporting a floor for others some day to dance on?"[25] Is God not using past generations as a means for the end of the future?

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But this is not an objection that has force against Kant.[26] For Kant, the "inner principle" of the world is *freedom,* not happiness, and such freedom is something that is available to all moral agents at all times. So the absence of happiness in the world or the fact that it is more easily available at later stages of history than at earlier ones is no objection. Indeed, it may seem puzzling that Kant should have a doctrine of *progress* at all. Of course, human beings have duties that are downstream from the fundamental value of *Persönlichkeit*—free moral agency—and these include the duty of self-development. Thus the Enlightenment providentialism that we find, for example, in Kant's "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" may lead to material progress and even to a softening of anti-social passions ("psychological progress", as one might call it) but that does not change human beings' basic moral situation.

Nevertheless, there is one extremely important form of moral progress. To follow the interpretation defended in this book, our moral duty requires us to act *as if* we were members of the kingdom of ends, irrespective of whether others do so as well. Hence, to take the most notorious example, we must tell the truth even if we believe that the person to whom we tell it will use that information to commit a crime. Kant's refusal to allow exceptions to such duties even when the consequences are awful has always been a stumbling-block for the advocates of Kantian ethics. Indeed, in response, Christine Korsgaard has gone so far as to advocate turning Kantian ethics into a "double-level" theory:

> The Formula of Humanity and its corollary, the vision of the Kingdom of Ends, provide an ideal to live up to in daily life as well as a long-term political and moral goal for humanity. But it is not feasible always to live up to this ideal, and where the attempt to live up to it would make you a tool of evil, you should not do so.[27]

This revisionary proposal actually represents a sharp departure from Kant, in my opinion. The felt need for it, however, does bring out how far, for Kant, the coincidence between good actions, which are individualistic, and good outcomes depends on people co-operating with one another. The idea of the "church invisible", as an ethical community, conveys the hope of gradually overcoming such dismaying discrepancies between duty and outcome, not just in another world but in this one.

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Herder

Herder's response to his own objection to Enlightenment providentialism is different, however. In 1774, he published a work with the title *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (*Another Philosophy of History for the Education of Mankind*). From the phrase "philosophy of history" the modern reader might expect a meta-level inquiry into the structure and justification of the activities of historians in the way that the philosophy of law relates to the activities of lawyers or the philosophy of science to that of scientists, but what Herder presents there and later develops more fully in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Ideas for the Philosophy of the History of Mankind,* published in parts between 1784 and 1791) is a substantive account of the history of mankind—a biologically inspired universal history which anticipated in many ways his German Idealist successors, Schelling and Hegel, in particular.

Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit is framed as a polemic in the spirit of Jean-Jacques Rousseau against Voltaire (who had used the title *La Philosophie de l'histoire* for an essay published in 1765) and other "philosophical" historians of the Enlightenment (hence the "*auch*" in the title).[28] Herder deplores the Enlightenment historians' assumption that society in its earlier, primitive stages was morally inferior to the present day. They were guilty of projecting the assumptions of their own age onto previous societies, he charged. Each society, Herder insisted, must be judged by its own standards, and the lack of "order" and "moderation" that the Enlightenment historians pointed to as a deficiency of societies less civilised than their own was in fact the necessary counterpart to those societies' greatest positive quality: their energy and vitality. The diversity of such small, savage, communities was far preferable, in Herder's view, to the inert uniformity of a modern bureaucratic state.

But Herder is neither a primitivist nor a relativist. On the one hand, individual cultures, like single organisms, are born, develop, flourish and die back to be succeeded by other new ones. Each reaches full self-realization only when it takes on its own, unique form. On the other hand, there are important dissimilarities between organic nature and history. Whereas each individual member of a plant or animal species is simply an exemplar in its own environment of what are (in Herder's pre-Darwinian view) basically unchanging species, cultures are connected to one another by the lin-

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eage of tradition: tradition provides a thread of historical continuity to run through the multifarious tapestry of individual forms:

> So the procreation of the races and of traditions connected human reason together; not in such a fashion that only a fragment of the whole existed in each individual—a whole that existed in no individual subject, and so could not be the end of the Creator—but because it carried the structure and connection of the whole race with it. Animals procreate in the same way as human beings but a universal animal reason does not arise from their races; yet, because reason alone forms the persistent characteristic of humanity, it had to reproduce itself as the character of the race—without it our race would not exist.[29]

Herder does not deny that the earlier stages of history are necessary for humanity's progress. What he objects to in the Enlightenment historians is the flat and mechanical way in which progress is conceived. Instead of being a cumulative development towards a single goal, progress is a complex matter of advances, retreats and changes of direction. Furthermore, although it is true that each culture is a distinctive organic form with its own particular way of life that can only be properly understood and evaluated in terms of its own standards and world-view, Herder does *not* suppose that such standards are inaccessible to us. On the contrary, together human societies form a single, interconnected whole.

Above all, Herder vehemently rejects the idea that earlier stages of history are no more than instrumental stages through which humanity must pass on its way to reason and happiness. Every society is equally capable of its own kind of happiness.

> [Mankind] must go through different ages! All are revealed in the progress! A struggle with one another in continuity! Between each are apparent resting places, revolutions! Changes! And yet each has the midpoint of its happiness in itself![30]

Seen as a whole, history is a process of growth in which individual societies, like human individuals, are both *means* to further development and *ends in themselves.* Only in this way, Herder believes, can historical progress be understood as compatible with the goodness of God, for whom all human beings must be equally valuable.

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> The purpose of a thing that is not a mere means must lie within itself. Were we so created that, like a magnet that turns to the north, we strive with never-ending vain effort for a point of perfection that lies outside ourselves and that we can never attain, we would not only deplore ourselves as blind machines, but also even that being that condemned us to the fate of Tantalus and created our race just for his malign, undivine spectacle.[31]

Although this picture of unfolding diversity may seem to be apologetic—everything is good in its own way—it actually contains a sharp critical element. Organic development is spontaneous and natural. But not all societies are allowed—for internal or external reasons—to develop in this natural, harmonious way. The alternative is that they become machines, operating under a hegemonic sovereign and inflexible system of law:

> The most natural state is thus one people, with a national character. For millennia the latter preserves itself in it and it can, if its own princes are so inclined, be most natural developed. For a people is a plant of nature, just as a family is, though with more branches. Nothing is so obviously contrary to the purpose of governments as the unnatural expansion of states, the wild mixture of kinds of men and nations under one sceptre. The sceptre of man is too small and weak that such contrary parts can be grafted onto it; they are stuck together in a fragile machine that is called "state-machine", without an inner life and sympathy of the parts in relation to one another.[32]

In this way Herder brings metaphysics to bear on history to denigrate imperial projects such as that of Rome in the ancient world or France in the modern world as "unnatural".

It is against this background that we should read Herder's essay "On Human Immortality"—a lecture given in Weimar that he published in 1792. His title is significant. Herder (who was, it should be recalled, an ordained minister—indeed, superintendent of clergy in Weimar) sets aside the religious doctrine of personal immortality to concentrate exclusively on another conception of it.

As he points out, the ancients believed that individuals could survive their own deaths in the fame that posterity gives to human greatness. But that, he says, was at an early stage of human history. By now the pages

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have been written full and there is hardly room to squeeze in new names in the margins, however deserving they might be. We should turn away from individual greatness and look at the issue instead from the perspective of the human race as a whole and its "vocation" (*Bestimmung*).

> That is immortal and that alone that lies essentially in the nature and vocation of the human race, in its continuing activity, in its steadfast path to its goal, in the best possible realization of its form; those things which, in their nature, continue, and always return again if suppressed, and must achieve ever greater scope, position and effect through the continuing, expanding activity of human beings: the purely-true, the good and the beautiful.[33]

Instead of thinking of those aspects of our selves that are particular to us and enable us to stand out in contrast with our fellow human beings, individuality in that sense must be transcended:

> For the transfer of this contribution into the whole, eternal treasure of mankind, a laying aside of our ego is required—that is, a separation of its self-hood and of the prejudices that are attached to that self. Would we wish, even if we could, to gift to the world and the world that follows our weaknesses? No! The nectar of immortality, the elixir of life, through which there sprouts the true and the good, is a pure juice. Everything that is mixed with personality must be sent to the bottom; it must be purified in the vessels and engines of the great world-machine until the dregs sink.[34]

Our nature and vocation make us part of a broader cultural process that goes back before us into history and will continue after our own bodily death—for which Herder uses that term that would later be so crucial, *Geist*.[35]

> The human being's most proper faculty is, to a greater or lesser degree, a comprehending spirit [*Geist*], that, with help from the past, has an effect on the future from its own present; the means that it has in its hands or that it, through its own nature, creates for itself are the overt tools and symbols of this active continuing effectiveness. I count amongst them above all language, writing, science, art, and, that supreme art, legislation and constitutional construction.

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> They are the great and small ships through which the spirit sails through the ocean of the ages.[36]

In this way Herder's grandly conceived organic account of society and culture not only allows him to counter his own criticism of Enlightenment conceptions of progress, but also, like Kant, to establish a view of history as a collective ideal to complement, if not replace, religious doctrines of personal immortality.

Fichte

Kant, of course, lived in Königsberg and exercised his great influence principally through his writings. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, however, the centre of German intellectual and cultural life was 500 miles to the west, in Weimar, where Herder and Schiller as well as Goethe lived, and in Jena, the nearby university under the control of the Sachsen-Weimar Duke, Karl August. In 1794, the young Johann Gottlieb Fichte was appointed to a chair in philosophy at Jena in succession to Karl Leonhard Reinhold. Immediately after his arrival, he gave a series of enormously popular lectures that were published (in part) under the title "*Einige Vorlesungen über die Bestimmung des Gelehrten*" ("Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation").[37]

The subject-matter is less narrow than it might seem, for Fichte is concerned not just with academic education, but, more broadly, what the role is of the life of the mind ("*Gelehrter*" might well be translated as "intellectual" rather than "scholar" or "academic") in a well-ordered society. Thus the lectures re-trace several of the themes that Schiller had discussed five years previously in his own inaugural lecture on "universal history", as professor of history at Jena (Schiller is said to have admired Fichte's lectures). In a short space, Fichte presents an entire social and political philosophy centred on an ideal of society based on ideas of reciprocity and co-operation between morally equal agents:

> If we only contemplate the idea just presented, even apart from all relation to ourselves, we can at least catch a glimpse beyond ourselves of an association in which one cannot work for himself without working at the same time for everyone, nor work for others without

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> working for himself; for the successful progress of any member is the successful progress of them all, and one person's misfortune is everyone's misfortune. Simply through the harmony which it reveals in the most diverse things, this spectacle pleases us sincerely and exalts our spirits mightily.[38]

This perspective not only transforms our understanding of our relationship with our fellow-citizens. It extends into a vast and inspiring vision of ourselves as part of an enormous, unending chain of human striving:

> Our sense of our own dignity and power increases when we say to ourselves what every one of us can say: My existence is not in vain and without any purpose. I am a necessary link in that great chain which began at that moment when man first became fully conscious of his own existence and stretches into eternity. All these people have labored for my sake. All that were ever great, wise or noble—those benefactors of the human race whose names I find recorded in world history, as well as the many more whose services have survived their names: I have reaped their harvest. Upon the earth on which they lived I tread in the footsteps of those who bring blessings upon all who follow them. Whenever I wish, I can assume that lofty task which they had set for themselves: the task of making our fellow men ever wiser and happier. Where they had to stop, I can build further. I can bring nearer to completion that noble temple that they had to leave unfinished.[39]

And this sense of ourselves as part of humanity is, to follow Fichte, a counter to the fact of human mortality, as he concludes in an extraordinary, frenzied peroration:

> "But," someone may say, "I will have to stop too, just like they did." Yes! And this is the loftiest thought of all: Once I assume this lofty task I will never complete it. Therefore, just as surely as it is my vocation to assume this task, I can never cease to *act* and thus I can never cease *to be.* That which is called "death" cannot interrupt my work; for my work must be completed, and it can never be completed in any amount of time. Consequently, my existence has no temporal limits: I am eternal. When I assumed this great task I laid hold of eternity at the same time. I lift my head boldly to the threatening

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> stony heights, to the roaring cataract, and to the crashing clouds in their fire-red sea. "I am eternal!" I shout to them. "I defy your power! Rain everything down upon me! You earth, and you, heaven, mingle all of our elements in wild tumult. Foam and roar, and in savage combat pulverize the last dust mote of that body which I call my own. Along with its own unyielding project, my will shall hover boldly and indifferently over the wreckage of the universe. For I have seized my vocation and it is more permanent than you. It is eternal, and so too am I!"[40]

Earlier in the eighteenth century, the contested borderland in debates about religion had been the idea of "natural religion".[41] For orthodox Christian believers, it was necessary to explain how those human beings who, by accident of history or geography, had not received religious revelation were nevertheless, as descendants of Adam and Eve, part of the community of mankind and subject to the jurisdiction of the one, true God. In the hands of unbelievers such as Diderot or Hume, however, the idea of natural religion could be used to raise an indirect challenge to Christianity's exclusive claims and the necessity for religious revelation. Between the two were a vast range of religious views that made Christianity subject to reason (as in Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity*) and re-interpreted or abandoned doctrines that did not meet those standards.

Something similar was true at the end of the century of the conception of "human immortality", as Herder calls it, that we are describing here. For Kant, the idea of humanity developing collectively through time is a complement to the idea of individual moral responsibility in the face of divine retributive justice. Together, the two strands form part of Kant's "post-Lisbon" account of the goodness of the world as consisting in human freedom. Equally, however, such doctrines of historical immortality (as it would be better to call them) represent a potential alternative to and replacement for the transcendent elements in conventional religious faith.

Fichte's first book (*Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung* (*An Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation,* 1792)) to which he owed his fame (it was published anonymously and initially mistaken for a work by Kant) defends the, by no means unorthodox, doctrine that revelation must meet the standards of reason (as Kant himself would also do in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* when it was published soon after). Fichte himself

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(whose family background was fervently religious and who was originally intended for the clergy) does not seem to have been a secret unbeliever in the doctrine of personal immortality at any stage of his philosophical career, although he is recorded as making the following cutting remark about most people's ideas of "life beyond the grave":

> One, the worst of them all, has become dominant: the idea of a concert in which only "Hallelujah!" is sung—at which I, for my part, imagine the most unbearable boredom.[42]

But it was the issue of immortality that would cost Fichte his position at Jena as a result of the so-called *Atheismussstreit* (dispute over atheism). The *Atheismussstreit* that unfolded in 1798 and 1799 involved a bewildering mixture of philosophy, religion and politics (both academic and in the relationship between the various German statelets) further complicated by Fichte's own naive but prickly personality.[43]

Fichte initially came under attack for publishing in the *Philosophisches Journal,* the journal that he edited, an essay by Friedrich Karl Forberg with the title "*Entwickelung des Begriffs der Religion*" ("*Development of the Concept of Religion*") in which, it was alleged, this surreptitiously anti-religious doctrine was being propagated. Without going into Fichte's somewhat contradictory self-justifications (that Forberg's position was not necessarily opposed to religion; that he had published his own article distancing himself from Forberg; that anyway just such issues should be discussed freely by "*Gelehrten*" in scholarly journals) it is apparent why Forberg's article should have given Fichte's enemies ammunition. At its outset, Forberg writes very bluntly:

> Religion is nothing but *practical belief in a moral world-order;* or, to express the same idea in a familiar, sacred language: a *living faith in the Kingdom of God, which is to come on Earth.*[44]

There are, Forberg asserts later, only two articles of religious faith: "Faith in the immortality of virtue and faith in a Kingdom of God on Earth".[45] To say that religion is "nothing but" faith in a Kingdom of God on earth and that it is virtue that is immortal is, it seems, openly to cross the dividing line between a faith in a moral world-order as a part of the Christian religion and faith in a moral world-order as a substitute for it. Forberg's readers of the time must have seen this very clearly.

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The Oldest System-Programme

In his essay "What Is Enlightenment?", published in 1784, Kant praises his monarch, Frederick the Great, as "the only ruler in the world" who says to his subjects: "*Argue* as much as you will and about whatever you will, *but obey*!"[46] By the 1790s, Frederick was dead and his successors faced a different world. Even Karl August of Sachsen-Weimar, the most tolerant of German princes, could not fail to take account of his fellow-rulers' anxious desire to impose discipline as Europe entered the quarter century of war that would lead, in the end, to the dissolution of the German state-system. So it is not surprising that those whose views might be seen as subversive (if they were more prudent than Fichte) found ways of avoiding public confrontation (not least, by expressing their ideas indirectly in literary works rather than philosophical or explicitly political ones).

In Germany, as George Eliot remarks in the middle of the nineteenth century:

> . . . the *educated* proletariat is the leaven that sets the mass in fermentation; the dangerous classes there go about, not in blouses, but in frock coats; they begin with the impoverished prince and end in the hungriest *littérateur*.[47]

Such was very much the case in the 1790s. The German universities played an important role in allowing gifted young men from the very humblest backgrounds to advance (Kant was the son of a harness-maker; Fichte had worked as a gooseherd in a tiny village). They produced lawyers, doctors, priests, officers and teachers, as well as the class of administrators needed by the absolutist rulers of the many small states. There were, however, more students than professional positions available, and those without independent means would, more often than not, find themselves working as household tutors—*Hauslehrer*—for merchants or minor aristocrats. This was the situation of the three friends, Hegel, Hölderlin and Schelling, who studied together at the Tübinger Stift. It is not surprising that what we have of their notes and unpublished writings, and the letters that they exchanged as they tried to keep one another informed while scattered around the German-speaking world, gives such a fascinating and candid picture.

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All three were especially influenced by Kant, Fichte and Schiller, whom they read (this was, after all, their shared Tübingen training) through the lens of theology. Thus in January and February 1795 they were exchanging letters from Berne (Hegel), Jena (Hölderlin) and Tübingen (where Schelling—the youngest of the three—was still finishing his doctorate in theology). Both Schelling and Hölderlin describe how their thoughts are moving through Fichte to Spinoza—not the "fatalist" Spinoza of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason,* but one whose idea of substance, read through Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre,* leads to a conception of the deity as impersonal and fully part of the world. As Hölderlin puts it:

> [Fichte's] Absolute Self, which equals Spinoza's Substance, contains all reality; it is everything, and outside it is nothing.[48]

Hegel, for his part, wants to revive (and indeed strengthen) the project of deriving necessary conclusions about the nature of reality from moral knowledge of the divine:

> If I had the time, I would seek to determine more closely to what extent, after having fixed moral belief, we might now utilize the thus legitimated idea of God backwards, for example in the elucidation of goal-directedness, and so on; that is, to what extent we might take the idea of God derived from our present vantage point in moral theology [*Ethikotheologie*] with us back into physical theology [*Physikotheologie*], in order to legislate in this second field by means of that idea.[49]

And he concludes his letter to Schelling with the following, highly resonant, exhortation:

> Reason and freedom remain our watchword and our rallying-point the church invisible.[50]

Of all the documents of that period, the most striking is the one known as the *Oldest System-Programme*.[51] It is a very short piece, indisputably in Hegel's handwriting, that is believed to have been composed in early 1797 by one of Hegel, Hölderlin or Schelling. What is more, it seems to have been addressed to the other two. It is a document of breathtaking ambition and radicalism, whoever may have been its original author.

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On one level the *Oldest System-Programme* represents the continuation of the trajectory noted by Hölderlin in his letter in which Kant's original idea of a "transcendental subject" is purged of all the features of individual personality to the point that it is transformed into an "absolute subject". What is most essential to this absolute subject (again the author is following Fichte) is its agency. Once we come to understand reality as having its source in a deity who acts from "free necessity" in creating a world, we can infer (as Hegel had already suggested in his January 1795 letter to Schelling) from moral theology to physical theology:

> The question is this: how must a world be constituted for a moral being? I would like to give wings again to our physics, which progresses laboriously with experiments.[52]

All of this in the opening paragraph! Next, says the author, he will turn to the "works of man" (*das Menschenwerk*). Echoing the Herderian contrast between organism and mechanism, every state, according to the author, is a mere mechanism that treats human beings as so many cogs in a machine—there is no "Idea" (*Idee*) of the state. So away with the state—"it must cease"! The instrumental perspective of conventional political theory with its "wretched" artificial institutions, constitutions and laws must be exposed, and political life framed instead within the higher perspective of a "history of humanity" (*Geschichte der Menschheit*):

> You can see for yourself that here all ideas, for example that of eternal peace, are only subordinate ideas of a higher idea. At the same time I want to lay down here the principles for a history of humanity, and to expose down to the bone the whole wretched artifice [*Menschenwerk*] of state, constitution, government and legislation.[53]

Reason must be turned against the established institutions and doctrines of religion:

> Finally come the ideas of a moral world, divinity, immortality—through reason itself the overthrow of all superstition, and the persecution of the priesthood, which recently pretends to reason.[54]

But it is not just the state and the priesthood that this Fichtean-Spinozan theology makes redundant. The author states explicitly the position that would be attributed to Forberg and Fichte shortly afterwards: the "history

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of humanity" dethrones the very ideas of personal immortality and a transcendent God:

> Then comes the absolute freedom of all spirits [*Geister*], which carry the intellectual world in themselves, and which may not seek God or immortality outside themselves.[55]

Famously, in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant identifies three objects of metaphysics: God, freedom and immortality:

> Metaphysics has as the proper goal of its investigation only three Ideas: God, freedom and immortality; so that the second concept, combined with the first, should lead to the third as a necessary conclusion.[56]

One could say that the author of the *Oldest System-Programme* is following just that programme. But in consequence of the power of the Kantian idea of freedom as autonomy (making "reason and freedom our watchword") God has lost his transcendence, and immortality, such as it is, is now to be found within the history of humanity itself.

This would, of course, have shocked and horrified Kant. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which it is the consistent continuation of his Socratic project. Kant's "post-Lisbon" theodicy aims to give an account of the goodness of the world—that it is an expression of the goodness of a good creator-god. The goodness of the world, for Kant, consists in human freedom, not happiness. Yet, at the same time, this world remains imperfect to the extent that there is a discrepancy between happiness and desert, from which we infer to an afterlife of reward and punishment and embrace the hope of fulfilling the project of justice in this world.

If God is just, he must have made human beings subject to laws that they can know without recourse to some authoritative act of revelation on God's part. In this way, morality connects God and man as their common property. But it should not be thought of as *binding on* God. To see him as "bound" by morality or as being "forced" by reason to choose "the best of all possible worlds" would be to make morality and reason into something external to him. On the contrary, morality and reason are essential to God's nature. God is *autonomous:* he acts with "free necessity". That radically alters our understanding of God. While it purges our conception of him of everything that is capricious, at the same time it takes away from

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our relationship with him everything that is personal. So God's transformation via Fichte, Schelling and Hölderlin into a Spinozan Absolute Subject is consistent.

And what about human beings? Are they not autonomous too? Do they not therefore carry the "*intellektuelle Welt*" in themselves? And does not the "church invisible" provide a sufficient object of hope? So do they *need* to think of God and immortality as something outside themselves on which they are dependent? Looking at the question in this way, we can see that the project of Socratic religion has had the most subversive consequences.

The Addresses to the German Nation

In the early part of the twentieth century, there hung in the great Aula of the Berlin University an enormous painting of Fichte delivering his *Addresses to the German Nation* (*Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808)).[57] The surviving photographs (the painting was destroyed in the Second World War) show Fichte standing on a suitable grass-covered rock with the Brandenburg Gate in the background, being listened to attentively by a representative range of Germans from different social classes, including such luminaries as Schleiermacher and Wilhelm von Humboldt.

This was, of course, a piece of nationalist fantasy (the painter, the grimly appropriately named Arthur Kampf, was a favourite artist of the Nazis). The *Addresses* were delivered indoors, in winter, and it is unlikely that the workers dressed in smocks and aprons depicted frowning thoughtfully at the speaker would have made much of Fichte's complex arguments. Still, it is fair to see the *Addresses* as the founding document of modern German nationalism.

By the time that they were given (at the end of 1807 and the beginning of 1808) much had happened—to Fichte and to Germany. After the *Atheismusstreit,* Fichte moved to Berlin, where he gave public lectures and wrote works intended for a broader public (*Popularphilosophie,* as it was called). Prussia had finally declared war against France in 1806, but its armies had been destroyed at Jena and Auerstedt, and Berlin was under French occupation. Not surprisingly, Fichte's tone in the lectures is even more fervent than usual.

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In the "Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation", Fichte had presented an image of historical immortality that was wholly universal: transcending boundaries of space and time by immersion in the vast, single stream of human history. In the *Addresses,* the focus is on nationhood. It is this that forms the object of hope for "noble" individuals:

> The belief of the noble man in the eternal continuance of his activity even on this earth is accordingly based on the hope for the eternal continuance of the people from which he has sprung and on the particularity of that same people.[58]

Yet this is not simply the substitution of a particularist form of collectivity for a universal one.

Herder, it will be recalled, was both a universalist and a particularist at the same time: someone who believed that the progress of the human race would be achieved through the distinctive self-realization of different peoples and cultures. He also embraced a sharp critical contrast between authentically self-realizing, organic cultures and those held together by artificial principles of sovereignty and authority—"state-machines"—a distinction that tracked the difference between Greece and Rome, as well as, implicitly, that between Germany and France. The distinction between natural and unnatural forms of social order remained at the heart of German thought about society and politics in the turbulent times that followed.

In Schiller's extraordinarily influential *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind* (*Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (1795)) this distinction is used to explain both the need for the French Revolution and its failure.[59] The modern world has become fragmented and mechanical, held together by force alone, according to Schiller. By contrast, in the states of Ancient Greece, the individual was part of a "polyp"—each individual was a complete whole who carried the form of the wider social union organically within itself.

> That polyp-nature of the Greek states, in which every individual enjoyed an independent life, but could, when the need arose, grow into the whole organism, now made way for an ingenious clockwork, in which out of the piecing together [*Zusammenstückelung*] of innumerable but lifeless parts, a mechanical kind of collective life ensued.

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> State and Church, laws and customs [*Sitten*], were now torn asunder; enjoyment was divorced from labour, the means from the end, the effort from the reward.[60]

Divided into contending classes, the modern world is characterized by *savagery* (where "feelings rule over principles") at the bottom and *barbarism* (where "principles destroy feelings") at the top. The Greeks should be our model, not as a savage people, as yet uncultured, but one in whom simplicity and refinement went together in harmony:

> We see them uniting at once fullness of form and fullness of substance, both philosophizing and creating, both tender and energetic, uniting a youthful fancy to the virility of reason in a glorious humanity.[61]

For Schiller, hope lies in the aesthetic realm to develop human beings to the point that a new order will not relapse into the vices of the old. For the author of the *Oldest System-Programme,* all states treat human beings as cogs in machines—they must be abolished—and a "new mythology" must be found to overcome the division between thought and feeling.

According to Fichte, in the *Addresses,* such an ideal of integrated personality can only be realized in a people that is truly authentic—one that exists "without adulteration and corruption by something foreign that does not belong to the whole of this constitution".[62] And, as it turns out, only the German nation has this genuine character:

> It must therefore be apparent that only the German—the original [*ursprüngliche*] man who has not become dead in an arbitrary constitution [*in einer willkürlichen Satzung*]—truly has a people and is entitled to count on one; that only he is capable of real and rational love for his nation.[63]

Thus it is on this true and pure German essence that the fate of mankind as a whole depends:

> If there is truth in what has been presented in these addresses, then of all modern peoples it is you in whom the seed of human perfection most decidedly lies and to whom the lead in its development is assigned. If you perish in this your essential nature [*eurer Wesenheit*], then all the hopes of the entire human race for salvation from the

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> depths of its evil perish with you. . . . There is, then, no way out: if you sink, all humanity sinks with you, without hope of future restoration.[64]

Love of this one, genuine fatherland is, however, not a substitute for belief in personal immortality. Those who embrace their destiny and throw themselves forward into love for the fatherland must, Fichte asserts, believe in immortality both in heaven and on earth:

> He who does not regard himself first and foremost as eternal has no love at all; nor can he love a fatherland, for nothing of the kind exists for him. He who perhaps regards his invisible life as eternal but not his visible life may well possess a heaven and in this heaven his fatherland; yet here on earth he has no fatherland, for this too is seen only under the image of eternity, of visible eternity rendered sensible, and he is unable therefore to love his fatherland either.[65]

Grasping historical immortality in this way, the true patriot will willingly sacrifice his earthly existence for his country:

> The promise of a life here below beyond the duration of earthly life—this alone can inspire men to die for the fatherland.[66]

In short, just as the doctrine of historical immortality can be seen either as the complement to traditional doctrines of the Last Judgement and personal immortality or as a potential substitute for them, it can also point in very different directions politically: from cosmopolitan universalism to particularistic convictions about national destiny.

Hegel and Immortality

Seen against this background, how should we understand the mature Hegel's equation of *die Weltgeschichte* with *das Weltgericht*? Does Hegel combine his belief in the divine significance of history with belief in the Christian doctrine of the Last Judgement and personal immortality? And is he, as Benjamin alleges, a "*Gewaltmensch*"? These are questions that can be answered either briefly or at much greater length. Before presenting some shorter responses, however, it will be helpful to recognize why the longer ones may seem necessary.

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Ideally, the interpretation of philosophical texts should be decided like other contested historical questions: the interpreter should canvas apparently plausible alternative hypotheses and see which one fits best with the available evidence—in this case, the patterns that we find in the texts. Of course, what counts as a "fit" may be difficult to determine. Authors change their minds over time and even the greatest philosophers may be inconsistent, so evidence from one piece of writing may not be dispositive about how to read other texts. Still, the principle of testing one's interpretation against otherwise puzzling passages is obviously sound. It is what I have tried to do in the account of Kant given here: to show that an interpretation by which human beings are connected by morality with a benevolent, but stern and retributive, creator makes better sense of Kant's texts than ones that separate his thought from doctrines of God and noumenal freedom.

Nevertheless, all interpretation faces the problem of circularity—the so-called hermeneutic circle—that, in seeking to test interpretation against the texts, our understanding of those texts already embodies interpretation. This problem can be more or less acute. Kant certainly does use a great deal of novel terminology and adapts existing language in consciously novel ways ("transcendental", "thing in itself", "appearance", "noumenon", "autonomy"—to name a few obvious examples) and these terms are defined largely in terms of one another. Yet there are also statements that can be understood without a prior understanding of Kantian vocabulary (". . . it is from the necessity of punishment that the inference to a future life is drawn", for instance)[67] and such statements are particularly apt for helping to anchor interpretations and test their cogency.

With Hegel, however, the hermeneutic circle is all but completely closed. The main texts of Hegel's philosophical *Wissenschaft* are written in language far removed from the everyday (or, for that matter, from the specialized vocabulary of previous philosophies). It is not immediately apparent to the uninstructed reader either *what* is being argued for or *how* it is supposed to be being argued. Even the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—the supposed point of entry to the "system of the sciences"—is expressed in terminology of dizzying abstraction, and, where more familiar terminology occurs in it ("master", "slave"), it is obviously being used in very unfamiliar ways. This is no accident. One of Hegel's most fundamental ideas (to state one of my own interpretive presuppositions) is that contrasts and oppositions that are felt to be compelling at the level of ordinary thought no longer have force

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when seen from the higher perspective of speculative philosophy. It is the goal of philosophy to move from the one to the other:

> The difference between *Vorstellung* and Thoughts has a more particular importance because it can be said in general that philosophy does nothing else except to transform *Vorstellungen* into Thoughts.[68]

One consequence of this is that the line between interpretation and reconstruction easily blurs. Commentators since Hegel's own time have offered to reveal "the secret of Hegel" to the perplexed reader and, in so doing, to "extract the rational kernel [of Hegel's dialectic] from its mystical shell".[69] In deciding between such reconstructions, interpretive evidence is more likely to be found through the gradual accumulation of material across the whole corpus of Hegel's writing than by looking for individual passages that clearly fit one interpretation but are incompatible with another. No wonder books on Hegel tend to be so long!

The difficulties are particularly acute when it comes to Hegel's attitude towards religion, and, as has been noted, they go back to Hegel's own time.[70] In what follows, I shall simplify matters by dividing approaches to interpretation into three.

(1) *Theistic interpretations.* On this view, Hegel is a philosopher of religion. His philosophy represents the translation or re-expression of religious doctrine (specifically, the religion of Lutheran Protestant Christianity) into a philosophical language. It articulates matters of religious faith and revelation in a way that makes their rationality apparent, but there is no conflict between Hegelian philosophy and religious orthodoxy, any more than there is between Catholic Christianity and the philosophy of Thomist Aristotelianism.[71]

(2) *Metaphysical interpretations.* For metaphysical interpretations, the basic commitment of the Hegelian philosophy is to the existence of a rational structure running through the whole of reality. This structure, which one can think of as similar to the Greek *logos,* is discoverable by philosophical reason: reality, insofar as it is rational, is knowable a priori.[72]

(3) *Social interpretations.* On the social interpretation, history and society are fundamental for Hegel. Even aspects of reality that one might think of as wholly objective and that Hegel talks about in

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> apparently absolute terms are, in the end, socially constituted. As Terry Pinkard expresses it in the title of his book on the *Phenomenology of Spirit,* Hegel, on this interpretation, is committed to "the sociality of reason".[73] In this way, Hegel can be understood as radicalizing (and historicizing) a certain understanding of Kant's transcendental idealism.[74]

Which of these three approaches should we choose (indeed, must we choose between them at all)?

On the social reading, *Geist* is to be understood as "culturally distinct objective patterns of social interaction to be analysed in terms of the patterns of reciprocal recognition they embody".[75] Yet, as was argued in Chapter 2, this reductive, anthropocentric interpretation of *Geist* is at odds with Hegel's texts: *Geist,* for Hegel, is the unified underlying reality that encompasses individuals' social relations—and everything else besides.

It is my view that the metaphysical interpretation best fits the ambitious claims that Hegel makes about his project at those points (in prefaces, introductions and additions to his main texts) when he breaks from his abstract philosophical exposition and steps back to give the reader a more informal overview of it. Thus he writes in the Introduction to the *Science of Logic:*

> Accordingly, Logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure Thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the presentation of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind. Anaxagoras is praised as the man who first declared that *nous,* Thought, is the principle of the world, that the essence of the world is to be defined as thought. In so doing he laid the foundation for an intellectual view of the universe, the pure form of which must be Logic.[76]

Hegel, as I read him, is committed to the view that the ultimate nature of reality is knowable by Thought alone. As he writes in the same discussion:

> Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains Thought in so far as this is just as much reality in its own self, or reality in its own self in so far as it is equally pure Thought.[77]

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Such claims will, admittedly, seem extravagantly implausible to modern readers, but to take that as a decisive objection is to run together interpretation and advocacy.

How do the metaphysical approach and the religious approach relate to one another, however? On the theistic reading, *Geist* is, simply, God—a Christian, trinitarian God, timeless and eternal but also incarnating himself in the world. For the metaphysical reading, *Geist* is the Greek *logos* or even Spinoza's idea of substance, although, unlike Spinoza, Hegelian *Geist* is dynamic, self-differentiating and self-realizing through time. Are they compatible?

One thing is clear. Hegel's is a thoroughly Socratic approach to religion. Not only does he, like Kant, make religion subject to reason, but he believes that reason can give us substantive knowledge of the nature of empirical reality, and of history in particular. In this way, the gap between faith and reason is closed. Hegel says as much extremely explicitly in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History:*

> I have been unwilling to leave out of sight the connection between our thesis—that Reason governs and has governed the World—and the question of the possibility of the knowledge of God, in order to avoid the suspicion that philosophy is shy of noticing the truths of religion and has reason to; that it avoids them because, so to speak, it lacks a clear conscience in relation to them. Rather, the fact is, that in recent times philosophy has been obliged to defend the content of religion against certain kinds of theology. God has revealed himself in the Christian religion: that is, he has given us to understand what he is so that he is no longer concealed or secret. And this possibility of knowing God imposes such knowledge as a duty. God wishes no narrow-hearted souls or empty heads and his children, but those whose spirit is of itself indeed, poor, but is rich in the knowledge of him, and who place all value in this knowledge of God. The development of the Thinking *Geist,* which has resulted from this foundation of revelation, must finally advance to the grasp in Thought of what was initially presented to the feeling and representing [*vorstellenden*] *Geist;* it must also be timely to comprehend that rich production of the creative Reason that is world-history.[78]

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Evidently, for many modern believers, such thoroughgoing rationalism is already in conflict with the essential character of religion as faith (it is on this point that Kierkegaard's quarrel with Hegel turns). But we should remind ourselves too just how compelling the claims of Socratism in religion were. If God is good, then he must be just. If he is just, then he must deal with human beings in ways that they themselves can understand, and any appeal to authority in religion—whether institutional, through the Church, textual, from Scripture, or even personal, through the individual believer's experience of faith—undermines this.

For Hegel, the rational presentation of history takes on central religious significance. "Philosophical history" is, he says in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy,* a "theodicy":

> Our mode of treating the subject is, in this respect, a theodicy—a justification of God, which Leibniz attempted in his way, metaphysically, in indefinite abstract categories, so that the evil that is found in the world may be comprehended, and the Thinking *Geist* reconciled with the fact of the existence of evil. Indeed, nowhere is such a reconciling knowledge more pressingly needed than in world history. This reconciliation can only be attained by recognizing the affirmative, in which that negative element disappears into a subordinate, and vanquished element, and through a consciousness of what the true end purpose of the world is, and also that that purpose is realized within it and that evil has not finally asserted itself against it.[79]

But is that view of the divine, providential character of history to be seen—as it was for Kant, Herder and Fichte—as the complement to a belief in personal immortality, or—as would appear to have been the case for Schiller, Forberg and the author of the *Oldest System-Programme* (Hegel himself?)—as an alternative that displaces it?

The fact that Hegel does not discuss personal immortality in any of his published works can point either way: that he takes the orthodox doctrine for granted or that he has no wish to allow his departure from orthodoxy to become public. In favour of his orthodoxy, we have Hegel's position in a Protestant university and his willingness to be a public spokesman on behalf of Protestantism (his address on the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession); against, an anecdote from Heine depicting Hegel as a furtive dissident.

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Beyond that, a reader for Harvard University Press has pointed me to another important piece of evidence. The Hegel scholar Walter Jaeschke has produced an edition of Hegel's lectures on religion that, unlike preceding editions, does not amalgamate the different versions into a single text. In the 1827 lectures, in presenting what he calls "*die vollendete Religion*" (translated as "The Consummate Religion"), Hegel does indeed mention the idea of immortality in relation to the Book of Genesis and the Garden of Eden. Not only does he describe it as a "*Vorstellung*" ("representation"), but he twice calls it a "*kindliche Vorstellung*" (childish image). Human immortality, he says, consists in Thought, for "only as Thinking (*denkend*) is its soul pure and free rather than mortal and animal-like".[80] So at least in some of his lectures, Hegel was prepared to allow himself a fairly unambiguous departure from orthodoxy.

But there is also a systematic interpretative question: *if* Hegel embraces a doctrine of personal immortality, how would that be compatible with the rest of his philosophy? As we have seen, for Kant, the doctrine of personal immortality is connected with the idea of divine judgement. For this to be part of a Socratic religion, three things are required: that human beings should be sufficiently free to be held responsible for their actions; that the moral law that governs their actions should be known to them; and that judgement should be given by an omniscient, just judge.

From a metaphysical point of view, Hegel can embrace the requirement of human beings as free agents without difficulty: his account of the nature of reality as a differentiated hierarchy subject to different kinds of explanation at different levels means that human beings are not susceptible to the threat of Spinozistic "fatalism" from a closed causal order that so troubled Kant. It is the other two requirements that are much less obviously accommodated. Hegel's *Geist* is not just a timeless deity that incarnates itself within the world as an expression of divine goodness but is itself historical and developmental—engaged in a temporal process by which it comes to knowledge of itself:

> World history is the presentation of the divine, absolute process of *Geist* [Spirit] in its highest forms—this staged process by which it attains its truth, its self-consciousness over itself.[81]

Geist needs the world for its self-realization—a realization that it only attains, at the end of a long process of development, in the modern age:

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> The history of *Geist* is its own act, for *Geist is* only what it *does:* namely, to make itself the object of its own consciousness as *Geist,* to apprehend itself as it unfolds itself for itself. This apprehension is its being and its principle, and the completion of its apprehension is at the same time its externalization and transition to a higher stage.[82]

For *Geist* to complete itself it must come to full self-consciousness and it does that *through* the consciousness of individuals: as individuals become aware of *Geist,* so *Geist* becomes conscious of itself:

> This past mode of existence has already become an acquired possession of the universal *Geist,* which constitutes the substance of the individual or his *inorganic nature.* The formation (*Bildung*) of the individual in this respect, seen from his perspective, consists in his acquiring what lies at hand, absorbing his inorganic nature into himself, and taking possession of it for himself. But this is at the same time nothing other than that the universal *Geist* or the Substance gives itself its self-consciousness; it is its becoming or reflection into itself.[83]

Individuals, if they are to be judged justly, must know what is required of them. In the case of Kant, it was argued, this requirement was satisfied by *moral unanimism*—human beings, if they do not allow themselves to be led astray by the temptations of self-interest, know what is right and what is wrong. This idea—that morality is a shared property of mankind—is, I have claimed, central to the Western tradition of ethical thought: in the Jewish Noachide Commandments, in St Paul's claims about the conscience of mankind, and in Roman ideas of "natural law". The idea that human beings live in a world of moral pluralism with all of the problems that brings with it is, if I am right, basically a modern one.

From this point of view, Hegel's critique of what he calls "*Moralität*" ("morality") in favour of "*Sittlichkeit*" ("the ethical order") is highly significant. If we think of *Moralität* as the Kantian idea of a universal system of moral obligations, *Sittlichkeit* is an ethical order that is characteristic of each particular social form or "*Volksgeist*". This, as was explained in Chapter 2, is central to Hegel's conception of society as a staged development:

> Each stage [of the development of the *Weltgeist*], being different from every other one, has its specific and particular principle. In

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> history, such a principle becomes the particular determination of the spirit [*ein besonderer Volksgeist*]. It is here that it expresses concretely all the aspects of its consciousness and will, its total reality; it is this that imparts a common stamp [*das gemeinschaftliche Gepräge*] to its religion, its political constitution, its social ethics [*Sittlichkeit*], its legal system, its *mores* [*Sitten*], but also to its science, its art, its technical skill. These special peculiarities must be understood as deriving from that general peculiarity, the particular principle of a people.[84]

One might think that this would exclude the idea of individuals being held accountable before a divine judge. But, although Hegel rejects what he takes to be the Kantian attempt to derive moral duties from an "abstract" conception of reasoning, *Sittlichkeit* itself is a source of duties. Indeed, Hegel, like Kant, identifies the performance of duty with freedom:

> The essence of the will is duty to me. Now if my knowledge stops at the fact that the good is my duty, I am still going no further than the abstract character of duty. I should do my duty for its own sake, and when I do my duty it is in a true sense my own objectivity which I am bringing to realization. In doing my duty, I am by myself and free. To have brought out this meaning of duty is the achievement of Kant's moral philosophy and its loftiness of outlook.[85]

So the fact that duties vary according to social context may not mean that human beings cannot be held accountable for the performance of them. Perhaps slavery is right, for example, in the Roman Empire, but wrong in the British Empire. But Hegel does not think that right and wrong are completely context-dependent. His position is more complex, as can be seen in the case of slavery.

On the one hand, he says, the idea of the innate freedom of human beings is "more advanced" than the "false standpoint at which man, as a natural entity . . . is for that reason capable of being enslaved". Yet, slavery occurs "in man's transition from the state of nature to genuinely ethical conditions; it occurs in a world where a wrong is still right. At that stage wrong is valid and so necessarily finds its place."[86] So slavery, wrong though it is in one sense, is not simply a misdeed on the part of the slave-holder perpetrated against the slave.

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> To hold fast to the side that human beings are free in and for themselves is thereby to condemn slavery. Yet if someone is a slave it lies in his own will, just as it lies in the will of a people if it is subjugated. Hence it is not simply a piece of wrongdoing [*Unrecht*] on the part of those who enslave or subjugate others, but also on the part of the slaves and the conquered themselves.[87]

Hegel's position is thus neither simply universalist nor particularist, but a combination of the two: something may be wrong from a universal, objective point of view, but justified and necessary in its context at the time. It is only at the end of the process of historical development that universal and particular coincide. Before then, irreconcilable conflicts between the two are possible—as in Hegel's favourite example of Antigone, in which, as he puts it, the "highest ethical and thus the highest tragic" conflict is embodied.[88] In those circumstances, it is hard to see a clear line of division between right and wrong by which human beings could be judged morally.

In short, as I read him, Hegel combines a developmentalist view of *Geist* (God), completing himself through human beings, with a developmentalist view of human beings' moral environment, progressing to a point at which *Sittlichkeit* is in harmony with itself. If human beings really do develop morally through time, however, such that, by sheer (moral) luck, some live in a world whose conception of ethical life is more developed and harmonious, then that would appear to be in conflict with the doctrine of human beings as being held justly accountable before a divine judge, at least as Kant conceives it. There are thus significant systematic reasons to think that the mature Hegel (like the much younger one) confines himself exclusively to a historical conception of immortality.

This would not have come as a surprise to many of Hegel's contemporaries. In 1830, the young Ludwig Feuerbach, who had attended Hegel's lectures, published his *Thoughts on Death and Immortality,*[89] in which he defended an exclusively historical conception of immortality. Feuerbach's book was published anonymously, but it was to cost him his academic career. Later, after Hegel's own death, Friedrich Richter published a book called *Die neue Unsterblichkeitslehre* (*The New Doctrine of Immortality*)[90] in which he claimed that the implication of Hegel's philosophy was indeed the rejection of the orthodox Christian doctrine of immortality. Although

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some Hegelians disagreed with Richter and defended the compatibility of Hegelianism with orthodox Christianity, for many German theologians he was only revealing what they already believed: that the Hegelian "school" was secretly pantheistic. But there can be no doubt that an exclusively historical conception of immortality is a part of Hegel's legacy—above all, through that one-time Feuerbachian Karl Marx.

Geist *and the Individual*

Is Hegel a "*Gewaltmensch*"? If that is understood as meaning that Hegel believes that might is right, then he himself makes it very clear immediately following his reference to *Weltgeschichte* as the *Weltgericht* that this is not the case:

> . . . world history is not the mere verdict of might, i.e. the abstract and non-rational necessity of a blind fate. On the contrary, since *Geist* in and for itself is reason, and reason's being for itself in *Geist* is knowledge, world history is the necessary development, out of the concept of *Geist*'s freedom alone, of the moments of reason, and so of its self-consciousness and freedom: the articulation and actualization of the universal *Geist*.[91]

But that does not end the objection. There is another way of taking Benjamin's remark—one that was pursued and amplified by Benjamin's friend Theodor Adorno.[92] Is Hegel not claiming that historical "might" (*Kraft*) is animated by *Geist,* and is not this subordination of the individual to *Geist* itself a form of "*Gewalt*"? The argument of this chapter has, I hope, put us in a position to address this objection.

Hegel's conception of *Geist* as an absolute subject expressing itself in nature and realizing itself in history has elements in common with Neo-Platonism's "One", Spinoza's "Substance", Rousseau's "General Will", Fichte's "Absolute Ich" and Schelling's "World-Soul", as well as the triune God of Christianity, but, for present purposes, what matters is that it is that collective entity in relation to which human beings can aspire to historical immortality. To evaluate how it does this we need to answer two questions: what values does *Geist* embody, and what is the relationship between *Geist* and individuals?

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To follow Hegel, the answer to the first question is clear. *Geist*'s self-realization realizes those very values which he had described in his letter to Schelling so many years previously as "our watchword": reason and freedom. As he writes in the *Philosophy of Right:*

> The state in and for itself is the ethical whole, the actualization of freedom; and it is the absolute end of reason that freedom should be actual. The state is *Geist* on earth, realizing itself there with consciousness.[93]

The answer Hegel gives to the second question is initially expressed in metaphysical terms. The *Sittlichkeit* embodied in the state is the "substance" in relation to which individuals are "accidents":

> Since the ethical determinations [*Bestimmungen*] constitute the concept of freedom, they are the substance or universal essence of individuals, who are thus related to them as something accidental only. Whether the individual exists is all one to the objective ethical order. It alone is permanent and is the power ruling the life of individuals.[94]

The realization of *Geist* through the state is a process in which individuals are to be counted as "moments":

> In considering freedom, the starting-point must be not individuality, the single self-consciousness, but only the essence of self-consciousness; for whether man knows it or not, this essence is externally realized as a self-subsistent power [*Gewalt*] in which single individuals are only moments. It is the march of God in the world that the state exists; its basis is the power [*Gewalt*] of reason actualizing itself as will.[95]

In returning from such metaphysical claims to the more familiar realm of history and politics, interpretation becomes necessary, however. If the description of individuals as "only" moments or accidents in relation to the self-realizing substance of the state sounds ominously like an anticipation of some of the worst aspects of later German history, a more sympathetic reconstruction is also possible. To fix ideas, let me briefly sketch such an interpretation.

On this view, Hegel's account of history is about the development of freedom and equality, understood as the mutual recognition of individ-

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uals. So to talk of the "*Gewalt*" of reason actualizing itself in history is no more sinister than to talk of the power of truth governing scientific enquiry: it simply reflects Hegel's belief in the progressive goal-directedness underlying the historical process. As for the subordination of individuals apparently implicit in the description of them as only "moments" or "accidents", that expresses the fact that individuals are indeed transient in relation to this great, developing process. Nevertheless, the historical process both enables individuals to realize themselves as free and equal and forms an appropriate object of hope for them beyond their own mortality.[96]

Reading Hegel this way fits him into the narrative of this chapter as, ultimately, a universalist in the spirit of Kant and the early Fichte of the *Lectures on the Scholar's Vocation*. *Geist* realizing itself in history corresponds to the "church invisible" as a moral community stretching across time and space. And the fact that *Geist* realizes itself in individual states is a reflection of the fact, first recognized by Herder, that universal human development requires that human beings should be embedded within the framework of different individual cultures, not subjected to abstract and alien formal principles: hence the primacy of *Sittlichkeit* over *Moralität.* Such an interpretation of Hegel fits the description of him by John Rawls (of all people) as a "moderately progressive reform-minded liberal".[97]

But is this Whig interpretation of Hegel correct? Its limitations are apparent when we consider Hegel's expressed views on war.

(1) War, for Hegel, is a permanent, necessary feature of the world-order, even when *Geist* has reached the point of self-completion in the modern world. This is because states are themselves individuals and individuals will necessarily come into conflict with one another:

> Perpetual peace is often advocated as an ideal towards which humanity should strive. With that end in view, Kant proposed a league of monarchs to adjust differences between states, and the Holy Alliance was meant to be a league of much the same kind. But the state is an individual, and individuality essentially implies negation. Hence even if a number of states make themselves into a family, this union, as an individual, must engender an opposite and create an enemy.[98]

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War is not to be seen as a blemish on the relations between states caused by injustice or destructive passions but belongs to their essence:

> War is not to be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external accident, which itself therefore has some accidental cause, be it injustices, the passions of nations or the holders of power, etc., or in short, something or other which ought not to be. It is to what is by nature accidental that accidents happen, and the fate whereby they happen is thus a necessity. Here as elsewhere, the point of view from which things seem pure accidents vanishes if we look at them in the light of the concept and philosophy, because philosophy knows accident for a show and sees in it its essence, necessity.[99]

(2) The ethical status of states' actions is not to be evaluated according to the standards appropriate to the evaluation of the moral relations between individuals.

(i) In the first place, states are not legitimated by the role they play in furthering the ends of individual human beings, so they cannot be held to standards derived from their welfare or rights.

> A very misplaced account of the demand for this sacrifice results from regarding the state as a mere civil society and from regarding its final end as only the security of individual life and property, for this security will not be obtained by the sacrifice of what is to be secured—on the contrary.[100]

(ii) Nor are states' dealings with one another subject to a set of moral rules or standards of international justice:

> Justice and virtue, wrongdoing, power and vice, talents and their achievements, passions strong and weak, guilt and innocence, grandeur in individual and national life, autonomy, fortune and misfortune of states and individuals, all these have their specific

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> significance and worth in the field of known actuality; therein they are judged and therein they have their partial, though only partial justification. World-history, however, is above the point of view from which these things matter.[101]

(iii) In particular, the relationship between "higher" and "lower" states is not constrained by ethical principles, which would presuppose equality between them:

> For the same reason, it happens that civilized nations regard and treat as barbarians those who lag behind them in institutions which are the essential moments of the state (a pastoral people in relation to hunters, agricultural nations in relation to both, etc.). They are conscious of the latter's unequal right and treat their autonomy as only a formality.[102]

(3) The conduct of war requires sacrifice. But this is not just a regrettable necessity—a price to be paid for achieving a valuable end. It is itself good.

(i) Sacrifice is good, first, for the general health of the state and its institutions: the death of individuals furthers the life of the whole:

> In peace civil life continually expands; all its departments wall themselves in, and in the long run men stagnate. Their particularities become continually more fixed and ossified. But for health the unity of the body is required, and if its parts harden themselves, that brings death.[103]

(ii) Sacrifice is good too (in a crucial, if not immediately obvious, sense of "good") for individuals themselves. The submission of one's own personality inherent in military discipline and the sacrifice of life in an impersonal conflict are, in fact, "the existence of freedom":

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> The intrinsic worth of courage as a disposition of mind is to be found in the genuine, absolute, final end, the sovereignty of the state. The work of courage is to actualize this final end, and the means to this end is the sacrifice of personal actuality. This form of experience thus contains the harshness of extreme contradictions: a self-sacrifice which yet is the existence of freedom; the maximum self-subsistence of individuality, yet only as a cog playing its part in the mechanism of an external organization; absolute obedience, renunciation of personal opinions and reasonings, in fact complete absence of one's own *Geist,* coupled with the most intense and comprehensive presence of *Geist* and resolution; the most hostile and at once most personal action against individuals, coupled with an attitude of complete indifference or even benevolence towards them as individuals.[104]

Courage in battle is not a virtue from a past age—the Homeric Greeks or the "chivalrous" combat of the Middle Ages—that has been lost with the coming of modernity. On the contrary, the "mechanical" character of modern warfare intensifies it and heightens its meaning, according to Hegel. As he says in one of those remarks that remind one just how strange his underlying view of the world really is, the principle of the modern world ("Thought and the universal") *necessarily* discovered firearms:

> The principle of the modern world—Thought and the universal—has given courage a higher form, because its display now seems to be more mechanical, the act not of this particular person, but of a member of a whole. Moreover, it seems to be turned not against single persons, but against a hostile group, and hence personal bravery appears impersonal. It is for this reason that this principle has invented the firearm, and the invention of this weapon, which has changed the purely personal form of bravery into a more abstract one, is no accident.[105]

Clearly, even making all due allowance for the difficulty of interpreting Hegel's often highly abstract pronouncements, these statements show that Hegel is no milk-and-cookies humanitarian but a nationalist and a militarist in the tradition of Fichte's *Addresses.*

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Yet what have we gained if we accept this? Of course, scholars should not be cheerleaders for the authors they interpret, but the impulse that leads commentators to search for a kinder, gentler Hegel is surely a generous one. There is, I hope, more to this correction than a mean-spirited desire to cut a great author down to size. In assimilating Hegel to humanitarian progressivism, some important matters are, I believe, lost from view. In concluding this chapter, I shall sketch five such themes.

(1) *Hegel in History* Hegel himself, of course, was quick to represent political phenomena that he found repugnant as expressions of misguided philosophy (for example, that the Terror of the French Revolution was a product of the understanding of the will as *Willkür*) but those who do not share his view of the intrinsic connection between philosophy and history should be cautious about doing the same.[106] Not least, the fact that Hegel's writings have been taken in such very different directions by his successors should warn against essentializing intellectual history of this kind.

Still, there is a striking historical question. How did a conceptual apparatus—the contrast between the "organic" and the "mechanical" and the associated ideas of *Bildung* and tradition—that started with Herder as a defense of diversity and the value of the so-called primitive against monarchical and imperial authoritarianism become transformed into a critique of democracy and the alleged shallowness of liberal politics in the service of German nationalism, such as we find in, for example, Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (*Reflections of a Non-Political Man*)?[107]

To trace the trajectory of that transformation would undoubtedly be extremely complicated, but Hegel (and Fichte) are surely an important part of the story.

(2) *Modern Conservatism* Familiar secularization narratives carry with them a picture of right-wing political thought that depicts it as essentially backward-looking—the name "conservatism" conveys as much. If we see the modern world as shaped by the advance of science, social equality and the instrumental kinds of market relationships characteristic of capitalism, then conservatism comes to be identified with the project of returning to traditional, hierarchical forms of social order. Certainly, that has been a part of

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conservatism, especially in the social teaching of the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century. But we can see in Hegel the possibility of forward-looking, distinctively modern, yet fundamentally illiberal, conceptions of shared political identity beginning to emerge.

(3) *Semi-Particularism* As has been argued, Hegel represents a departure from the moral universalism that sees the whole of mankind as subject to a single, shared moral law, although his particularism is framed within an ultimately unified picture of historical teleology. To read Hegel from the perspective of humanitarian progressivism, on the other hand, is to place him back into a shared moral framework from which the deep difficulties represented by such moral diversity have been removed.

(4) *Militarism* Of course, the idea that human beings gain true immortality on the battlefield goes back to the very beginnings of Western civilization. It is an idea, however, that fits badly with progressive humanitarianism. From that point of view, if war is necessary at all, it is regrettable, and the loss of life in war is, at best, a noble, although equally regrettable, sacrifice. Yet, as we have seen, Hegel revives and even intensifies the ancient glorification of war to the point of identifying the soldier's death with "freedom".

(5) *Reason and Freedom* And this brings us to the final, and perhaps most fundamental, issue. To say that history is about the realization of freedom invites the question: freedom in what sense? If the soldier's submission of himself to the anonymity of military discipline and the sacrifice of his life in the machinery of modern warfare count as "freedom", should that not lead us to question whether Hegel's conception of freedom is one with which it is appropriate for modern human beings to associate themselves?

Of course, suspicions about Hegel's conception of freedom have been raised by his critics and rejected by his defenders since his own day. The material developed so far in this book, however, leads to the hope of being able to clarify the issue.

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Chapter 7

Autonomy and Alienation

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrodde:
Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God;
As I wad do, were I Lord God,
And ye were Martin Elginbrodde.

—GEORGE MACDONALD

Theodicy

In the narrow sense, "theodicy" is a problem specific to monotheism: the need to show that the world created by a single, all-powerful God is good, the presence of apparent evil in it notwithstanding. To say that the world is "good" does not necessarily mean that the world is made for the promotion of human happiness, however. On the contrary, there are different ways in which a world that contains evil might be justified.

For the mainstream of Christianity, as descended from Augustine and St Paul, the presence of evil in the world is a sign that mankind is being punished, either for Adam and Eve's initial transgression or for its own innate sinfulness. In this way, the goodness of the world lies in it being an expression of divine justice, not beneficence alone. Yet modern ideas of justice, for which what matters above all is individual human responsibility, make such conceptions quite implausible. How can it be just to punish human beings who are alive now for Adam's sin or for a feature

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of ourselves that we were simply born with? As Pascal writes, with his characteristic combination of anguish and insight:

> Nothing more shocks our reason than to say that the sin of the first man rendered those culpable, who, being so distant from the source, seem incapable of participation in it. This transfusion does not only seem to us impossible, but even most unjust, for there is nothing so repugnant to the rules of our miserable justice as to damn eternally an infant incapable of will, for a sin in which he seems to have so scanty a share, that it was committed six thousand years before he was in being.[1]

A different version of theodicy, found in early modern Europe and associated with the Enlightenment, argues that the world is indeed made for human happiness—that it is governed by causal laws, but that those laws are harmoniously ordered to promote human well-being. It was this idea to which the Lisbon Earthquake seemed to give such a devastating rebuttal. Following this, we have traced the distinctive Kantian account of the goodness of the world, focused on individual freedom and justice. On this view, the world has value because it contains genuine freedom. Such freedom cannot be random or haphazard, however—mere unpredictability. If it is to be the foundation for moral responsibility, it must involve the ability to make choices that are reasoned and properly informed.

The centrality of rational justification to Kant's thought is conveyed by a metaphor that runs through the whole of his philosophy: the contrast between the violence and anarchy of the state of nature and the objective legal order of civil society. Thus, in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant describes the role of the Critical Philosophy as bringing peace to the "battlefield of metaphysics" by establishing a "law court of reason" to decide philosophical claims in a way that is objectively justifiable.[2] The metaphor extends to Kant's account of religion. Religion, if it is to be religion "within the limits of reason alone", must be purged of everything that is capricious or arbitrary. In consequence, God can no longer be regarded as an all-powerful despot but, as Kant puts it in his lectures on religion, a constitutional monarch:

> God is the only ruler of the world. He governs as a monarch, but not as a despot; for he wills to have his commands observed out of love, not out of servile fear.[3]

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A constitutional monarch has the authority to stand over and enforce a constitutional order in the form of a set of laws, but the source of those laws does not lie in the monarch's sovereign will. Exactly the same thing is true of the Kantian God. The content of the moral law is fully available to human beings by their own reason. Morality ties God and man together in a shared order of justification.

But we can also speak of "theodicy" in another, much broader, sense, as part of a project of reconciliation. Understood in this way, theodicy encompasses all of those cultural devices (scientific explanations, mythical narratives, religious practices or artistic productions) that can be regarded as techniques to deal with the standing problem that we human beings, as finite, embodied creatures, all face: the existence of death and suffering. It is in this sense that Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* calls the Greeks' contemplation of the happiness of the gods of Olympus "the only true theodicy". Following Nietzsche's suggestion, we divided strategies to do this into three: Dionysianism (the intoxicated dissolution of the self); Apollonianism (escape into the realm of dream and beauty); and, finally, Socratism (the conviction that the world is intelligible). Kant's solution to the problem of theodicy through his account of freedom and moral agency can be understood as the culmination of religious Socratism. Does it succeed as a theodicy in the broader sense, however? That is the question behind this chapter.

The Alienation Dilemma

To introduce my argument, let me return to the passage from Iris Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* that was quoted at the beginning of Chapter 5, but include this time the paragraph that precedes it:

> The idea of life as self-enclosed and purposeless is of course not simply a product of the despair of our own age. It is the natural product of the advance of science and has developed over a long period. It has already in fact occasioned a whole era in the history of philosophy, beginning with Kant and leading on to the existentialism and the analytic philosophy of the present day. The chief characteristic of this phase of philosophy can be briefly stated: Kant abolished God

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and made man God in His stead. We are still living in the age of the Kantian man, or Kantian man-god. Kant's conclusive exposure of the so-called proofs of the existence of God, his analysis of the limitations of speculative reason, together with his eloquent portrayal of the dignity of rational man, has had results which might possibly dismay him. How recognizable, how familiar to us, is the man so beautifully portrayed in the *Grundlegung,* who confronted even with Christ turns away to consider the judgement of his own conscience and to hear the voice of his own reason. Stripped of the exiguous metaphysical background which Kant was prepared to allow him, this man is with us still, free, independent, lonely, powerful, rational, responsible, brave, the hero of so many novels and books of moral philosophy. The *raison d'être* of this attractive but misleading creature is not far to seek. He is the offspring of the age of science, confidently rational and yet increasingly aware of his alienation from the material universe which his discoveries reveal; and since he is not a Hegelian (Kant, not Hegel, has provided Western ethics with its dominating image) his alienation is without cure. He is the ideal citizen of the liberal state, a warning held up to tyrants. He has the virtue which the age requires and admires, courage. It is not such a very long step from Kant to Nietzsche, and from Nietzsche to existentialism and the Anglo-Saxon ethical doctrines which in some ways closely resemble it. In fact Kant's man had already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: his proper name is Lucifer.

The centre of this type of post-Kantian moral philosophy is the notion of the will as the creator of value. Values which were previously in some sense inscribed in the heavens and guaranteed by God collapse into the human will. There is no transcendent reality. The idea of the good remains indefinable and empty so that human choice may fill it. The sovereign moral concept is freedom, or possibly courage in a sense which identifies it with freedom, will, power. This concept inhabits a quite separate top level of human activity since it is the guarantor of the secondary values created by choice. Act, choice, decision, responsibility, independence are emphasized in this philosophy of puritanical origin and apparent austerity.[4]

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To follow the interpretation that has been presented in this book, we can now see that, vivid though it is, Murdoch's representation of Kantianism is wrong in several fundamental ways. Did Kant see the "will as the creator of value"? No. The good will (note, not just the "will") is the only thing that is good in an absolute way ("*ohne Einschränkung*"—without restriction) and it is the *condition* for the goodness of other things.[5] But that does not mean that willing itself is the source of value. On the contrary, or so I believe I have shown, Kant clearly takes the Socratic side of the Euthyphro dilemma. Did Kant see "life as self-enclosed and purposeless"? No again. Kant's philosophy in general and his moral philosophy in particular are saturated with teleology—claims about human beings' natural purposes—and many of his arguments fail without it. Thus, as was argued in Chapter 5, it is only by invoking the "*Bestimmung*" to further life that his argument in the *Groundwork* against suicide is at all plausible; likewise, the requirement to develop our talents only makes sense if we impute some such natural purpose to human beings.

Finally, it is false to say that Kant "abolished God and made man God in his stead". The idea that Kant was a secret atheist goes back a long way—to Heine's *History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany,* at least.[6] According to Heine, Kant was the German Robespierre. With his "guillotine of ideas" and the restriction of human knowledge to the bounds of sense, said Heine, Kant was not just a regicide but a deicide—he put an end to God! Now indeed, Heine admitted, Kant, in his practical philosophy, had allowed God back in as a "postulate", but we shouldn't treat this too seriously. Kant's old servant, Lampe, was pious, and Lampe must have his God. The true motto of the Critical Philosophy was: abandon hope!

Heine's excellent jokes notwithstanding, this image of Kant is grossly one-sided. Yes, it is true that Kant is fiercely destructive of the pretensions of rationalist metaphysics to give us speculative knowledge of God's nature. Yet human beings are connected with the divine by morality and practical reason. Moral reason underlies the essential coincidence between the "self-given law" of human freedom and the Divine Will. Kant's God is, in that sense, a *Socratic* God, one who is linked to human beings by the requirement of moral intelligibility. So Kantian man is not cut off from God by an act of proud disobedience against a perceived tyrant, but, to the contrary, is essentially tied to him by the bonds of justice, just as a

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constitutional monarch is tied to his subjects. Yet, if the Kantian God has the authority to hold human beings to account, they, in their turn, have the authority to hold him to account.

On the emotional level, however, Murdoch's description of Kantian man as "lonely" and "alienated" has proved resonant with many readers and it is helpful to ask why. The answer that I shall give is simple but very radical in its implications. "Alienation", notoriously, is a label that has been applied to all kinds of modern disaffection ("the despair of our age", as Murdoch calls it). Behind those various uses, however, we can distinguish two quite different kinds of failure of reconciliation, one of which it is not unfair to see as a consequence of modern Socratic rationalism, while the other is exactly what Socratic rationalism, as epitomized by Kant, is aimed against. I shall call them, respectively, the *alienation of impersonality* and the *alienation of arbitrariness.* The Alienation Dilemma is that, or so it seems, the Socratic drive that we find in Kant to remove the alienation of arbitrariness produces the alienation of impersonality as a result: the drive towards rationality and justification leads to existential loneliness.

Murdoch has thus seen something important about the Kantian project, although the explanation that she gives for it is wrong. Although Kant has not abolished God, in drastically reducing the distance between God and man, he has removed the basis for a part of religion that is widely held to be fundamental: the personal character of the deity. At the centre of Christianity is the idea that God is not just good but loving ("God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him," John 4:16). What does that mean? Certainly, a loving creator will want what is best for those they create, so they will create a world that is good (the fact that it does not seem to be so in all respects is the source of the problem of theodicy).[7] But the idea that God and mankind are linked by love is something more: love is a *relationship.*

What kind of a relationship can there be between such feeble and fleeting creatures as ourselves and an all-powerful creator of the universe? The Christian answer, of course, comes with the first words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9); we should revere God as our heavenly father. Does Kant's Socratic God allow us to continue to conceive God in that way, however? To explain the difficulty let us compare Kant with Milton—Kant's forerunner, according to Murdoch.

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Divine Goodness and the Devil

Milton's depiction of the Fall of Man and the origin of evil is a drama—a family drama. Milton's Lucifer is a rebel whose rejection of the moral law is truly the first disobedience. He is the son who has left home, never to return. Thus Lucifer's loneliness comes from the loss of a personal relationship. Kant's own account of the devil makes a revealing contrast, however.

As Kant first introduces it, his view of the devil sounds strikingly similar to Milton. The devil, he writes in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* is a being who was once good but has now become "so evil as to betray his master". He has "lost whatever estate he might have had in heaven" but has "succeeded in setting himself up as the supreme proprietor of all the goods on earth, i.e. as the prince of this world".[8] This makes it sound as though, for Kant, the devil is a personal agent whose power is independent from that of God. What then of God's omnipotence? Why should an omnipotent God tolerate such rebellion? In a footnote at this point Kant tells the story of a Jesuit missionary in Canada, Father Charlevoix:

> Father Charlevoix reports that when he told his Iroquois catechumen the story of all the evil that the evil spirit wrought on a creation originally good, and how this spirit is still constantly seeking to thwart the best divine arrangements, the catechumen asked him with indignation: But why does not God strike the Devil dead? to which question he candidly admits that he was unable, on the spot, to find an answer.[9]

It is here that Kant reveals how far his own understanding diverges from Milton. The explanation why God allows the devil to exist, he writes, is that "the Devil" is not, in fact, an independent agent, a rival to the deity, but refers to an aspect of the world as it has been made by God for free beings: a world in which human beings always face a choice between good and evil. Thus the "Kingdom of Evil" is really another name for the goods of this world, temptations which divert human beings from their duty but with their own free consent. So the devil too is part of the goodness of the world—part of what makes this world a place in which human beings are tested such that punishment is deserved and reward can at least be reasonably hoped for. Kant, by making the devil a principle, not a person, avoids

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Blumenberg's "threat of Gnosticism" and makes the devil a part of divine goodness.

We can see exactly the same thing in Goethe's *Faust.* At first sight, Mephistopheles seems to be very much a person: one of the two central characters in the drama. The play opens with a discussion between Mephistopheles, the archangels and "the Lord" (echoing the dialogue between God and Satan at the beginning of the Book of Job). Yet, when the story moves to Earth and Mephistopheles first meets Faust, Faust asks him who he is. In reply, Mephistopheles calls himself the "spirit of negation" ("*Der Geist der stets verneint*"). As such, he is, he says, part of that power that wills what is evil but produces what is good ("*ein Teil von jener Kraft / Die stets das Böse will, und stets das Gute schafft*").[10] So Mephistopheles too is the personification of a principle that is part of a theodicy: *providentialism,* the idea that apparent evil will turn out to be part of a greater good.[11]

There is an obvious parallel between Goethe's "spirit of negation" and the productive role of negativity (Hegel calls it "determinate negation" ("*bestimmte Negation*")) in *Geist*'s dramatic journey to self-knowledge, as recounted in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit,* and with Hegel's later assertion in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* that "philosophical history" is a "theodicy" in which reconciliation can only be attained by an affirmation "in which that negative element disappears into a subordinate, and vanquished element".[12]

Seen in one way, providentialism is a perfect embodiment of the idea of God as a loving father to mankind: we should trust God as a father because he is good and knows what is good for us. Take William Cowper's well-known 1774 hymn "God moves in a mysterious way / His wonders to perform", for example. Cowper's theme is the discrepancy between divine goodness and human knowledge and its message is an exhortation to believers to place their trust in divine benevolence:

> Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
> But trust Him for His grace;
> Behind a frowning providence
> He hides a smiling face.[13]

Divine grace is an expression of the loving care of a being who knows what is good for us better than we do ourselves—the proper attitude towards such a being is trust.

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Kant himself was the most fervent of providentialists, and, over the course of his writings, he presents many vivid examples of divine benevolence for his readers to marvel at. Thus, for example, he explains in the essay "On Perpetual Peace", the natural world has been made in such a way that even the most inhospitable parts of the globe are capable of being lived in by human beings.

> It is in itself worthy of wonder that moss can still grow in the cold wastes that surround the Arctic Ocean; the reindeer can scrape it out from beneath the snow, and can thus itself serve as nourishment or as a draft animal for the Ostiaks or Samoyeds. Similarly, the sandy salt deserts contain the camel, which seems as if it had been created for travelling over them in order that they might not be left unutilised.[14]

Nor is it just the animal kingdom that has been organized for human beings' benefit:

> But nature's foresight arouses most wonder by the driftwood it brings to these barren regions (without anyone knowing exactly where it comes from), without which material they could make neither their boats and weapons nor their huts to live in.[15]

Even things as apparently bad as mosquitoes can be seen to be good when interpreted from the point of view of their effects on human activity and development, Kant argues in his lectures on religion:

> . . . even in pain there are incentives to activity and so one might even call it beneficial in itself. Thus the stinging flies in a swampy place are nature's call to human beings to drain the mires and make them arable in order to get rid of these disagreeable guests.[16]

Not surprisingly, these, to our eyes, far-fetched observations are not the ones that Kant's modern followers most emphasize, but they do show how far Kant's thought is pervaded by a commitment to the existence of teleology deep in the natural world.

Yet Socratism sets a limit to providentialism. If human beings are to be properly responsible agents, then a good God must have given them sufficient knowledge to make informed decisions. If something that seems to be bad from the limited, human point of view is really good from the

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divine standpoint, would that not affect our decision-making? And, if so, might it not lead us to do what is wrong in the false belief that it is right? Paternalist providentialism, on the other hand, requires us to trust in authority in ways that it is not open to us to hold rationally to account.

Paternalist providentialism might seem to be more plausibly attributed to Hegel. But even here there are reasons to doubt. Hegel and Goethe had good relations with one another during Hegel's Jena years (so it is very possible that Hegel read work of Goethe's in manuscript or heard it performed privately) but all that had been published of *Faust* as Hegel was writing the *Phenomenology* was the 1790 text *Faust: A Fragment.* It is surely significant that the quotation from *Faust* that Hegel uses in the *Phenomenology* (one that he evidently liked so much that he used it again in the *Philosophy of Right*) asserts that what is most essential about human beings is their capacity for *knowledge.*

> *Es verachtet Verstand und Wissenschaft*
> *Des Menschen allerhöchste Gaben—*
> *Es hat dem Teufel sich ergeben*
> *Und muss zu Grunde gehen.*
>
> It despises understanding and science,
> Man's highest gifts—
> It has given itself to the Devil
> And must fall into ruin.[17]

Hegel's picture of history as a process of self-misunderstanding that culminates in self-knowledge is a part of what I have called his "semi-particularism": his picture of moral diversity and conflict, held together within the framework of a single, developing, retrospectively comprehensible, *Geist.* Perhaps "trust" in its superior wisdom would be the right way to describe individuals' relationship with the divine at earlier stages of *Geist*'s development, before its underlying rationality had become available to human beings. As history moves towards transparency, however, so Hegel's *Geist* becomes an objective and impersonal, but fully knowable, Absolute, and the idea of a personal God is relegated to the realm of "*Vorstellung*" ("representation" and metaphor) which the philosopher transcends by the ascent to speculative knowledge.

Clearly, this development is pre-figured in Kant. There is no place in Kant's religion for the most common ways in which we might think of God as personal.

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We do not look to the personal character of God's will as the source of morality. Nor do we need knowledge of the divine will in order to have knowledge of right and wrong. On the contrary, human knowledge of right and wrong should be decisive in deciding what is and what is not an expression of God's will. Kant is, not surprisingly, outraged by the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. The conflict with morality makes it clear that this cannot have been the voice of divine command, he protests:

> But in some cases the human being can be sure that the voice he hears is not God's; for if the voice commands him to do something contrary to the moral law, then no matter how majestic the apparition may be, and no matter how it may seem to surpass the whole of nature, he must consider it an illusion.
>
> We can use as an example the myth of the sacrifice that Abraham was going to make by butchering and burning his only son at God's command (the poor child, without knowing it, even brought the wood for the fire). Abraham should have replied to this supposedly divine voice: "That I ought not to kill my good son is quite certain. But that you, this apparition, are God—of that I am not certain, and never can be, not even if this voice rings down to me from (visible) heaven."[18]

Kant's God does not suspend his own laws to work miracles or respond to petitionary prayer. Nor is he engaged in a struggle with another agent who is evil. He is indeed benevolent towards human beings, but not in a way that requires them to trust in something that they do not understand.

Finally, and perhaps most troublingly, there is no place in Kantian religion for divine mercy: Kant's God does not "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us". This drastic revision to conventional Christian doctrine on Kant's part can be seen as consistent with his underlying project. For Kant, punishment is not a regrettable necessity (an instrumental means to deter others or to reform the wrongdoer) but an essential part of justice: transgression *requires* punishment. If mercy were extended to some and not to others, then it would be unjust for that reason, but even if it were extended to the whole of mankind, then, in suspending justice, it would be in contradiction with God's nature:

> . . . God's justice is unrelenting. For a judge who *pardons* is not to be thought of! He must rather weigh all conduct strictly according to

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> the laws of holiness and allow each only that measure of happiness which is proportionate to his worthiness. . . . God himself, the all-benevolent, can make us worthy of his good deeds; but that he shall make us partakers of happiness without our becoming worthy of his good deeds in virtue of morality—*that* he, the Just One, cannot do.[19]

In short, Kant's Socratic religion has led to a conception of God as little more than a wise source of order and an impartial executor of justice. One can conceive of having awe and reverence and even gratitude towards such a being, but not a personal relationship with it.

Existential Loneliness

The romantic and post-romantic theme that the modern world is one of existential loneliness that Murdoch invokes is often traced back, via Weber's concept of *Entzauberung* ("disenchantment"), to Schiller, more specifically to his long poem "*Die Götter Griechenlandes*" ("The Gods of Greece"), first published in 1788.[20]

On one level, Schiller's poem is an elegy for the passing of the Greek gods. Yet it cannot be a conventional poem of mourning: immortal gods do not die; they disappear from human life, leaving only memories of the time when they were believed in. So the poem's real theme is the changing character of human experience. It contains many now-familiar images about the secularization process: the sun is no longer a fiery chariot; woods and streams no longer harbour nymphs; nature has become no more than a clock that obeys the law of gravity like a pendulum. What is left, as Schiller puts it, is "*eine entgötterte Natur*".

That phrase is normally translated as "godless nature". Thus the nineteenth-century English translation (by Edward Bulwer-Lytton) reads:

> Dull to the Art that colours or creates,
> Like the dead timepiece, godless Nature creeps
> Her plodding rounds, and by the leaden weights,
> Her slavish motion keeps.[21]

Significantly, however, "*entgötterte*" is plural (singular would be "*entgottete*")—the translation should be "gods-less". It is not just the sense of living in a mechanical world of inexorable causal necessity that sepa-

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rates us from the Greeks, as Schiller presents it, but that behind our modern world there is now a single source of order: not many gods but one. Thus Schiller's theme is not the disappearance of religion as such, but the change in its character. "On Saturn's throne", Schiller writes, a perfect, self-sufficient being now rules—a judge whose eye was "never dimmed by tears". We are necessarily remote from such a being. The impersonality of the deity is responsible for a transformation of experience in the modern world: "when the gods were more human, human beings were more divine."

Unlike Murdoch's "life as self-enclosed and purposeless", Charles Taylor's "immanent frame" or even Bulwer-Lytton's "godless Nature", Schiller does not put the blame for the impoverishment of human nature in the modern world on atheism but, much more subversively, on monotheism. Indeed, one might almost imagine that Schiller had composed his poem in response to Kant, the "perfect being" on "Saturn's throne" being so like the Kantian God. But this is extremely unlikely.[22] In fact, the poem has an argumentative structure very close to the picture of "Socratism" as the enemy of early Greek religion that we find in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (and this is surely no coincidence—Schiller was one of the major influences, alongside Schopenhauer and Wagner, on Nietzsche's early thought about art and nature).

The radical implications of "*Die Götter Griechenlandes*" for the established religion of his own time were not lost on Schiller's contemporaries and he was attacked for it publicly. In response, he published a revised version from which the incendiary material about the rise of monotheism was removed, with the result that the poem can indeed be read as a more generic lament for the way in which the advance of science has led to "disenchantment" familiar in conventional secularization narratives.[23] But, as we have seen, that was not its original message.

Our culture is full of warnings about the dangers of releasing magic and spirits that then escape control, yet it seems that Socratism—the disenchanting force of reason itself—also has unforeseeable destructive consequences that cannot be contained.[24] Once the divine and the human are no longer seen to intermingle and the events in this world are no longer interpreted as expressions of paternal care, human beings are left with Socratism's gifts of knowledge and material goods but must pay the price of finding themselves marooned in a bleak and indifferent landscape. Yet this is a one-sided picture. Socratism is not just, as religious thinkers commonly

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like to depict it, part of an "Enlightenment project" in which the spiritual is sacrificed to the material. Its drive for justification is also part of a project of reconciliation: a way of coming to terms with the world through the overcoming of alienation.

Arbitrariness and Alienation

As was established in Chapter 4, opposition to *arbitrariness* is at the heart of Kant's account of freedom. It is a project that is shared by his Idealist successors (Schelling and Hegel, in particular). Opposition to arbitrariness motivates both the Idealist struggle to escape from determinism (our actions being set and fixed by a configuration of laws and initial conditions that just happened to be a certain way) and the rejection of the idea of freedom as something random or underdetermined. Arbitrariness is one kind of heteronomy and heteronomy can also be seen as a kind of alienation.[25]

Thus, in the passage at the opening of the third section of the *Groundwork* referred to in Chapter 4, Kant summarizes his conception of the freedom of the will as follows:

> *Will* is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and *freedom* would be that property of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes *determining* it, just as *natural necessity* is the property of the causality of all nonrational beings to be determined to activity by the influence of alien causes.[26]

It is significant that Kant speaks here of freedom as being not just independent of causes but of causes that are "alien" (*fremde Ursachen*). The phrase anticipates the famous formulation by Marx in "On the Jewish Question" in which he describes human beings in civil society as "the plaything of alien powers" (*Spielball fremder Mächte*).[27] Freedom for the German Idealists, as we have seen, is not opposed to determination but to determination by something of the wrong kind. What makes a cause "alien" is the arbitrariness that it shares with an uncaused, random choice. Kant's Socratic opposition to arbitrariness includes the rejection of all forms of arbitrary determination, whatever its source: natural, divine or human. Hence his opposition to unaccountable authority.

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Famously, Kant defines "enlightenment" as human beings' emergence from their "*selbstverschuldete Unmündigkeit*" ("self-incurred immaturity") into a condition in which they use their own understanding without direction from another.[28] *Mündigkeit* is a characteristically human status—and a civic-political one at that. While an animal, a plant—or even a bottle of wine—can be "mature", only a rational being can be *mündig.*

To be treated as *mündig* means to be treated as an adult and that any authority exercised over one must be accountable. Any kind of dependence, whether selective or not, represents a kind of infantilization if that agency is not something that is open to human beings to comprehend and endorse. "Divine grace" (understood as an undeserved gift from God that is given to some and not to others, whether through the sacraments of the Catholic Church or, in Protestant form, through the pre-determination of God's "elective love") is unfair and unjustifiable, yet even universal benevolence diminishes human beings if they are not able to comprehend it. The relationship between God and human beings inevitably becomes increasingly impersonal in consequence: hence the struggle against the alienation of arbitrariness leads to the alienation of impersonality.

Yet, even accepting the profundity of the alienation dilemma, the remedy is surely not the fantasy of returning to a pre-Socratic world. Schiller's affirmative image of Greek religion, in which men and gods mix together freely, completely ignores the massive inequality of power between the two and the anxiety that comes from the constant need to flatter and placate such wilful beings. "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods. They kill us for their sport," says Gloucester in *King Lear.* And even if we were confident that the face behind the clouds is always a smiling one, unless what is being done by it can be understood and approved by us, we would still be kept in a state of childhood. For Kant, Enlightenment is not principally the drive for knowledge or the control of nature: it is the demand for human beings to be treated as adults.

Autonomy

The Kantian campaign against the alienation of arbitrariness thus returns us, through the idea of *heteronomy,* to *autonomy.*

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Autonomy, as we have seen, is the explanation how God's goodness and his freedom go together. Is something good because it is commanded by God, or is it commanded by God because it is good? For Kant, it is the latter. But does that not mean that God is bound by the moral law and does that not diminish divine freedom? Kant's answer, as established in Chapter 4, is that, yes, God is *determined* by the moral law, but not *bound by* it as he would be by an external constraint or command. God has "spontaneity" or, as Spinoza put it, "free necessity". The explanation why God cannot but follow the moral law is quite simple: as a perfect being, he does not have any reason to do otherwise. In that sense, God is autonomous.

But what of human beings? We are not perfect beings and so the moral law is binding on us. Yet we too are capable of autonomy. As Kant says: "what . . . can freedom of the will be other than autonomy, that is, the will's property of being a law to itself?"[29] Yet here is where the paradox of autonomy bites: if the moral law is really *self-given,* how can it be binding?

One response places the weight of "autonomy" on the *nomos.* What determinism, undetermined (but haphazard) choosing and the exercise of despotic power have in common is that they are arbitrary and, for that reason, unintelligible. It is this that underlies the alienation of arbitrariness. But the moral law is not like that. It is not just the product of a command (divine or human) or the artefact of certain shared features of human nature (sympathy or a moral sense) but the embodiment of reason—moral reason. The moral law is not alien because we can have insight into it, and we can have insight into it because it is rational. Although the moral law runs counter to the sensual, appetitive part of our personality, and so is binding on us in a way that it is not on God, we should not feel that following it is alien in the way that an arbitrary command or unchosen psychological characteristic would be. This interpretation is consistent with Kant taking the Platonic side of the Euthyphro dilemma, as was argued in Chapter 2.

From this point of view, Kant's ingenious arguments to justify belief in the possibility of freedom of choice by individuals in a world of material causation can be separated from his account of the moral law. Even without freedom of choice, the idea of the moral law as a rational ideal would still have value.

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Thus that eminent Victorian scientist and non-believer Thomas Henry Huxley writes:

> I protest that if some great Power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with the offer.[30]

Yet, as was explained in Chapter 2, John Rawls does not accept that Kant takes the Platonic side of the Euthyphro dilemma. Even though Rawls is, I believe, mistaken in his reading of Kant, it is instructive to ask why he appears to want to straddle both sides of the fence (or, as one might put it, slide down the razor-blade). It is not, of course, that this great philosopher was not capable of seeing the problems. My interpretive suggestion is, rather, the following. While Rawls certainly wishes to avoid landing on the voluntarist side of the Euthyphro dilemma and making morality in any way arbitrary or conventional, he is also deeply concerned by the way in which, as he sees it, the Platonic alternative, in representing morality as something independent, apparently creates a gulf between the moral realm and the self. In concentrating exclusively on the "*nomos*" in "autonomy", morality becomes detached from the "*autos*". It is this distance that troubles Rawls, I suggest. Thus he writes:

> Heteronomy obtains not only when these first principles are fixed by the special psychological constitution of human nature, as in Hume, but also when they are fixed by an order of universals, or of moral values grasped by rational intuition, as in Plato's realm of forms or in Leibniz's hierarchy of perfections.[31]

The distance between morality and the self is *not* a matter of morality's content. As far as its content is concerned, there is no question but that morality has a close connection with the self for Kant. As was argued in Chapter 5, everything turns on respecting others and ourselves as moral agents. Kant, moreover, states plainly that only "morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of humanity", has "dignity"—that is "inner, incomparable worth".[32] This unique value, although it is absolute, does not exist in some "realm of forms" remote from human agency: it *is,* in fact, human agency. All of this is established by the "Platonic" interpretation of Kant's

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account of moral duty articulated in Chapter 5. But even the fact that "personhood" (*Persönlichkeit*), something that each of us carries inalienably within us, is the ultimate, intrinsic value evidently is not enough to overcome the distance between morality and the self that troubles Rawls. How to explain his discomfort?

The phrase in the previous quotation ("moral values grasped by rational intuition") might seem to give an explanation. On a simple view, the world contains empirical facts, some of which—the most basic ones—we simply *see.* Now if moral facts were like that, something that we see with a kind of moral vision ("intuition"), then it becomes understandable why they could seem alien. In that case moral facts would have, to borrow a phrase of Hegel's from the discussion in Chapter 4, a merely "external" necessity; they would perhaps impose themselves as necessary, but just in the way that facts impose themselves on us whether we like it or not. They are (note the metaphor in the word) inescapable.

Framed in this way, it is apparent why Rawls might be unsatisfied with moral realism. But surely an admirer of Plato would want to argue back. Yes, they might say, if "rational intuition" were just a kind of inner observation any moral facts so observed would have that flat kind of inescapability. But, on any reasonable interpretation of Plato, that is not the way that he saw things. Moral knowledge, for Plato, comes at the end of a kind of ascent that gives us insight into the good in a way that is different from the observation of a mere fact, and, in so doing, elevates the soul. Hence knowledge of the good brings reconciliation, not alienation.[33] Would Rawls still want to resist? I think that he might.

Nietzsche, it will be remembered, takes the Olympian realm of the Greek gods as the prime example of the Apollonian ideal. As he points out, the Greeks did not think that they too would join the gods on Olympus. Nevertheless, the vision of the gods in their beauty and happiness (Nietzsche calls it a "dream") was a powerful source of consolation, Nietzsche claims. In other words, contemplation itself—when done in the right way with the right objects—can be a form of reconciliation.

Apollonianism can be combined with Socratism. The idea that the satisfaction that comes from detached contemplation is the highest reward for the pursuit of knowledge runs through the history of Western philosophy from Plato onwards. It explains philosophy's standing love affair with mathematics. Here, for instance, is Bertrand Russell responding to the "ter-

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rible sense . . . of exile amid hostile powers" and the "all-but omnipotence of alien forces":

> The contemplation of what is non-human, the discovery that our minds are capable of dealing with material not created by them, above all, the realisation that beauty belongs to the outer world as to the inner, are the chief means of overcoming the terrible sense of impotence, of weakness, of exile amid hostile powers, which is too apt to result from acknowledging the all-but omnipotence of alien forces. To reconcile us, by the exhibition of its awful beauty, to the reign of Fate—which is merely the literary personification of these forces—is the task of tragedy. But mathematics takes us still further from what is human, into the region of absolute necessity, to which not only the actual world, but every possible world, must conform; and even here it builds a habitation, or rather finds a habitation eternally standing, where our ideals are fully satisfied and our best hopes are not thwarted.[34]

But it is not only the contemplation of such inhuman realms as mathematics that offers escape from everyday reality. For Plato, the highest object of contemplation is the "Form of the Good", in which truth and value coincide. In connecting human beings to the sublime and evoking the religious emotions of awe and reverence, the Platonic reading of Kantianism can be seen as offering the same kind of escape from the empirical self and its sense of "exile amid hostile powers" into a pure and impersonal higher realm. But is that an appropriate conception of moral theory? Rawls, I suggest, would answer "no".

Morality as Identity

It might seem that the question how morality connects to the self does have an obvious answer available to the Kantian, however. For Kant, to follow the moral law is not just to obey its commands and to respect what is intrinsically valuable: it is to be free. The opening of the Third Section of the *Groundwork* carries the heading "The concept of freedom is the key to the explanation of the autonomy of the will" (Ak. 4:446). Morality connects to me because, in acting morally, I realize my freedom.

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Christine Korsgaard, Rawls's distinguished successor as a constructivist interpreter of Kant, gives a very clear and succinct account of an interpretation along these lines:

> Kant begins by defining a free will as a causality that is effective without being determined by any alien cause. Anything outside of the will counts as an alien cause, including the desires and inclinations of the person. The free will must be entirely self-determining. Yet, because the will is a cause, it must act according to some law or other: a lawless cause, Kant thinks, is a kind of contradiction. Alternatively, we may say that since the will is practical reason, it cannot be conceived as acting and choosing for no reason. Since reasons are derived from principles, the free will must have a principle. But because the will is free, no law or principle can be imposed on it from outside. Kant concludes that the will must be autonomous: that is, it must have its *own* law or principle. But now we have a problem: for where is this principle to come from? If it is imposed on the will from outside then the will is not free. So the will must adopt a principle for itself. But until the will has a principle, there is nothing from which it can derive a reason. So how can it have any reason for adopting one principle rather than another? And indeed the problem is in a way even worse than that. For it looks as if the free will, by imposing some principle upon itself, must restrict its own freedom in some arbitrary way.[35]

There are five essential steps in the argument:

(1) Freedom requires causality.
(2) Causality requires law.

But:

(3) Freedom is incompatible with being "determined by an alien cause".
(4) "Anything outside of the will counts as an alien cause, including the desires and inclinations of the person."

Therefore:

(5) Freedom requires that the will is the source of its own law.

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But Statement (4)—that "anything outside of the will counts as an alien cause, including the desires and inclinations of the person"—begs the question. The idea that my "desires and inclinations" are "alien" seems quite implausible—what, after all, are more obviously part of me?

In her Tanner Lectures, published as *The Sources of Normativity,* Korsgaard brings together the *autos* and the *nomos* through the idea that morality is part of a person's "practical identity" and that "an obligation always takes the form of a reaction against a threat of a loss of identity."[36] It is moral identity, she claims, that is essential to and governs all other conceptions of identity:

> If we do not treat our humanity as a normative identity, none of our other identities can be normative, and then we can have no reasons to act at all. Moral identity is therefore inescapable. Second, and for that reason, moral identity exerts a kind of governing role over the other kinds. Practical conceptions of your identity which are fundamentally inconsistent with the value of humanity must be given up.[37]

Yet, as G. A. Cohen points out in his response to Korsgaard, the idea that morality is essential to our identity seems to be, at best, "a huge exaggeration":

> I could remain me, both in the evident banal sense and in every pertinent non-banal sense, if I gave nothing to help the distant dying who oppress my conscience. I just wouldn't *feel* very good about myself. And I might even say, in morose reflection: "how typical of me to be so bloody selfish."[38]

From Korsgaard's perspective, those aspects of myself that don't survive the test of morality are seen as "alien" to the point that they are no longer recognized as part of the *self* at all. Certainly, one might think, the fact that our inclinations are personal and contingent means that they are not suitable for inclusion in a moral law whose essential feature is its rationality and impartiality. On that view, morality, as impersonal, overrides self-hood. But Korsgaard's claim on Kant's behalf goes much further than saying that morality should take precedence over what is personal: it is that the moral law is also a realization of *my freedom.* Her argument for the identification of morality with freedom appears to work only because the self has been

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identified with an inner core of rational agency: the *autos* has been compressed into the *nomos.*

Schopenhauer

The main stream of criticism of Kant's moral philosophy, stretching from Hegel (and Marx) to our own day, concerns the content of Kantian morality: the allegation that the categorical imperative is too "abstract", "formal" or narrowly "logical" to give a "decision procedure for picking out morally acceptable principles".[39] In consequence, the categorical imperative should either be abandoned entirely (the view of the mature Marx and Nietzsche) or, at the least, needs supplementation, either with a consequentialist higher-order principle to choose between competing universalisable maxims (Kant points towards rule consequentialism) or by embedding those maxims in some way within history and society (the Hegelian move from *Moralität* to *Sittlichkeit*).[40]

Chapter 5 advocated a radical response to that line of criticism. The argument was not that the categorical imperative *succeeds* in "picking out morally acceptable principles" but that it is not to be understood as a formal procedure for moral decision-taking at all. We should understand the categorical imperative as embodying a series of ways of expressing respect towards *Persönlichkeit* ("personhood", "humanity in one's person"). The fact that these cannot be objectively and impartially derived from a formal principle—that they are dependent on something like "intuition"—does not count as a disabling objection. In Kant's view, human beings—when free from the distorting effects of self-interest—do not face the perplexity of having to decide between competing, consistent moral systems: human beings know the right thing to do without the need for philosophy. In this way, Kant stands with St Paul, Cicero and many other earlier Western thinkers in belonging to a world in which the need to overcome (apparent) ethical diversity is not one of the most urgent tasks to which moral philosophy must respond.

The issue for this chapter is different: the place that Kantianism gives to morality within human existence. Here too, however, Kant's contemporaries and immediate successors had thought-provoking criticisms to make.

It is safe to say that there is very little in philosophy about which Hegel and Schopenhauer agree, yet, in their attitudes towards Kantian morality,

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they are strikingly at one. Both see the Kantian conception of the moral law as the expression of a limited and distorted conception of moral life. The works that I shall discuss—*On the Basis of Morality* and Hegel's *Spirit of Christianity* (*Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal*)—were written more than forty years apart and embody fundamentally different attitudes towards the Christian religion.

To start with Schopenhauer (who, by the way, prefaces *On the Basis of Morality* with some extraordinarily abusive remarks about Hegel) what he objects to above all in Kantian ethics is its imperatival form, its domination by the ideas of "duty . . . together with its near relatives such as those of *law, command, obligation,* and so on".[41] These concepts, or so Schopenhauer maintains, have their origin in theological morals—specifically, in the "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" of the Decalogue.

Such language, he claims, really only has meaning in a theological context with an omnipotent deity in the background: "Every *ought* derives all sense and meaning simply and solely in reference to threatened punishment or promised reward."[42] In talking about obligation and duty as detached from self-interest, Kant "is feeding the reader on fair words". In fact, the idea of reward as the consequence of obedience is essential to Kant's conception of ethics:

> The complete, utter impossibility and absurdity of this concept of an *unconditional obligation* that underlies Kant's ethics appear later in his system itself, in the *Critique of Practical Reason,* like a hidden poison that cannot remain in the organism, but must finally break out and show itself. Thus that *ought,* said to be so *unconditioned,* nevertheless in the background postulates the immortality of the person to be rewarded, and a rewarder. This, of course, is necessary when once we have made duty and obligation the fundamental concepts of ethics.[43]

So long as the moral law is presented in the form of a *command* (and what other form could there be for a Categorical *Imperative*?) it must be seen as embodying an authority which is alien to the self, wherever that command might be thought of having its source:

> A commanding voice, whether coming from within or without, cannot possibly be imagined except as threatening or punishing.[44]

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For Schopenhauer, in short, the very idea of *autonomy* is self-contradictory: the form of the *nomos* must inevitably set it in opposition to the *autos.* As soon as I am subject to law, I am subject to a will that is alien to me.

What are we to make of Schopenhauer's critique? As has been argued, Kant does not think that the virtuous individual is *entitled* to happiness (although they may hope for it) and the existence of unpunished injustice is, for Kant, a discrepancy that casts doubt on the goodness of the world. Of course, it is possible to move, as Schopenhauer's disciple Nietzsche would do, from critique to diagnosis: to argue that the impersonal desire to see evil punished is just a personal desire for revenge in disguise. But such claims are easy to make and hard to justify. Nevertheless Schopenhauer is quite right, I believe, in pointing to the fundamental dualism in Kant between the commanding standpoint of the moral law and the standpoint of the empirical agent who is commanded by it.

The idea that dualism is ineliminable from Kant's view of morality is damaging to interpretations like Korsgaard's that seek to identify morality and self-realization for it draws attention to the distance between the moral law and our ordinary, empirical selves with our desires and inclination. Yet there is compelling textual evidence for it.

Nowhere does Kant state his position more clearly and forcefully than in his replies to Schiller's *On Grace and Dignity,* one of the earliest (and still most perceptive) attempts to revise Kant's conception of moral motivation.[45] To resume very briefly, Schiller identifies "grace" and "dignity" as the aesthetic manifestations of two different virtues of character. The graceful individual is the one who follows the requirements of morality spontaneously and unreflectively; the dignified one is one whose strength of will overcomes contrary inclinations. In response, Kant made it quite clear that he wants nothing to do with the idea of moral gracefulness. In a footnote in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* he writes:

> I readily grant that I am unable to associate *grace* with the *concept of duty* by reason of the latter's very dignity. For the concept of duty includes unconditional necessitation, to which gracefulness stands in direct contradiction. The majesty of the law (like the law on Sinai) instills awe (not dread, which repels; and also not fascination, which invites familiarity); and this awe rouses the respect of the subject

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> toward his master, except that, in this case, since the master lies in us, it rouses a *feeling of the sublimity* of our own vocation [*Bestimmung*] that enraptures us more than any beauty.[46]

Kant re-affirms the essential opposition between duty and inclination when he repeats his criticism of Schiller in the *Lectures on Ethics* (Vigilantius):

> From this it is also certain that every obligation is . . . associated with a moral constraint, and that it is contrary to the nature of duty to *enjoy* having duties incumbent upon one; it is necessary, rather, that man's impulses should make him disinclined to fulfil the moral laws, and that these impulses should be overcome only through the authority of the laws, without it being possible to say that these laws demand respect in the manner of painful or despotic commands. Given that man's fulfilment of the moral laws can be accomplished only under a necessitation, it cannot therefore be claimed, as Schiller does . . . that such fulfilment also has a certain grace about it.[47]

To the extent that we are subject to the *command* of the moral law, Schopenhauer is right: there is indeed an essential duality between the agent and the law to which he or she must submit. But Kant's motivation in insisting on the separation between our inclinations and the vantage-point of the moral law is not necessarily an unrecognized desire for our own advantage concealed behind apparent disinterestedness. That ignores the way in which, for Kant, respect for the moral law is associated with an aesthetic-theological motif that pervades his thought, that of the *sublime.* The idea is that to meet the demands of morality is to be connected thereby with a transcendent realm. For the inspirational emotions of the sublime to be associated with morality—*awe, reverence, majesty, respect, submission,* and so on—the opposition between duty and our inclinations is essential, as Kant frequently makes clear.

When, in a famously rhapsodic passage of the *Critique of Practical Reason,* Kant asks for the genealogy of duty ("Sublime and mighty name that embraces nothing charming or insinuating but requires *submission*") he states that the moral law commands "*reluctant* reverence" and that before it "all inclinations are dumb, *although they secretly work against it.*"[48] And the answer that Kant gives to his own question makes explicit the idea

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that submission to the law at the same time draws us into contact with a transcendent dimension:

> [The origin of duty] can be nothing less than what elevates a human being above himself (as part of the sensible world), what connects him with an order of things that only the understanding can think and that at the same time has under it the whole sensible world.[49]

We see here an absolutely fundamental tension in Kant's moral theory. On the one hand, the dualism between the agent and the moral law is the key to the idea that acting morally has value for us by placing us in contact with a domain that transcends human finitude; on the other, there is the idea that to act morally is to be *free.* But if freedom is to be *our* freedom, how can it consist in submission to a law that transcends us? It seems that the conception of morality as freedom can overcome the separation of morality from the self at a very high price indeed—by adopting a conception of freedom in which the self is separated from its own empirical nature.

Hegel: The Spirit of Christianity

Hegel's criticisms of Kantian moral theory extend beyond his much-discussed objections to the "abstractness" of the procedure by which (supposedly) moral decisions are to be determined to the Kantian conception of the moral enterprise itself. This point can, admittedly, be hard to see in Hegel's mature writings, given how far his criticisms of Kant are there embedded in the complexities of his presentation of his own metaphysical system, but it is clearly apparent in *The Spirit of Christianity,* a lengthy unpublished work of Hegel's from the late 1790s.

The Spirit of Christianity has been (rightly) much admired by those who know it—Dilthey believed that Hegel never wrote anything finer—and to summarize it is, inevitably, to lose much of its richness. Nevertheless, its basic structure is easily seen. Hegel sets out to compare the moral teachings of Christianity with those of Judaism, focusing in particular on The Sermon on the Mount. Judaism, as Hegel represents it, turns out to share its essential limitations with Kantianism. The Christian alternative which Hegel presents shows its superiority, not in requiring a different set of moral duties or in giving them a different foundation, but in offering a picture of

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moral life in which individuals are given possibilities for *reconciliation* with the community that are not available within a context that is focused (like Judaism or Kantianism) on the idea of morality as *law.*

In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* Kant took issue with religions that take their ethics from direct authority—whether that authority is a sacred text, the orthodoxy of church doctrine or the (claimed) illumination of direct revelation. For Hegel, Judaism is a religion that rests on just such an appeal to authority beyond the limits of reason. But in the teachings of Jesus, he claims, we find a response to "the positivity of moral commands" that is quite different from Kantianism:

> We might have expected Jesus . . . to show that . . . even if every ought, every command, declares itself as something alien, nevertheless as concept (universality) it is something subjective, and, as subjective, as a product of human power . . . it loses its objectivity, its positivity, its heteronomy, and the thing commanded is revealed as grounded in an autonomy of the human will.[50]

In other words, the Kantian response to the arbitrary commands of the Deity would have been to interrogate those commands to see how far they could be justified as rational embodiments of moral law and expressions of autonomy. But this, says Hegel, would be unsatisfactory:

> By this line of argument, however, positivity is only partially removed; and between the Shaman of the Tungus, the European prelate who rules over Church and State, the Voguls and the Puritans, on the one hand, and the man who listens to his own command of duty on the other, the difference is not that the former make themselves slaves while the latter is free, but that the former have their lord outside themselves while the latter carries his lord in himself, yet is at the same time his own slave.[51]

Anyone who knows *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* will see that Hegel is here taking aim at that work. "Tungu shamans" and "Puritans" are taken from Kant, who uses them as examples of religions in which cult practices have overridden their rational ethical content. Hegel's radical claim is that exactly the same criticism applies to Kant himself. For Hegel, no less than for Schopenhauer, the idea that we must submit to "the moral law within" is itself just such a fetish. The novelty of Christianity,

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to follow Hegel, is not to have given religious commands a foundation in moral reason but to have pointed to a way of going beyond the framework of law and justice entirely:

> Retribution [*Wiedervergeltung*] and its equivalence with crimes is the sacred principle of all justice, the principle on which any political order [*Staatsverfassung*] must rest. But Jesus makes the universal demand for the surrender of rights [*Aufhebung des Rechts*], elevation above the entire sphere of justice and injustice through love. Through love there disappears, along with rights [*das Recht*], also the feeling of inequality and the normative requirement [*das Soll*] of this feeling, the demand for equality—that is, the hatred of one's enemies.[52]

Although Hegel thus rejects the Kantian attempt to give religious doctrine a rational foundation through the idea of moral reason, we should note that his defence of Christianity makes no reference to divine revelation or miraculous intervention—or, indeed, to belief in an afterlife. The values described by Hegel as promulgated by Jesus in place of the moral law cannot be realized except in the form of a social community. Hegel's Christianity is inextricably embedded in history.

So where has this taken us? We have traced through a dialectic. Two powerful drives—the desire to see the world as personal and human and the desire for human beings to be subject only to relationships that are rational and transparent—are in fundamental conflict. Iris Murdoch would, no doubt, say that the demand for justification is a matter of Luciferian pride, but Kant himself would say that it follows from his fundamental faith in the Creator's goodness. The alienation of impersonality and the alienation of arbitrariness represent failures of reconciliation at the level of the individual. To be condemned to a life of loneliness or subordination to alien forces are two of the worst things that we can envisage, and the thought that the struggle to escape from the alienation of arbitrariness leads to the alienation of impersonality is alarming indeed.

Kantian autonomy is problematic when considered from the point of view of the individual. If the "self-given" law is understood as one that human beings create for themselves, then there seems to be no reason why they cannot also release themselves from it. On the other hand, if the moral law is a matter of objective rationality, then it confronts the individual as

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a command—a rational command into which we can have insight, to be sure, but a command nonetheless. To say that morality is a fulfilment or realization of the self is to reduce the self to an essential kernel of moral rationality and to make it my "governing identity", as Korsgaard puts it.

Bernard Williams follows Murdoch (as well as Alasdair MacIntyre and Elizabeth Anscombe) in criticizing Kantian morality as a form of voluntarism. He writes, for example, in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy:*

> In the thought of Kant and of others influenced by him, all genuinely moral considerations rest, ultimately, and at a deep level, in the agent's will.[53]

To follow the interpretation of this book, however, that criticism is wrong. In fact, Kantianism could hardly be more objective: it has been purged of any form of dependence on a choosing will, human or divine. Nevertheless, Williams's question what reason human beings have for following morality is not so easily dismissed; human beings (unlike God) always face a choice between moral and non-moral reasons. Thus the critique epitomized in the devastating title of the last chapter of *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*—"Morality: The Peculiar Institution"—has force independently of Williams's misinterpretation of Kant as a voluntarist. Even if morality is fully rational, objective and transcendent, why should we submit to it? Kant's moral law presents itself as Augustine's God "whom to serve is perfect freedom". But is it really? Or is the drive to make oneself "the slave of duty", rather, a supreme example of fetishism?[54]

Love and Alienation

If we evaluate reasons from the moral point of view, then, to no one's surprise, moral reasons will turn out to be the better reasons. Furthermore, if we represent all non-moral reasons as mere inclinations or drives ("*Neigungen*" or "*Triebe*"), then it seems that only morality can offer us a way of escaping from the slavery of appetite. Bernard Williams, for one, attributes just such a view to Kant:

> Kant . . . believed that every action not done from moral principle was done for the agent's pleasure.[55]

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But this, it might be said, is an unsympathetically restrictive way to read Kant. It is true that, as was argued in Chapter 5, moral agency—*Persönlichkeit*—is unique in being the sole thing that is good "without restriction" ("*ohne Einschränkung*"), but that does not mean that it is the only thing that is good except as a means. Things other than moral action are non-instrumentally good, although they would not be so without the presence of *Persönlichkeit.* They can be infused with goodness in some, admittedly rather mysterious, way by the simultaneous presence of moral agency ("bonified", to use a word coined by G. A. Cohen) with the result that such things too can be good as ends.

To present this less abstractly, let us turn to a case of Kantian ethics in action, first brought to attention by Walter Benjamin, and later discussed in depth by Rae Langton.[56] The history of Maria von Herbert is somewhat obscure, but develops out of a letter written by her to Kant asking him for advice and help. While Benjamin presents the case flippantly (his heading is "Kant as Agony Aunt"—"*Kant als Liebesratgeber*") Langton treats it as raising deep and serious philosophical issues for Kantianism. She is, I believe, quite right.

Maria von Herbert was part of a friendship circle of young people in Klagenfurt (the capital of the Austrian province of Carinthia) centred on her brother, Franz von Herbert, a businessman (the family owned a factory for white lead) and passionate adherent of the Enlightenment. We know more about Franz von Herbert than we do about his sister. This is partly because of Franz's correspondence with such friends as Leonhard Reinhold, Friedrich Karl Forberg (both of whom we have encountered briefly in previous chapters) and the philosopher and doctor Johann Benjamin Erhard (who acted as an intermediary with Kant) but also because of the attention paid to Herbert and Erhard by the Austrian authorities in the anti-Jacobin campaign of the 1790s.[57] The "Herbert-circle" seems to have resembled the "*schöne Seelen*" ("beautiful souls") who came together in the salons of Henriette Herz and Rahel Varnhagen in Berlin.[58] They read and discussed philosophy together, the two sexes participating equally in a way that could, of course, never have happened in a university at that time.

Maria von Herbert's initial letter to Kant is all too clearly the expression of a soul in despair. She turns to Kant, she says, "as a believer to her God", either for help and comfort or to prepare herself for death. As she

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explains it, she has lost a deep love and without that, her existence in this world seems to have no value—worse, it is a torment. The only thing that keeps her from taking her own life is the conviction that she would thereby be violating the basic principle of moral duty: to preserve her existence for its own sake. The reason that she gives for her state of (as Langton calls it) desolation is that she had lied to her lover—though not to conceal something dishonourable on her part—and that, once revealed, this had ruptured the emotional bond between them.[59]

Kant clearly spent time in preparing his response, which he sent the next spring. From the strict point of view of Kantian ethics there is an important difference between lying (which is always, whatever the circumstances, a violation of a strict "duty to oneself") and lack of candour, which Kant is very far from condemning. He is also concerned whether Maria is feeling repentance for her lie or regret for its consequences. But, those questions apart, Kant ends his letter with a revealing paragraph:

> When your change in attitude has been revealed to your beloved . . . only time will be needed to quench, little by little, the traces of this justified and virtuous reluctance, and to transform his coldness into a more firmly grounded affection [*Neigung*]. If this doesn't happen, then the earlier warmth of his affection was more physical than moral, and would have disappeared anyway-a misfortune which we often encounter in life, and when we do, must meet with composure. For the value of life, in so far as it consists of the enjoyment we get [*was wir Gutes geniessen können*] is vastly overrated.[60]

The idea that love is either "moral" or "physical" seems to show that Kant does indeed have a reductive view of it: physical love is just another kind of pleasure, without intrinsic value—one, indeed, to recall the passage from the *Lectures on Moral Philosophy,* that is degrading and dishonourable.[61] Yet earlier in his letter Kant speaks of the "candour" that comes in friendship and love—the feeling that there is someone to whom we can fully open our heart. So even Kant is not entirely deaf to the idea that love between the sexes has a distinctive, relational kind of value—an intimacy and personal quality that is different from a mere pleasure. That distinctive value cannot, however, exist without morality, Kant clearly believes.

What about morality without love, though? In January 1793, von Herbert wrote a letter in response to Kant that is, if anything, more heart-wrenching

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than her first. She was by now, so far as she could tell, in good standing as a moral agent, but her love had not returned. As a result, she says, she finds herself living in a world of unrelieved and bleak loneliness and she longs for death (she did, in fact, end her own life several years later). Her plan (which she never fulfilled) was to make a visit to Königsberg to meet Kant for herself.

> . . . I would like to know what kind of life your philosophy has led you to—whether it ever seemed to you to be worth-while to take a wife, to devote yourself to someone with your whole heart and to reproduce your likeness. I have an engraved portrait of you by Bause, from Leipzig. I see a profound calm there, and moral depth—but not the astuteness of which the *Critique of Pure Reason* is proof. And I am unhappy not to be able to look you directly in the face.[62]

Even granting Kant his premise that morality is a necessary condition for the warmth and intimacy of relational love, it is clearly not a sufficient one. What would it be like to live in a world in which Kantian morality is realized but from which personal love is absent? What kind of person would one have to be to survive in such a colourless and arid environment? Von Herbert's intuition brings out a very troubling question.

One way of looking at the Kantian project as presented in this book is as a set of defences against perceived threats of a loss of value. At its heart is Kant's sense that a "Spinozist" or "fatalist" world, in which human beings are reduced to "marionettes" or "thinking automata", would be drained of value, and that an arbitrary or random freedom would not be freedom at all.[63] Then there is the imperative of retributive justice: the balance between action and desert that requires that the "last murderer" be put to death, because "if justice disappears, there is no longer any value in men's living on earth."[64] To this Maria von Herbert adds another kind of loss of value: the absence of love. And she rightly asks herself what it might be about the solitary Kant that made him immune to this kind of desolation.

It was not just the young Hegel who saw love as transcending retributivism. Maria von Herbert's brother, Franz, was, unsurprisingly, a freemason, as were the most prominent male (women were excluded from freemason lodges) humanists and adherents of the Enlightenment in late eighteenth-century Austria. Two other, very famous, Austrian freemasons

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were Mozart and Emanuel Schikaneder, composer and librettist, respectively, of the masonically inspired opera *The Magic Flute,* which was first performed in 1791, the year of Maria von Herbert's first letter to Kant. As its admirers know, *The Magic Flute* is set in an (all-male) priestly community, directed by a benevolent High Priest, Sarastro.[65] In the famous aria "*In diesen heil'gen Hallen*", Sarastro sings about how, within the sacred precincts of his community, revenge is unknown, because, if there is transgression and "a human being falls", "love" will lead him back to duty.[66] To follow *The Magic Flute,* love is both transformative and transfigurative. In a duet, the heroine, Pamina, and the comic bird-catcher, Papageno (sung by Schikaneder himself in the original production) praise the divine character of conjugal love: "*Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann/reichen an die Gottheit an.*" ("Man and wife, and wife and man, reach up to God.")

The question that Maria von Herbert and the creators of *The Magic Flute* pose is this. If we eliminate the arbitrary elements from God and no longer live in a world given warmth by God's personal character of divine love and mercy, is it not necessary to find some kind of this-worldly relationships to replace it? And what would be more apt to do that than love, romantic and social? To my mind, this represents a profound challenge—and alternative—to the Kantian project.

Being with Oneself in Otherness

Running through the centre of German Idealism is the conception of freedom as self-determination, anticipated in Rousseau's idea that to be free is to be subject to a "self-given law" and, before that, in the Spinozan conception of "free necessity". As Schelling puts it:

> Only that is free which acts according to the laws of its own essence and is not determined by anything else either within or outside it.[67]

For Spinoza, such complete self-determination ("absolute spontaneity", as Kant calls it, or "inner necessity", to use Schelling and Hegel's term) belongs to God alone. For Kant, on the other hand, the freedom that comes with being subject to a self-given law—autonomy—is a possibility for human beings as well. A human being's *Willkür* makes a free (in the sense of undetermined) choice to be determined either by morality or by

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inclination. If they choose morality, then their will is determined by a law that is fully rational.

That law, however, confronts human beings as a command—an elevating, awe-inspiring command, to be sure, but a command nevertheless. If following the moral law is to be a realization of freedom, then it seems to require that the self should be shrunk: the *autos* identified with the *nomos* and the contingent and empirical aspects of the self made ancillary to its true, moral identity. Otherwise the law comes to the self as a command from outside. As we have seen, the young Hegel makes this objection to Kant very forcefully. Does the mature Hegel have a solution to it? To answer this question, we must present and evaluate Hegel's account of freedom and see how it compares with Kant's.

Hegel's *Geist* is not the Christian God with the personal qualities of paternal benevolence and merciful grace, yet nor can it be reduced to a set of relationships between empirical individuals ("culturally distinct objective patterns of social interaction", as the *Stanford Encyclopedia* says).[68] *Geist* is best understood as a combination of Spinoza's God, the one true substance, with Kant's idea of humanity as an ethical community that develops through time—the "church invisible". Where Kant's Socratic God stands as a judge, controlling the entrance to life beyond the grave, *Geist* is fully in this world—a dynamic, self-realizing subject, coming to self-understanding through human beings and their history. It is not the *source* of order but the order itself.

Freedom, in the sense of internal necessity, is *Geist*'s essential characteristic. The following passage from the Introduction to Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* makes this explicit. Hegel has been discussing development in nature. For Hegel, organic nature is teleological: it contains processes whose various stages constitute a developing whole (most obviously, the growth of a plant). But, says Hegel, such development always involves a duality: the difference between the individual that is realized (the life of the plant as a whole) and the various material forms through which it passes (seed, seedling, mature plant). He then turns to *Geist:*

> In *Geist* it is otherwise: it is consciousness and free because within it beginning and end coincide. . . . That for which the other is, is the same as that other; and thus *Geist* alone is at home with itself in its other. The development of *Geist* lies in the fact that its going forth and separation constitutes its coming to itself.

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> This being with itself [*Beisichsein*], or coming-to-self of *Geist* may be described as its complete and highest end: it is this alone that it desires and nothing else. Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time simply are the struggles for *Geist* to know itself, to make itself objective to itself, to find itself, be for itself, and finally unite itself to itself; it is alienated and divided, but only so as to be able thus to find itself and return to itself. Only in this manner does *Geist* attain its freedom, for that is free which is not connected with or dependent on another. True self-possession and satisfaction are only to be found in this, and in nothing else but Thought does Geist attain this freedom. In sense-perception, for instance, and in feeling, I find myself confined and am not free; but I am free when I have a consciousness of this my feeling. Man has particular ends and interests even in will; I am free indeed when this is mine. Such ends, however, always contain another, or something which constitutes for me another, such as desire and impulse. It is in Thought alone that all foreign matter disappears from view, and that *Geist* is absolutely free. All interest which is contained in the Idea and in Philosophy is expressed in it.[69]

Thus it is only in speculative philosophy—"Thought", in Hegel's particular sense of that term, purged of all the contingencies of "*Vorstellung*"—that the freedom of *Geist* is fully realized. As Hegel writes in his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences:*

> In Logic, Thoughts are grasped so that they have no other content except that which belongs to Thought itself and which Thought has brought forth. Thus the Thoughts are *pure* Thoughts. Thus *Geist* is purely with itself [*rein bei sich selbst*] and hence free. For freedom is just this: to stay with itself [*bei sich selbst*] in its other, to be dependent on itself, to be that which determines itself.[70]

But what place does that leave to human freedom?

For Spinoza himself, since "free necessity" is confined to God, human beings' highest aspiration is a kind of Socratic Apollonianism in their relationship with God: the *amor intellectualis dei*. Perhaps something similar is true of Hegel. Initiation into speculative philosophy enables human beings to grasp the full freedom of Thought. Yet, as anyone who has embarked on the study of Hegel will know, the barriers to entry into the

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Hegelian philosophical priesthood are high, so its membership will always be limited. What, then, are we to make of statements like Hegel's famous pronouncement in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* that the Germanic world "knows that all are free"?[71] It is from the apparent paradox that full freedom is realized only in *Geist* but that Hegel considers the modern world to be the realization of universal freedom that any assessment of Hegel's account of freedom must start.

Let me draw attention first to a feature of Hegel's language. In the passages quoted above, Hegel refers to freedom as a matter of being "*bei sich*", "*Beisichselbstsein*" or "*bei sich selbst in seinem anderen*". Such phrases are ubiquitous in Hegel's writings when he refers to freedom. Similar language can be found in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* and the *Lectures on Aesthetics,* as well as, famously, the *Philosophy of Right.*[72] The expression presents a problem both to the translator and the interpreter, however.

Bei sich is standardly translated as "with oneself". But this already sounds paradoxical, in English at least ("Who are you with?" "Myself." "Oh, so you're not with anybody then!"). German does have a different sense as well, however. If someone asks where you are, you could reply "*bei mir*" (at home, at my place) or, as the case might be, "*bei Stefan*" (at Stefan's). This sense of being "at home" is surely an important ingredient in Hegel's meaning. Thus the phrase "*bei sich selbst in seinem anderen*" could be translated as "at home in its other". (I once—unsuccessfully—tried to persuade a distinguished French Hegel scholar to use "*chez soi*" for *bei sich* in his translation of the *Philosophy of Right.*)

The idea of being at home thus returns us to the theme of this chapter. Not to be at home is to be distant and remote—in short, alienated. So freedom, for Hegel, is a kind of non-alienation. Still, that brings its own dilemma with it. As we have seen from the passages quoted (and there are similar ones elsewhere in Hegel's writing) it is only *Geist* and the pure categories ("*Gedanken*") of Logic that have fully independent self-determination and they are essentially impersonal. How can *Geist* be "at home" or "alienated" in anything like a human sense? Thus it seems as if *Beisichsein* has two levels of meaning: the one human, experiential or phenomenological of being "at home" even in otherness; the other metaphysical, referring to the underlying rational identity that, to follow Hegel, runs through and gives order to the diversity of nature and history. How to understand the relationship between the two?

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For Hegel, the standpoint of *Geist* has priority over that of the individual:

> In considering freedom, the starting-point must be not individuality, the single self-consciousness, but only the essence of self-consciousness; for whether man knows it or not, this essence is externally realized as a self-subsistent power [*Gewalt*] in which single individuals are only moments. It is the march of God in the world that the state exists; its basis is the power of reason actualizing itself as will.[73]

At the same time, in order to realize itself, *Geist* has divided itself into those particular individuals. In the third part of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* Hegel returns to the famous dialectic of master and slave (*Herr und Knecht*) from the *Phenomenology* in order to explain how recognition produces both equality between individuals and the understanding of their shared identity as members of *Geist:*

> The master who stood in contrast with the slave was not yet truly free, for he did not yet see himself completely in the other. Only once the slave becomes free does the master too become completely free. In this condition of universal freedom I am immediately reflected in the other in being reflected in myself, and, conversely, I relate myself immediately to myself in relating myself to the other. We have here the mighty diremption of *Geist* into different selves, that in and for themselves and for each other are completely free, independent, absolutely aloof and resistant, and yet at the same time identical with one another and thus not independent, not impenetrable, but merged, as it were.[74]

To appreciate this diremption of *Geist* into individual selves, Hegel goes on to say, is a matter of speculative philosophy—but it is not, for that reason, something arcane and uncertain. On the contrary: it demonstrates the immediate relevance of philosophical comprehension:

> This relationship is of a thoroughly speculative kind; and if one is of the opinion that the speculative is something remote and ungraspable, one need only look at this relationship in order to convince oneself of the groundlessness of this opinion. The speculative (or the rational and true) consists in the unity of the notion, or of subjectivity and objectivity. This unity is evidently present in the standpoint

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> under discussion. It forms the substance of *Sittlichkeit:* namely, the family; love between the sexes (where that unity has the form of particularity); love of the fatherland; desire for the universal purposes and interests of the state; the love of God; likewise courage, when this takes the form of a commitment of one's life for a universal purpose; and also honour, when the latter is not a matter of the indifferent particularity of the individual, but has as its content something substantial, truly universal.[75]

Instead of seeing individuals as having value absolutely (*Persönlichkeit*) like Kant, their value, for Hegel, is subordinate to their true substance: that supra-individual network of social institutions and cultural practices that Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit.*

> Since the ethical determinations [*Bestimmungen*] constitute the concept of freedom, they are the substance or universal essence of individuals, who are thus related to them as accidents only. Whether the individual exists is all one to the objective *Sittlichkeit.* It alone is permanent and is the power ruling the life of individuals.[76]

The actions of individuals—even self-seeking and material ones—are given value by the contribution they make to *Sittlichkeit* as a whole. As Hegel explains in the *Phenomenology:*

> As the individual in his own particular work *ipso facto* accomplishes unconsciously a universal work, so again he also performs the universal task as his conscious object. The whole becomes in its entirety his work, for which he sacrifices himself, and precisely by that means receives back his own self from it. There is nothing here which may not be reciprocal, nothing in regard to which the independence of the individual may not, in dissipating its existence on its own account, in negating itself, give itself its positive significance of existing for itself. This unity of existing for another, or making self a "thing", and, of existence for self, this universal substance, utters its universal language in the customs and laws of a people.[77]

Hence each member of a people can see themselves as a particularized part of a single substance and recognize others likewise as particularizations of that whole: in that sense all are equal. For this reason individuals

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should keep to their socially defined duties and not presume to subject them to challenge or scrutiny:

> But this existent unchangeable nature is nothing else than the expression of the particular individuality which seems opposed to it: the laws give expression to that which each individual is and does; the individual knows them not merely to be what constitutes his universal objective nature as a "thing", but knows himself, too, in that form, or knows it to be particularized in his own individuality and in each of his fellow-citizens. In the universal *Geist,* therefore, each has the certainty only of himself, the certainty of finding in the actual reality nothing but himself; he is as certain of the others as of himself. I apprehend and see in all of them that they are in their own eyes only these independent beings just as I am. I see in their case the free unity with others in such wise that just as this unity exists through me, so it exists through the others too—I see them as myself, myself as them. In a free people, therefore, reason is in truth realized. It is a present living spirit, where the individual not only finds his destiny, i.e. his universal and particular nature, expressed and given to him in the fashion of a thing, but himself is this essential being, and has also attained his destiny. The wisest men of antiquity for that reason declared that wisdom and virtue consist in living in accordance with the customs of one's own people.[78]

Thus when—very surprisingly, given the strictures on duty-based morality that we saw in *The Spirit of Christianity*—Hegel commends Kantian philosophy for emphasizing that "in doing [my duty] I am by myself and free", he is doing so from a perspective that is very different from Kant's: it is not part of a claim that individual agency has absolute value but that the value of agency is derivative from the individual's place in a wider order. Where Kant defends the idea that the individual is free and fully self-determining by shrinking the self into an inner kernel of moral agency, Hegel defends the same idea by locating the "universal essence" (*das allgemeine Wesen*) of the individual collectively, in *Sittlichkeit.* It is through existing, socially defined, duties that we are part of *Sittlichkeit* and, through that, connected with the wider order of *Geist.*[79]

This emphasis on obedience to the established order might be thought to be in tension with Hegel's Socratic rationalism, however. As Hegel says

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in the *Zusatz* to para. 317 of *The Philosophy of Right,* "The principle of the modern world requires that what anyone is to recognize shall reveal itself to him as something entitled to recognition."[80] Add in the modern "obstinacy", praised by Hegel, that "will not recognize anything in conviction that is not justified through Thought"[81] and it is possible to read Hegel as endorsing the principle of "justifiability to each person" that is often taken as the essential core of modern political liberalism. Nevertheless, if people are entitled to have the political order justified to them and the justification of the modern state is given by speculative philosophical *Wissenschaft* (note the phrase "*durch den Gedanken gerechtfertigt*") such justification will only be available to the philosophically initiated.

Bearing this in mind, the long *Zusatz* to para. 270 of the *Philosophy of Right,* in which Hegel discusses the role of religion in the state, is revealing:

> Now if you say that the state must be grounded on religion, you may mean that it should rest on rationality and arise out of it; but your statement may also be misunderstood to mean that men are most adroitly schooled to obedience if their minds are shackled by a slavish religion. . . . But if you mean that men ought to respect the state, this whole whose limbs they are, then of course the best means of effecting this is to give them philosophical insight into the essence of the state, though, in default of that, a religious frame of mind may lead to the same result.[82]

Note that the problem as Hegel here poses it has significantly shifted. It is no longer: how can we rationally justify the state to individuals?, but: how do individuals come to see the state as worthy of respect? In other words, we have moved from *justification* in the form of rational demonstration to the conditions for de facto acceptance of the state. Hegel's metaphysical idealism (the idea that history is the depiction of the successive stages of *Geist*'s self-realization) leads to sociological idealism—the idea that cultures are organic wholes containing within themselves an inner principle of unity. This inner principle is, he says, consciously echoing Rousseau, a "General Will": a collective, objective identity that pervades all stable societies, even the most authoritarian:

> The origin of a state involves imperious lordship on the one hand, instinctive submission on the other. But even obedience—lordly

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> power, and the fear inspired by a ruler—is already a relationship of the will. Even in barbarous states this is the case; it is not the isolated will of individuals that prevails; individual pretensions are relinquished, and the general will is what is essential.[83]

So it turns out that Hegel's conception of the realization of freedom in history is almost the exact opposite of Kant's. In order to understand Kantian morality as a realization of freedom, it was necessary that the individual should be in some way or another shrunk—the agent's will was identified with moral duty. Hegel's solution is the reverse: the individual is expanded.

For Kant this world is, in a sense, incomplete. There is always the possibility that morality and desert come apart: the virtuous suffer and the wicked go unpunished. It is this that points us both to the Last Judgement and to the hope that human history embodies a developing moral community moving towards a "universal republic based on the laws of virtue". In the hands of Herder and Fichte that idea of human history as a developing moral community was transformed into a modern version of the ancient Roman idea of historical immortality. History gives human beings a collective object of identification. Hegel takes things further by making *Geist,* the equivalent of Spinoza's and Kant's God—an impersonal, fully self-determined and, hence, free agent—the object of that identification.

Insofar as speculative philosophy demonstrates the rationality underlying the apparently haphazard conflicts of human history, it is a "theodicy" in the Socratic sense. But such transparent knowledge is out of reach of all except the philosophically initiated. Instead, Hegel offers the ordinary individual intuitive identification with the established order (and, as we saw in Chapter 6, the intoxication of military self-sacrifice in the service of the state—if he is male, that is). In the Nietzschean terms that we have used to classify strategies of reconciliation, such collective identification is a modern form of Dionysianism. What Hegel does not offer to the individual, however, is the right to submit the exercise of authority by the state to the sobering discipline of accountability.

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Chapter 8

Philosophy in History

> I do believe in divine providence (that, incidentally, is the main reason why I have such a firm conviction that the truth will prevail in philosophy, despite all the manœuvres that are available to falsehood).
>
> —R. M. HARE

Kant and Hegel: A Brief Review

The central interpretive work of this book is now over, and, at this point, the reader deserves to be able to stand back and look at the figures who, I believe, stand before us once we have chipped away the encrustations laid down by previous generations of readers.

The Kant whom I have depicted is not a secular thinker. On the contrary, theism is at the very heart of his project. Kant believes, above all, in a just God: one who rewards and punishes human beings as they deserve. And that means three things.

First, of course, human beings must know what is required of them. That cannot be dependent on a revelation that is given to some people and withheld from others. Morality must be available to all, whatever their level of intellect and education. Salvation cannot be dependent on the instruction or sacramental power of a church. Nor, for that matter, can it depend on the capacity for intricate moral reasoning of a sophisticated analytical philosopher—a Judith Jarvis Thomson, an Onora O'Neill or a Frances Kamm. Each of us—even the most uneducated—carries within ourselves

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"*die gemeine Menschenvernunft*" (common human reason) and, armed with that, has "no need of science and philosophy to know what one has to do in order to be honest and good, and even wise and virtuous".[1] Moreover, if knowledge of right and wrong is something we all carry within ourselves, it looks as though it must be the same for people at all places and times.

The moral reason that we share is not a kind of impersonal algorithm (a "CI procedure", as Rawls calls it) that applies an objective test to resolve moral dilemmas. Instead, it draws on the notion of treating the embodiment of an intrinsic, inviolable value—*Persönlichkeit* (personhood or "humanity in one's person")—with appropriate respect. Turning that into specific ethical judgements requires a lot of (to modern readers, often dubious) intuition as well as teleological thinking about human beings and their condition (our "faculties" and their "*Bestimmungen*").

Secondly, morality must be understood by human beings to be intrinsically good—it cannot take its goodness from the command of a particular being, however powerful. Hence Kant's commitment to the "Platonic" side of the Euthyphro dilemma.

Thirdly, human beings must be capable of following or failing to follow the requirements of morality in ways for which they can properly be held responsible. And this means that they really must choose their actions freely—it is not enough that, in acting morally, they believe that they are acting freely. So the question of transcendental freedom cannot be avoided as going beyond our concerns—but nor (as I believe I have shown) does Kant do so.

Yet, although Kant is not a secular thinker, he is nevertheless a secularizing one. This shows itself very plainly in the way in which the Kantian God becomes depersonalized. This is not a result of Kant moving away from the theistic project, but of his pursuing it so relentlessly. The Kantian God does not offer human beings the gift of grace, nor does he override justice by exercising divine mercy. To allow either might make God warmer and more personal, but it would, at the same time, introduce an element of arbitrariness or capriciousness—by Kant's lights, it would make God unjust.

God does not establish the moral law by decree: he is a "constitutional monarch". Nor does he make a decision to obey it himself. Because the moral law expresses God's own nature it is not binding on him or a limitation on his freedom. On the contrary, God's freedom in following the moral law is a model of true freedom: the freedom of (in Schelling's language) a

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being "which acts according to the laws of its own essence and is not determined by anything else either within or outside it".[2]

Such an ideal of freedom applies to human beings too. They, however, must choose (freely) to follow this law. So human freedom is the law of human beings' "essence" only if morality is itself taken to be the essence of human identity. Yet morality, as Kant makes clear in his response to Schiller, actually works *against* human nature: thus it remains, as Hegel, Schopenhauer and Bernard Williams all appreciated, a command—a rational command from within, perhaps, but a command nonetheless.

Looked at from the wider standpoint of reconciliation, Kant is, of course, the epitome of Socratism: in his hands, the Socratic drive for *explanation* is part of a wider drive for *justification*. Iris Murdoch is wrong to identify Kant as a rebel like Milton's Satan—was there ever a less Kantian phrase than "Evil be thou my good"?—but Kant does indeed consistently refuse to acknowledge the claims of unjustified, arbitrary authority, human or divine. Hence the need for reason to operate as a "law-court" (*Gerichtshof*). Likewise, he rejects the metaphysical picture that would have human beings as, in the end, the "plaything of alien forces".

Thus Kant's philosophy can be seen as the embodiment of a bourgeois kind of heroism: an uncompromising campaign against the alienation of arbitrariness. On the other hand, to the extent that human beings have been consoled by the sense that they stand in relation to a personal deity who has them under his paternal care, Murdoch and her admirers are right to see Kantianism as a source of alienation too: the alienation of loneliness and impersonality.

But as well as this Socratic drive, there is also a streak of Apollonianism in Kant. The contemplation of the order of the natural world and the moral law produces, not the kind of dreamlike euphoria that Nietzsche thinks was the Greek response to the beauty and happiness of the gods of Olympus, but the more submissive religious emotions of "awe" and "reverence" when we look outside ourselves towards nature and the moral order—as does the image of humanity moving collectively towards justice as an "invisible church".

Turning now to Hegel, we can certainly see him as continuing some central Kantian themes. Most importantly, for Hegel, just as for Kant, to be free is to be fully self-determined. Hegel's *Geist* has this quality of full self-determination. Yet, unlike Spinoza's God, whom it strikingly resem-

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bles in many ways, *Geist* only achieves full self-realization through human beings and their history. And, unlike Kant's God, *Geist* is not a judge. There is no trace in Hegel of the doctrine of a Last Judgement to be followed by an afterlife of either reward or punishment, and all the evidence we have is that he did not believe in one.

Nor, unlike Kant, is Hegel a moral universalist. What unifies mankind is not morality, but *Geist* itself and its history. *Moralität* is always embedded in *Sittlichkeit,* and that varies drastically with time and place. Thus Hegel is, as I have labelled him, a semi-particularist: someone who can believe both that ancient slavery was wrong (in conflict with the nature of human beings) and that it was right (in conformity with the development of *Geist* at that time).

It is evident how Kant's philosophy responds to the problem of theodicy, but in Hegel's case—although he himself claims that his philosophical account of history is a "theodicy in Leibniz's sense"—this is much less clear. How can we see the self-realization of *Geist* as "good" for human beings? Plainly, that goodness does not consist in the promotion of human happiness. ("World history is not the soil in which happiness grows. The periods of happiness are the blank pages in it.")[3] Nor (though Hegel is no Spinozan fatalist when it comes to human action) does it consist in the intrinsic value of free agency. Officially, the philosophy of history is a theodicy because it makes *Geist* (the "will of God") fully knowable. But that leaves two questions.

First, is mere knowability sufficient for goodness? Of course, ignorance may make a bad thing worse—perhaps it is less bad to know that one has an incurable disease than not—but that is not enough to make the bad thing good. Thus it seems that Hegel must be working from a Platonic or Neo-Platonic view of knowledge: that the highest kind of knowledge is a kind of self-alignment, and so, in coming to know the structure of *Geist* philosophically, we embrace our identity with it.

But, even if we accept that, there is a second issue. The kind of knowledge that Hegel claims comes from philosophy is not available to everyone. Surely the world must be good for those others too. What holds them to *Geist* is not philosophical knowledge but their embeddedness within particular societies at particular stages of *Geist*'s development. Each such society contains an inner structure—Hegel describes it as a "general will"—and this manifests itself as laws, customs and traditions: in short,

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its national culture. This is what connects the wider population to *Geist,* the "substance" of the individual, as Hegel calls it. It is for this reason that Hegel claims that, in doing my duty as it comes to me through law and custom, I am "by myself and free".

Hegelian patriotism reaches its height in the individual's sacrifice of everything that is contingent and personal about themselves, up to and including their physical existence, as part of the "sovereign deed of the State" in the anonymous battles of modern warfare. In this way, by taking up the nationalistic idea of historical immortality that we first saw emerging in Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation,* Hegel brings together collective self-identification with Dionysian self-dissolution and lays the ground for Prussian militarism and state-worship.

I do not claim to have established these interpretations beyond dispute. The hermeneutic circle is real: the texts that we take as evidence for our interpretations must themselves already be understood, and, where those texts are expressed in language as unfamiliar as Kant's and Hegel's, this gives ample opportunities for a commentator to continue to defend a cherished interpretation even when others might think that the weight of the evidence is overwhelmingly against it. So it is idle for me to hope that my re-interpretations, however convincing I find them myself, will prove irresistible in overthrowing established interpretive communities—and, perhaps, that would be undesirable too, for we all have our prejudices, however sincerely we try to set them aside.

Hegel and Marx on Philosophy and History

The objective of this book is not just to revise received views of Kant and Hegel, however, but to use those interpretations to illuminate the broader process of secularization. For this we must move outwards from philosophical texts to history and society. Yes—but how? That question returns us to the methodological issues that were raised in Chapters 1 and 2. To address them, let us start by comparing how Hegel and Marx see the relationship between philosophy and society.

According to Hegel, philosophy is "its time captured in Thought" ("*ihre Zeit in Gedanken erfasst*").[4] That famous dictum may make it sound as if Hegel believes that philosophy is no more than a response to changing cir-

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cumstances. But that is wrong. For Hegel, the term "*Gedanke*" refers, not to what happens to be in people's minds at a particular time, but to that rigorous form of categorial activity displayed in pure form in the *Science of Logic*. Philosophy is thus a privileged kind of intellectual activity: "the fullest blossom, the notion [*Begriff*] of *Geist* in its entire form, the consciousness and spiritual essence of all things, the *Geist* of the age as *Geist* present in itself."[5] The history of philosophy reveals the trajectory of the development of *Geist* in its purest form. In Hegel's theory this historical narrative goes together with a unitary picture of the social whole at any one time: all areas of culture are emanations of a single "*besonderer Volksgeist*" (the particular spirit of a people) which gives a "*gemeinschaftliches Gepräge*" (a common stamp) to the entire system—a cultural unity which should be recognized and accepted (either reflexively and philosophically or intuitively and immediately) by all of a society's members. Philosophy embodies this essential kernel.

For Marx, by contrast, philosophy, like religion, has no independent, rational history, although it falsely believes itself to have one ("Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness . . . have no history, no development").[6] Philosophy is a mere "reflex and echo"—an expression in subjective terms of objective social processes taking place elsewhere. Marx, of course, makes conflict fundamental to his picture of society—at least until the coming of socialism and the end of the "class struggle"—yet, in every epoch, "the ruling ideas" are "the ideas of the ruling class".[7] Philosophy, in reflecting those "ruling ideas", plays a socially conservative role. It does so not just in the content of particular doctrines but, more fundamentally, through the fact that it promotes its own ruling illusion: that ideas are independent and efficacious. Philosophers, for Marx, are puppet warriors, unaware of the strings that are pulling them as they carry on their fights.

The difference between the two conceptions emerges in the way that each presents a parallel between Kantian philosophy and the French Revolution.

According to Hegel, Kant's philosophy is linked to the French Revolution through the idea of freedom as self-determination. Hegel endorses this conception of freedom, but alleges that, in Kant's and Rousseau's hands, it still remained "abstract", with the result that, once the attempt was made to put it into practice, it led to political disaster in the form of the Terror.

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Hegel does not hold Kant himself responsible for this, however: fortunately, the Germans, unlike the French, do not allow the turmoil of theory to escape into the political world.

> The truth of the Kantian philosophy is that Thought is taken to be concrete in itself, self-determining; the recognition of freedom. Rousseau already established the Absolute as existing in freedom; Kant established the same principle, but taken rather from the theoretic side. The French regard it from the side of will, which is represented in their proverb: "*Il a la tête près du bonnet.*" France possesses the sense of actuality, of business, of promptitude—conception passes more immediately into action; people have applied themselves more practically to actuality. But, however much freedom may be in itself concrete, it was there applied to actuality as undeveloped and in its abstraction; and to make abstractions hold good in actuality means to destroy actuality. The fanaticism of freedom, put into the hands of the people, became frightful. In Germany the same principle asserted the rights of consciousness on its own account, but it has been worked out in a theoretical fashion. We Germans have commotions of every kind in our heads and on them, but through them all the German head quietly keeps its nightcap on and goes to work within.[8]

In Marx's version, the force of the comparison is reversed completely. Instead of the Terror being a ghastly "fanaticism of freedom", Marx sees it as the natural (and welcome) product of the self-assertion of "energetic bourgeois liberalism". Thus while, for Hegel, the French Revolution represents the translation into action of an inadequate form of philosophy, for Marx, the distance between philosophy and political practice is a product of the backwardness of the German bourgeoisie. Kant is the bourgeoisie's "whitewashing spokesman" and his philosophy "mirrors" the German failure to turn bourgeois self-interest into effective political action.

> The state of affairs in Germany at the end of the last century is fully mirrored in Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft.* While the French bourgeoisie, by means of the most colossal revolution that history has ever known, was achieving domination and conquering the Continent of Europe, while the already politically emancipated English bourgeoisie was revolutionising industry and subjugating India po-

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> litically, and all the rest of the world commercially, the impotent German burghers did not get any further than "good will". Kant was satisfied with "good will" alone, even if it remained entirely without result, and he transferred the *realisation* of this good will, the harmony between it and the needs and impulses of individuals, to *the world beyond*. Kant's good will fully corresponds to the impotence, depression and wretchedness of the German burghers . . .
>
> The characteristic form which French liberalism, based on real class interests, assumed in Germany we find again in Kant. Neither he, nor the German middle class, whose whitewashing spokesman he was, noticed that these theoretical ideas of the bourgeoisie had as their basis material interests and a *will* that was conditioned and determined by the material relations of production. Kant, therefore, separated this theoretical expression from the interests which it expressed; he made the materially motivated determinations of the will of the French bourgeois into *pure* self-determinations of "*free will*", of the will in and for itself, of the human will, and so converted it into purely ideological conceptual determinations and moral postulates. Hence the German petty bourgeois recoiled in horror from the practice of this energetic bourgeois liberalism as soon as this practice showed itself, both in the Reign of Terror and in shameless bourgeois profit-making.[9]

The interpretations of Kantian philosophy that Hegel and Marx are drawing on here are, to say the least, tendentious. Even if Hegel is right that the Kantian attempt to give an account of the self-determining *Wille* must be counted as a failure, surely the Rawlsians are right too: the Kantian enterprise is one of rational self-limitation through respect for the agency of other people. The Kantian demand for justification and the desire to take part in the shared project of the realization of a moral community as a "Church invisible" is quite different from—indeed, opposed to—the empty self-assertion that would lead to a "fanaticism of freedom". As for Marx's claim that the Kantian "pure" will reflects the "impotence" of the German bourgeoisie, what makes the Kantian will "pure" is the fact that it is not directed by any empirical interest. Implicit in Marx's affirmation of the French and British bourgeoisie's ruthless assertion of their sectional interests is the assumption that any attempt to

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practise politics from the point of view of the common good is no more than idle sentimentality.

But what is worse is the suspicion that it is only by means of such interpretive caricatures that Hegel or Marx's models of the relationship between philosophy and society are at all plausible.[10] If social forms in a given society are emanations of a single principle—a *besonderer Volksgeist* that comes to its clearest expression in the philosophy of the age—then philosophy at any one time must be reducible to some simple essence. Likewise, if philosophy is a passive reflection of what is going on elsewhere in society, its self-understanding is always illusory and its claims to use rational argument to evaluate social reality are simply false: the whole business is a waste of time.

Yet what is the alternative? Must we conclude that the history of philosophy and history more broadly—political, cultural and social—are separate from one another? Or is there a more nuanced way of understanding philosophy as socially embedded? I believe that there is.

Philosophy as a Lebensform

Philosophy, it was argued in Chapters 1 and 2, can be looked at as, in Goethe's words, a *Lebensform,* a "way of coming to terms with the world" ("*mit der Welt fertig werden*"). It was this perspective that informed the interpretation of Kant, Hegel and their fellow-Idealists as we looked at their writings through the lens of theodicy—both in the narrow sense of the justification of the belief in divine goodness and, more broadly, as presenting a route to reconciliation. At the same time, we can look at ideas in society from the standpoint of "Legitimation-In-Legitimation-Out" (LILO). This is a kind of historical idealism, although one that is very different from Hegel's, for whom cultural phenomena share a single, common kernel. It is different too from "Discursive Transcendentalism"—the idea that society is embedded within a set of limits to what can be said and thought—as we find it in Foucault with his "regimes of truth", or Quentin Skinner and Charles Taylor when they invoke the idea of society as framed by a "social imaginary".[11]

From this point of view, the relationship between philosophy and society is not one of expression (a single philosophical principle is realized

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in different areas of social life) or mirroring (philosophy is a "reflex" or "echo" of economic and political life). Instead, we should see philosophy and culture more broadly as sharing a common project. If societies need to offer their members ways of making sense of the world that render life acceptable to them, then philosophy can be understood as part of that enterprise.

But does that not threaten to deprive philosophy of a distinctive identity of its own?

A first response is to ask whether that would be such a bad thing. After all, the word "philosophy" has been used very differently at different times. As is well known, the word "metaphysics" simply comes from an editor of Aristotle who brought together a number of his writings as being "after the physics" (*meta ta phusika*) and, in the seventeenth century, "philosophy" was still used to apply to the full range of human knowledge (Newton's "Principia" are properly titled *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*).[12] Here, for instance, is a quotation from Descartes's *Principles of Philosophy:*

> Thus the whole of philosophy is like a tree. The roots are metaphysics, the trunk is physics, and the branches emerging from the trunk are all the other sciences, which may be reduced to three principal ones, namely medicine, mechanics and morals.[13]

The Enlightenment often used the terms "philosophy", "philosopher" and "philosophical" to contrast with what depended on religious authority. Thus Voltaire's "*Philosophie de l'histoire*" (history written by a "*philosophe*" to be read by "*philosophes*", as Voltaire describes it) could be rendered as "secular history". In fact, it was only with Kant and his successors, and then again in the twentieth century, that philosophy became preoccupied with establishing its disciplinary independence. By now it had become important, not just to contrast philosophy and religion, but also to draw a sharp line between philosophy and science. Here is not the place to go through the many essentialistic accounts of the nature of philosophy that have been proposed to do this—the German Idealists' various attempts to produce philosophical "systems", Husserl's conception of philosophy as "transcendental phenomenology", Heidegger's "fundamental ontology", Wittgensteinian "*Sprachkritik*", the logical positivism of the Vienna Circle, and so on—and the reasons that they have all proved to be unsatisfactory.

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Yet, even if it is true that philosophy is one way in which human beings try to come to terms with the world, it is clearly not the only way. So the question what—if anything—distinguishes philosophy remains. A better account is likely to be more historical than prescriptive.

If we return to Plato—the unquestioned founder-figure of Western philosophy—we can see that he brings together a variety of distinct and powerful ideas of what it means to do philosophy. The philosopher is someone who looks for the universal at the sacrifice of the immediate (Thales falls down a well while looking at the stars).[14] Philosophical argument proceeds by dialogue ("dialectic").[15] It tests beliefs by their consequences and consistency ("*elenchos*").[16] The philosopher follows the argument where it leads, "like the wind".[17] Philosophy is a kind of recollection ("*anamnesis*")—it brings to awareness things that, in some sense, we already know.[18] Philosophy moves human beings from *doxa* to *episteme* (from common belief to knowledge).[19] Philosophical knowledge—knowledge of justice—is the ultimate justification for authority in society.[20] The philosopher is a "gadfly" who bites the sleeping Athenian people on the rump to rouse them.[21] While philosophy is like geometry ("let no one ignorant of geometry enter here" stood over the entrance to the Academy) in that it is impersonal and (to use an anachronistic word) objective, it is, at the same time, personally transformative.[22] The philosopher is someone whose knowledge of the good leads them necessarily to act rightly and to bear injustice with equanimity (as we learn from the narrative of the death of Socrates).[23] In short, knowledge brings reconciliation.

Interpreters argue about how to understand these various elements and how consistently they go together in Plato's thought, but, clearly, Plato himself believed that they were all supported and integrated by his most fundamental views concerning (what we would now call) metaphysics and epistemology: that the world as we experience it is the expression of an ideal realm and that it is possible for human beings to ascend to knowledge of that realm by a process of philosophical argument. Once those fundamental views came to lose their hold, however, Plato's different conceptions of the enterprise of philosophy started to come apart.

On the one hand, the ideal of impersonal knowledge became separate from the project of personal self-transformation. Later on, the scientific revolution called into question how far (if at all) such impersonal knowledge is attainable by thought alone. As Francis Bacon put it vividly:

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> For the wit and mind of man, if it worketh upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.[24]

But this empiricist or positivist (if you will allow the anachronistic terms) turn to outer experience did not go unchallenged, and the a priori philosophical systems of the German Idealists, based on the idea of "reflection", can be understood as a revival of the Platonic conception of philosophy as anamnesis.

It is worth noting that I am including Kant in this reflective understanding of philosophy, although the dominant tradition in writing about Kant's theoretical philosophy, in the English-speaking world in particular, presents him as a critic of a priori metaphysics. Kant was indeed a critic of *traditional* metaphysics (and an admirer of Bacon—a quotation from Bacon is the epigraph of the *Critique of Pure Reason*). Yet his own project was to develop a philosophical system of synthetic a priori propositions, parallel to mathematics—one that would apply to experience without being dependent on observation or (particular) experiences. How exactly he thought this was to be achieved is, of course, controversial, but he himself represents that project as reason coming to knowledge through self-examination. Thus he writes in the Preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason:*

> [Metaphysics] is nothing but the inventory of all our possessions through pure reason, systematically arranged. In this field nothing can escape us. What reason produces entirely out of itself cannot be concealed, but is brought to light by reason itself, immediately the common principle has been discovered. The perfect unity of this kind of cognition, and the fact that it arises solely out of pure concepts without any influence that would extend or increase it from experience or even particular intuition, which would lead to a determinate experience, make this unconditioned completeness not only feasible but also necessary. *Tecum habita, et naris quam sit tibi curta supellex* [Dwell with yourself and you will see how simple your possessions are]. Persius.[25]

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That, at least, is how Kant's immediate successors, Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, all understood him—and, in my opinion, rightly so.

With Hegel, the connection between Idealism and Platonism is explicit. For Plato, the turn inwards is a turn upwards—to the impersonal realm of forms. For Hegel it is that too (the "*Vorstellungen*" are transformed into "*Gedanken*") but it is also a turn outwards and indeed backwards. The readers of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* are taken through a process by which material with which they are already acquainted is transformed into full knowledge. As Hegel writes, "Whatever we are acquainted with is, just because we are acquainted with it, not recognized" ("*Das Bekannte überhaupt ist darum, weil es bekannt ist, nicht erkannt*").[26] Philosophy is thus a kind of recollection based on the assumption that the unfolding of the *Weltgeist* has reached a point of completion.

The German Idealists believed that their systems would give a philosophical solution to the problem of theodicy: to justify belief in the world as the product of an omnipotent and benevolent creator. The religion that they defended was *Socratic* in the sense that the goodness of the world was something that it was open to human reason to comprehend—and necessarily so because, if a good God is to *judge* human beings, then he must do it justly, that is, according to principles that they themselves can grasp. Yet in giving primacy to reason and justification, their conception of the deity became more and more impersonal. Moreover, with Kant, a new (or, more precisely, renewed and transformed) conception of historical immortality emerged alongside belief in a Last Judgement. With Hegel, the understanding of the individual as embedded within history as a constituent element in *Geist* came to replace belief in divine judgement and personal immortality, to the point that Hegel's "theodicy" (as he himself calls it) is no longer a religious one in the traditional sense of the word—*die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.*

Marx saw very clearly that the German Idealist project rested on an indefensibly over-ambitious conception of a priori knowledge, but he was wrong in thinking that all that would be necessary to escape from philosophy would be to trace its origins in "real life-processes"—that "real positive science" ("*die wirkliche positive Wissenschaft*") would begin where "speculation" ended.[27] Marxism has only abolished philosophy in various ways; what is important is to understand it. Philosophy remains inescapable (even if in a much less grand form) because it lives wherever strongly

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held beliefs (or, as I would prefer to say, commitments—"*doxai*") are in conflict with one another. The history of Western philosophy thus follows (to borrow a phrase from Quine) the *ways of paradox*.

The Ways of Paradox

This "dialectical" conception of philosophy contrasts with one that is more common: that philosophy is about addressing a distinctive set of questions or "problems". The disappointingly obvious response to that conception is that, while science has come up with good answers to so many of its questions (Why are the days longer in summer than in winter? Why is the sky blue?) philosophers are still struggling to explain how we can have knowledge or why we should follow morality. And, if that is the case, we must add to the list of unanswered philosophical questions the question why philosophical questions have proved so intractable. I think that we can answer that question, however. It is that we should see philosophy as about revealing and responding to dilemmas. If the dilemma is a deep one, like the Euthyphro dilemma, it does not go away easily. Like a rock in the harbour, we need to find a way of navigating around it, but to find and chart it is in itself an enormously valuable (and surpassingly difficult) intellectual achievement.

As it has responded to such dilemmas, Western philosophy's central thread has been, in Nietzsche's sense of the word, Socratic: it strives for reason, consistency, explanation and justification. Kant captures what I am trying to convey with a word for which there is no exact English equivalent but which is familiar in German:

> It is the first duty of a philosopher to be *consequent,* and yet it is the most seldom encountered.[28]

To be *konsequent* (the word is spelled with a "k" nowadays) is to be consistent, but it means more: it means to be thorough and unsparing, willing to follow things through to their conclusion. The closest equivalent is perhaps "logical" as that word is used (to the despair of trained logicians) in everyday English.

Plato thought that the Socratic *elenchus* pointed in a single direction: upwards towards knowledge of the ideal realm, from which perspective

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conflicts would dissolve. Yet, as noted in Chapter 1, this is not necessarily so as a matter of logic—"one philosopher's *modus ponens* is another philosopher's *modus tollens*."[29] So the drive for justification and explanation carries with it the possibility that these objectives are unattainable. Indeed, it may even be that what should be given up is consistency itself: that we should accept that it is reasonable—or inevitable, at least—to see the world from different, fundamentally conflicting perspectives. This is why scepticism in various forms has haunted philosophy from Sextus Empiricus to Adorno.[30]

Looking at philosophy as the conflict of *doxai* allows one to avoid the alternative that philosophical problems are either timeless or historically specific: they may be continuous in some ways but not in others. For example, as part of the "problem of knowledge" one might have the dilemma that (1) we believe that we have knowledge of an independently existing world; but (2) the resources that we have at our disposal (sensory experience) are, apparently, not sufficient to justify that claim. That is a dilemma that the ancient world would surely have recognized and it remains with us today. Yet, alongside it, we can also formulate another, distinctively modern, one: (1) The natural sciences are a model for how we gain knowledge of the world. But (2) scientific knowledge is not once-and-for-all; science advances because theories overthrow their predecessors. (3) How then does science nevertheless give us knowledge? This is a surprisingly modern dilemma, one that only emerges, I believe, at the end of the nineteenth century.

From all of this we can, I think, make an, admittedly rough, distinction between a broad and a narrow sense of "philosophy". In the broad sense, philosophy includes all of those *doxai* that form part of the way in which human beings see and come to terms with the world and their place in it, and the history of philosophy is the history of the way in which such *doxai* have changed. All of those who contribute to that process by innovation or advocacy—whether calling themselves "philosophers" or not—are part of that history. In this way, philosophy naturally extends into other areas of culture: religion, politics, science and literature. But, in the narrower sense, philosophy is a series of disputes carried on around the central project of articulating our *doxai* and coming to terms with apparent inconsistencies in them—a pursuit of "reflective equilibrium".

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Western philosophy has taken place at the intersection between science and religion. With the former it shares the drive towards knowledge and explanation; with the latter (at least, residually) the project of reconciliation. What has been characteristic of the West has been the way in which religion itself has incorporated rationalism—justification has been an essential element in reconciliation—and the mixture of the two has proved corrosive. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels describe the bourgeoisie as "its own gravedigger". To follow Nietzsche, something similar is true of religion. In interpreting the thought of Kant and Hegel from this perspective we have seen Socratic religion reach a point of inflection. The drive for justification undermines elements of religion that were once essential to it. In the transition from Kant to Hegel it becomes transformed into something that is no longer recognizably religion in the traditional understanding of it. Now we must ask: what comes after?

After Hegel?

Hegel's three great nineteenth-century successors, Kierkegaard, Marx and Nietzsche, all gave different answers. For Kierkegaard, if religion is to be saved it must break with rationalism—otherwise it will end up being sucked into the Hegelian maelstrom. Marx, on the other hand, officially embraces an austere Enlightenment secularism: religion (and philosophy) will be replaced by objective science. Yet, in fact, Marxism is a perfect example of what I mean by the "shadow of God". It carries within itself (without Marx himself apparently being aware of it) a massive legacy from religion: the *doxa* of historical immortality, self-transcendence through immersion in a collective struggle for human emancipation. Marxism's power in the century after Marx's and Engels's deaths—its ability to inspire its adherents to the point of being willing to sacrifice themselves in the cause of social revolution—is quite incomprehensible without appreciating its presence.

Nietzsche appears to have thought that the demise of rationalism would leave the way open for a post-rationalist civilization that would in important ways return to the pre-Socratic world—a re-birth of tragedy or a new kind of Dionysianism. So far—significant assaults notwithstanding—the

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rationalist element in Western culture has apparently remained intact and science and technology are advancing, if not more rapidly, at least on a broader front than ever before. Does that mean that Nietzsche was wrong or is the story more complicated?

In my view, it is. Nietzsche is understood—and rightly—as a critic of both the Christian religion and its supposed antipode, the secular world-view of materialist science. The "scientific-positivistic" world-view, he writes in *The Gay Science,* is the product of a demand for certainty—a desire to "stand on firm ground" that is ultimately futile.

> Metaphysics is still needed by some; but so is that imperious *demand for certainty* that today discharges itself among large numbers of people in a scientific-positivistic form. The demand that one *wants* by all means that something should be firm (while on account of the ardour of this demand one is easier and more negligent about the demonstration of this certainty)—this, too, is still the demand for a support, a prop, in short, that *instinct of weakness* which, to be sure, does not create religions, metaphysical systems, and convictions of all kinds but—conserves them.[31]

Yet, remarkably, in Book One of *The Gay Science* there is another passage in which Nietzsche endorses precisely that demand for certainty.

> . . . *the great majority of people* does not consider it contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly, without first having given themselves an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con, and without even troubling themselves about such reasons afterward: the most gifted men and the noblest women still belong to this "great majority." But what is good-heartedness, refinement or genius to me, when the person who has these virtues tolerates slack feelings in his faith and judgements and when he does not account *the desire for certainty* as his inmost craving and deepest distress—as that which separates the higher human beings from the lower.[32]

How to reconcile the two? The answer is that, for Nietzsche, the motives behind the search for truth can take different forms: either the weak and cowardly desire to flee from what is changeable and potentially threatening into a world of permanence and stability or a brave and honourable desire not to be taken in by lies and hypocrisy. To embrace the search for

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truth is to make a commitment—a *doxa,* as I would call it—to embody the virtue of *honesty:*

> Honesty—granted that this is our virtue, from which we cannot get free, we free spirits—well, let us labour at it with all love and malice and not weary of "perfecting" ourselves in *our* virtue, the only one we may have: may its brightness one day overspread this ageing culture and its dull, gloomy seriousness like a gilded azure mocking evening glow! And if our honesty should one day none the less grow weary, and sigh, and stretch its limbs, and find us too hard, and like to have things better, easier, gentler, like an agreeable vice: let us remain *hard,* we last of the Stoics![33]

Nietzsche, no less than Schiller, laments the passing of the Greek gods and the experiential impoverishment of the modern world compared with the ancient one. Yet, at the same time, he not only criticizes the "asceticism" that led to this "gods-less" universe, but endorses it too:

> All honour to the ascetic ideal *insofar as it is honest!* so long as it believes in itself and does not play tricks on us!"[34]

This rationalist or "Socratic" strand in Nietzsche has been much less noticed by interpreters, but, in his embrace of philosophical *Konsequenz,* Nietzsche has more in common with Kant than his admirers (and, perhaps, he himself) realize. Still, for Nietzsche, rationalism is a *choice,* a *commitment* to treating ideas on their merits. It may seem odd to call it a strategy of "reconciliation" since there is no guarantee that the universe itself will be in harmony with it—indeed, its heroism consists in remaining resolute in the face of an unresponsive universe. Nor does it bring the Apollonian consolation of escaping into a supposed realm of timeless truth. But it too is a *Lebensform* that it is possible to inhabit. In embracing what William James called "the puritanism of science" it embodies something like the existentialist defiance of Camus's *homme révolté.* On the other hand, you could say that its iconoclasm simply gives an outlet to disappointment and turns it into the pleasure of destruction. The choice is, in the end, an ethical one.

Yet what Nietzsche seems to have missed completely is that, within such progressive creeds as liberalism and socialism (as, indeed, within sectional or reactionary ones such as nationalism and racism) there had already

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emerged a new strategy of reconciliation: the possibility of self-transcendence within a historical collective as a surrogate for the loss of faith in a traditional, religious afterlife.

Immortality, Freedom and Moral Disagreement

Cultures, then, contain complex sets of *doxai.* Some are evaluative and normative ("All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights"); some are empirical ("Human beings are descended from apes"); and some are not easily assigned to one or the other ("God's providence works through the laws of nature rather than by miraculous intervention"). Some *doxai* are very much in the foreground ("If slavery is not wrong nothing is wrong") while others remain unstated yet are all the more powerful for that—the *doxa* of historical immortality that we have been excavating being a case in point. But we should not believe that cultures are uniform. Even at a single time and in a single place different solutions and different balances may grip different people. The Age of Kant was also the Age of Bentham and it would be wrong to essentialize one at the expense of the other.

That said, we can bring together now the *doxai* that have most concerned us. At the centre are the *doxa* of personal immortality as understood through the doctrine of a judging, rewarding and punishing God and the *doxa* of historical immortality that came to play a role complementary to personal immortality for Kant and, later, in Hegel, took its place. Alongside those *doxai* is the *doxa* that freedom is self-determination. The German Idealist idea of freedom resolves the problem of autonomy (how a law can come from the self and yet not be something that the self can release itself from) by making truly free action (moral action) something that is necessary, not chosen. But that, in turn, requires a distinction between two kinds of will—the potentially arbitrary *Willkür* and the rational *Wille*—and between two kinds of necessity: a coercive, external one and an internal one that is expressive of the agent's own nature.

In Kant, this *doxa,* as we have seen, connects both human and divine agency. Unlike God, who is entirely free and without *Willkür,* it is only human beings' moral selves—our selves as moral agents—that have free necessity or autonomy. This threatens to shrink the human agent into a nodal point of pure moral agency, battling against the rest of the self as if

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it were an external reality, or, worse, encourages the idea that our real identity can only be given from the moral viewpoint. In my opinion, the idea of "inner necessity", taken over from Kant's moral philosophy, forms the starting-point for the metaphysical systems of the German Idealists. They extend it to encompass material nature, both physical and organic, and history. But this is a claim that would require very extensive argument to substantiate properly. For the moment, let us just remind ourselves of the author of the *System-Programme*'s remark that, in future, all philosophy will begin in morality and that that represents the "only true" creation ex nihilo.

But does not the Idealist attempt to mirror in philosophy "the thoughts of God before the creation of the world and a finite mind", breathtaking though it may be in its intricacy and ambition, not represent a wild fantasy—speculation in the pejorative sense? Yes, indeed. Still, we can see in the idea of freedom as inner necessity the resolution to a genuine (and, I think, characteristically modern) problem.

Freedom, if it is to be true freedom, cannot be arbitrary. It would be arbitrary if it were the result of a set of laws and initial conditions that just happened to be a certain way, and it would be arbitrary too if it were a matter of wholly uncaused but contingent choice. For Hegel, it is only *Geist* that has free necessity. Individuals can reconcile themselves either by coming to comprehend *Geist* through speculative philosophy (in the way that Plato's guardians ruled in the light of their abstract philosophical knowledge) or by practical identification with *Geist*'s sociological realization as "objective Spirit". Thus Hegel's account of freedom stands or falls with the metaphysics of *Geist.*

At the same time, Hegel has left us with a new *doxa* about freedom. To be free, as he so frequently puts it, is to be "*bei sich selbst in seinem anderen*" ("with oneself in otherness"). Although only *Geist*—the agent comprehending the whole of reality—can be truly present in its own (apparent) otherness, the phrase also speaks to something else: the feeling of being "at home" or, more poignantly, the feeling of *not* being at home in our existence that we moderns call "alienation". The dialectic between the twin tendencies that I have called "the alienation of arbitrariness" and the "alienation of impersonality" frames a deep problem for modern culture.

Together with this transformation goes another. Kant, as I have argued, was a *moral unanimist.* It was not the task of the philosopher to give

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criteria for solving moral dilemmas because, when human beings are not blinded by self-interest, such moral dilemmas do not exist. Why is that idea so remote to us today? Certainly, people did not become aware of the vast differences between different societies only in the relatively recent past—the awareness of human diversity in custom and culture goes back to the ancient world. But does the fact that cultures differ mean that the moral principles governing them are different too? After all, the distance from principle to practice is considerable. Might not different practices flow from the same principles when articulated in a different context?

At the end of the *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* Hume (no religious believer, of course) appends "A Dialogue" in which he imagines a report from his friend "Palamedes" on a nation which he had visited.[35] The nation in question approves highly of a number of practices—incest, homosexuality, infanticide, suicide, for example—that Hume's own nation considers flagrantly immoral. And yet, Hume points out, this nation is only Ancient Greece and Rome, lightly disguised. The conclusion that Hume draws is not that one nation is immoral, the other not—it is that the difference in morals comes from different judgements about what is "useful or agreeable" in different circumstances.

There is one practice of the ancient world that Hume does not mention, however: slavery. Slavery seems to be the clearest possible example of the difference between the ancient and the modern worlds. This is not just a matter of the pagan civilizations of Greece and Rome. The great monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—all accepted slavery too. Thus, one might think, the spread of the conviction of the intrinsic wrongness of slavery helped to dethrone moral universalism whether embedded within religious doctrine or not.

For the religious believer, there is, of course, no difficulty in thinking that the societies in which the faithful originally found themselves were deeply evil. It becomes extremely challenging, however, if the immoral practices of those past societies were originally accepted by their own religious communities, as was the case with slavery. Kant was a member of no church and so he had no trouble in rejecting many of the original doctrines of the established religion of his day as superstitious and demeaning of human agency. What was unthinkable for him, however, was the possibility that those who had followed immoral practices did so without the

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possibility of knowing that they were unacceptable. In that case, how could they deserve to be blamed by a just God?

It has been argued that it was the impact of the anti-slavery movement that inspired Hegel's account of human agency and freedom.[36] As a matter of intellectual biography, I find that claim doubtful, but it is certainly true that it is in relation to slavery that we find Hegel's most explicit statement of (as I have called it) "semi-particularism"—slavery occurs "in a world where a wrong is still right".[37]

Radical moral disagreement seems to be a characteristically modern problem—one might even say *the* characteristically modern moral problem. Each of the three obvious responses faces equally obvious objections. Argue that human beings share a single objective moral truth (for example, that slavery is wrong) and it becomes puzzling why past societies failed to recognize it. Surely moral facts cannot remain hidden and awaiting discovery by specially trained researchers in the way that facts about nature do. On the other hand, if we see human beings as living in discrete moral worlds, what becomes of the idea of a universal human community? Finally, semi-particularism joins us to other times and other cultures only at the price of ranking some as more valuable because closer to the developed truth than others (remember Hegel's appallingly contemptuous remarks about the indifference of "civilized nations" to "barbarians").[38] At any rate, those, like Derek Parfit, who want to claim that, nevertheless, human beings share an objective moral truth cannot look to history (Parfit's own training, as it happens) to back them up. Parfit's image of moral disagreement giving place to moral agreement of time as the fog of religion clears could hardly be more at odds with historical fact.

The Turning of the Tide

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was—to state the obvious—a time of political turmoil and intellectual ferment, in Germany in particular. We can think of such periods of contestation as like the turning of the tide. As thinkers attempt to hold on to some *doxai*—divine goodness, the knowability of the world by reason, for example—or assert new ones, others, like divine judgement and personal immortality, may lose their grip.

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As new *doxai* entrench themselves, however, they come to seem no more than "common sense" while former *doxai* come to seem remote. Thus there is a tendency for interpreters to downplay those aspects of a past author's thought when writing about the period in retrospect. Who could seriously now believe that retribution is intrinsically valuable and think that the need for it was the basis for the inference to an afterlife? Such readings are sometimes defended as applying the "principle of charity" to the interpretation of texts. Would it not be reasonable, if our goal is to take what we can from the authors of the past, to reconstruct them with as close an approximation to the beliefs that we ourselves hold to be true as possible rather than to pillory them for ideas that now seem to us to be indefensible? That may sound plausible, but, from my point of view, something important is lost. What if those things that we (assuming there is indeed such a shared "we") reject play an essential role in the author's project?

Yet this tendency to read the authors of the past from the perspective of the present also opens an opportunity. If, by engaging with the text, we can show that such readings are unconvincing, we can uncover and draw attention to the earlier *doxai* that are at work. The point is not to argue that other interpreters are wrong—there is far too much of that in philosophy—but, by reading the authors of the past "against the grain", to open ourselves to the past and let it challenge us. If we look at the texts of the past with sympathetic and (so far as we can) unprejudiced eyes, we can see the struggle that is going on.

But what happens after the turning of the tide? At that point some of the old *doxai* will have receded to the point that they are no longer "live options", to use James's useful phrase, and new ones will have established themselves in their place. Moreover, some surviving *doxai* that were once understood as essentially connected with those older *doxai* may have become unmoored. New *doxai* may have diffused themselves across the seafloor and become an accepted part of the broader culture instead of being contested in the foreground. For all of these reasons, it may be difficult to give a picture of this new world. But there is continuity as well as discontinuity. At the most general level, the "project of reconciliation"—theodicy in the broad sense—will remain so long as human beings need to come to terms with the unpalatable facts of death and suffering. So we can always usefully ask how that task is being carried out. But the argument of this book is that it can be carried out in different ways even in a

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single society—and with different degrees of success. In this I align myself with Nietzsche, Weber, Blumenberg and Adorno against Hegel, Marx, Durkheim and Habermas.

For Hegel, societies must have a shared *Sittlichkeit* that is available to all at some immediate level: "Even in barbarous states . . . it is not the isolated will of individuals that prevails; individual pretensions are relinquished, and the General Will is the essential bond of political union."[39] Even where there is fundamental conflict in society—one thinks of Hegel's treatment of Sophocles's Antigone—that conflict is open to comprehension through works of art that articulate both sides. He does not consider that societies may contain contending ways of seeing the world or that a society could be enduring but unsatisfactory in fundamental ways. Reconciliation depends on two levels: a historical-sociological claim about the existence of a shared *Sittlichkeit* and a philosophical-metaphysical one about the nature of reason: the quarrel between explanation and reconciliation exists because our conception of reason is limited to the "understanding"—"*Verstand*" or "*Räsonnieren*", instead of "*Vernunft*"—and we fail to see the rational structure that runs through nature and history alike:

> Thus, in a free people reason is actualized in truth. It is present living *Geist,* not only in that the individual finds his destiny, that is, his universal and singular essence [*Wesen*], expressed and found present as thinghood, but also that he himself is this essence and that he has also achieved his destiny. For that reason, the wisest men of antiquity expressed the verdict: wisdom and virtue consist in living in conformity with the customs of one's people.[40]

Hegel was, of course, aware that, nevertheless, for many of his contemporaries, the modern world was pervaded by a sense of loss—as a member of the Romantic generation and a close reader of Rousseau and Schiller, how could he not?—but he seems to have believed that this was a transitional phenomenon that would disappear or be confined to a disaffected "rabble" at the margins of society once the new *Sittlichkeit* of modernity had entrenched itself. The idea that we might find ourselves in a new configuration that is stable (or, at least, enduring) but accompanied by such a sense of loss was not a real possibility.

Yet a sense of loss (here represented by Iris Murdoch, although we might as easily have chosen Heidegger or one of his disciples such as Gadamer,

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Leo Strauss or Charles Taylor) does seem to be an enduring feature of the modern world, and it is genuine and important. One way of explaining why that is so is that two projects that were united as theodicy in the narrow sense—the religious project of reconciliation and the Enlightenment project of understanding and explanation—have come apart and we find ourselves caught between the alienation of arbitrariness and the alienation of loneliness.

One could say that the history of Marxism is the attempt to re-unite the two. With the coming of socialism, Marx believes, alienation and fetishism will be overcome and obscurity will give way to transparency.

In the famous section of *Das Kapital* on "The Fetishism of Commodities", Marx compares capitalist production with other forms of production. He starts with Robinson Crusoe ("since political economy loves *Robinsonades*") whose productive activity he describes as rational and transparent:[41]

> In spite of the variety of his productive functions, he knows that his labour in whatever form is but the activity of one and the same Robinson. Necessity itself compels him to apportion his time accurately between his different kinds of work . . . His stock-book contains a list of the objects of utility that belong to him, of the operations necessary for their production; and, lastly, of the labour time that definite quantities of those objects have, on average, cost him. All the relations between Robinson and the objects that form his self-created wealth are here so simple and clear that even Herr M. Wirth should be able to understand them without particular mental exertion.[42]

Production for Robinson, Marx says, is a purely administrative operation: the end is known, as are the resources available and the techniques by which the end could be attained. The choices facing him are thus simple ones. Marx then moves from "Robinson's island, bathed in light" to discuss the "dark ages of mediaeval Europe" and the patriarchal organization of production that we find, he says, "on the historical threshold of all civilized peoples"[43] before alighting on:

> . . . a community of free individuals, carrying on their labour with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community.[44]

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Here, says Marx,

> All the characteristics of Robinson's labour are . . . repeated, but with this difference, that they are social, instead of individual . . . The social relations of the individual producers to their labour and to the products of their labour remain here transparently simple, in production as well as in distribution.[45]

The thought that a complex modern economy could present no problems that were different in principle from the problems faced by an individual producer producing for his own subsistence—that social relations could be "transparently simple" in both production and distribution—is hard to take seriously. Even G. A. Cohen, in his no-holds-barred defence of Marxism, admits that this is unrealistic:

> The yearning for transparent human relations can be satisfied in part, because we can specify removable social institutions, notably the market, which foster opacity. But it is futile to hope for the total transparency contemplated in the Hegelio-Marxist tradition.[46]

Yet even if transparency *were* possible, it would only remove one kind of alienation—the alienation of arbitrariness that comes from being the objects of forces that we do not understand. But would that be enough for reconciliation? We can see here how the legacy of Hegel haunts Marxism. Marxism has consistently claimed *both* to be "scientific" *and* to be the inheritor of the Hegelian ideal of a higher form of reasoning that transcends the more limited reasoning of the natural sciences. The Idealist aspiration to move from "*Verstand*" to "*Vernunft*" has been a central theme informing twentieth-century Marxism, from Lukacs's *History and Class Consciousness* through the Frankfurt School and its critique of "instrumental reason". It still survives, somewhat attenuated perhaps, in Habermas's idea of "communicative reason", although the commitment to a revolutionary transformation of the economic order has disappeared. This aspect of Marx's thought has proved elusive and contested, of course. Indeed, it was just the idea of defending Marx while purging Marxism of any methodological commitments that could not be found elsewhere in the natural sciences (in Darwinian biology, in particular) that drove the "non-bullshit Marxism" of Cohen and his fellow "analytical Marxists".[47] Still, one philosopher's bullshit is another philosopher's fertilizer.

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Some Questions

The message of this book is one of complexity. The project of reconciliation continues, but it is carried on in different ways with no guarantee that it will succeed. Perhaps a better metaphor, then, might be a tapestry within which there run different threads connected in different ways. What holds those threads together is not a single narrative, much less a single argument. Still, the reader is entitled to responses to some questions that will, I imagine, be in her mind at this point, even if she has found the central interpretations presented here convincing.

(1) Am I right in thinking that the *doxa* of historical immortality became part of the background to the modern age? If so, how did it spread?

This book started from Kant's very particular response to the theodicy problem: that the goodness of the world lies in human freedom and that freedom (human or divine) must not be arbitrary. This combined with the idea of the "church invisible" and the ideas of historical immortality that we find in Herder and Fichte to culminate in Hegel's *Geist:* a fully self-transparent, historically self-realizing, impersonal, immanent and, his own protestations notwithstanding, very unchristian God. The influence of Hegel on Marxism and of Fichte and Hegel on German nationalism are surely undeniable, but was this part of a wider process or was it just the diffusion of the legacy of Kant's very particular struggle to sustain the idea of divine goodness?

(2) Were there other important developments?

Plainly, the answer to that question is: yes. More specifically, however, what was the effect of the ideas presented here and were they themselves transformed as they came into contact with other aspects of the modern world?

Economics and politics are obvious areas. The expansion of capitalism leads to opacity and anonymity in economic life quite apart from any injustice in the distributive outcomes it produces. From the point of view of the alienation of arbitrariness and the alienation of impersonality, it looks like it is the worst of both worlds. Yet, do we really need economic rela-

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tions to be transparent? If our scissors are sharp, do we care whether they were made in Sheffield, Solingen or Shanghai? And, as for impersonality, is that such a bad thing if the alternative is the asymmetric authority relations of feudalism or even slavery?

Turning to politics, the lineage from Kant to modern ideas of human rights ("All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights") has often been traced. The Kant depicted here is not a "rights-based" theorist, however, but a "duty-based" one. That is, what is ethically primordial for Kant is the possibility of free human agency, exercised through freely choosing to follow the moral law. It is this that is the "condition" for value in general. Even less is he a voluntarist who bases rights on a conception of "self-ownership" or the sovereignty of the individual. Nor does Kant speak of "human rights". His preferred term is "*das Menschenrecht*"—singular "*Recht*" rather than plural "*Rechte*"—which creates a problem for the translator into English. While English has a clear distinction between "laws" and "the law", it does not make a similar distinction between "rights" and "the right" (hence the inevitable awkwardness of Hegel's "*Philosophy of Right*"). So where German would say "*Naturrecht*", the English equivalent is "natural law" or "law of nature".

Still, that said, I do not think that the connection is in any doubt. The possession of moral agency gives human beings an intrinsic value that requires to be treated with respect. Moreover, this is something that human beings all have equally, just by being human. So, although Kant does not speak of innate human rights, he does use the term "*Weltbürgerrecht*" ("cosmopolitan citizen-right") to signal that individual human beings have claims to be treated in certain ways irrespective of social status or political arrangements.[48] But, beyond these ideas of equal human rights, important as they are, the drive to overcome the alienation of arbitrariness and "*selbstverschuldete Unmündigkeit*" ("self-incurred immaturity") leads to the requirement to be governed in a way that is accountable and to live in social relations that are public and explicit.

Radicals, on the other hand, have deeply distrusted such values. It is not just that entrenching equal human rights and the rule of law can go together with material and (feminists would add) social inequality. Another objection, going back to Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question" at least, is that such a justice-based way of thinking about human relations, based

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on ideas of claims, protections and entitlements, already presupposes a competitive division among human beings at the expense of other, more collaborative and co-operative kinds of human relations. In the terms of this book, overcoming the alienation of arbitrariness comes at the expense of the alienation of impersonality.

But it is not just at the level of individual rights and equality that we can draw connections. We live in a world of states almost all of which subscribe (with greater or lesser sincerity and commitment) to an ideal of democracy. Yet the democratic idea of self-government is deeply difficult. Is democracy no more than a means to promote individual rights and distributive justice, or is it grounded in some form of collective identity? If so, what is it? The need to give an account of political authority in a world divided between sovereign states means that democracy has been inescapably involved with more collective conceptions of shared identity.

(3) Does the "shadow of God" fall elsewhere?

We have seen how the need to see human beings as subject to judgement by a just and impartial deity leads to a conception of individuals as free and equal agents living in a world in which the requirements of morality are shared and available to all. We have seen too how the decline in the idea of personal survival in another life brought with it the revival and transformation of the idea of historical immortality. These are ideas with momentous consequences. But is there more? I think so.

If we think of Kant's two sources of "unceasing wonder and reverence", the starry heavens and the moral law, we can see them as pointing not just outwards to observation and inwards to agency, but to a contrast between the incompleteness of our knowledge of the physical world with the completeness of our knowledge when it comes to morality. Also, as we have seen, for Kant, the devil—Satan, the Evil One—is not an independent agent but a personification of the goods of this world: the temptation to follow inclination rather than duty. But there is a different understanding of good and evil in the Christian tradition.

In what is perhaps the best known of all of his writings—chapter 13 of the first Epistle to the Corinthians—St Paul compares the present situation of human beings with their redeemed state as a contrast between the obscurity of a mirror compared with the clarity of direct observation (ancient mirrors were indeed rather imperfect): "For now we see through a

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glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Alongside this image of human beings as cognitively limited, there is a more independent image of the devil. In St John's Gospel, he is described three times as "the ruler of this world" (*archon tou kosmou*), and in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul writes that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). This supports an understanding of human beings as caught in a world of ignorance and deception, needing the help of divine grace, whether channelled through the discipline of the Church or through the redemptive gift of the faith in being "born again", to have any chance of escaping from the machinations of "the father of lies".

This, much less Socratic, picture of the relationship between good and evil plays an important role in rounding out the story presented in this book. It is a short step from seeing the task of the faithful as turning human beings from the evils of this world to seeing it as a struggle against evil in the world itself. For Kant, good and evil are essentially individualistic. The regrettable but inevitable consequence of a world in which human beings are poised between duty and inclination is that some will fail to meet its demands. On the view just canvassed, however, the forces of evil in the world are systematically organized, and those forces exercise their power, not just in the obvious way, by tempting human beings to selfishness and indulgence, but by deception.

(4) What about religion?

This is what the Germans call the *Gretchenfrage* (the question that Gretchen asks Faust). The story of this book is framed around the project of Socratic religion and the need to give a convincing answer to the problem how an omnipotent, omniscient, benevolent deity could allow evil when the answer—that human beings are being justly punished for Adam and Eve's sin—no longer carries conviction. The argument is that Kant's deity, the pure embodiment of justice, leads by natural stages to Hegel's *Geist*—a God (if it is God at all) that is more of a Spinozan Absolute than anything that a Christian would recognize. Yet, plainly, religion survives. Indeed, the nineteenth century was an age not only of loss of faith but also of very great religious intensity. For every Matthew Arnold, Charles Darwin or

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George Eliot, there were Florence Nightingales, Cardinal Newmans and Gladstones a-plenty. Did it simply carry on or were there important transformations?

(5) Is this a Western story?

Again, this is a question to which the answer is obvious: yes, of course. The subject-matter is how philosophers who stood at the end of a long tradition of searching for rational justification applied themselves to thinking about morality, freedom and history in the context of a religious tradition that also claimed to be capable of rational justification. The more difficult question is: is it limited by that fact?

One thing that should be said is that this has not been a narrative of triumphalism in which reason, justice and equality triumph over ignorance and superstition. We are dealing with particularly Western ways of "coming to terms with the world" but there is no claim that they have triumphed because they have succeeded in a way that non-Western ways of seeing the world did not—indeed, a sense of loss and failure ("the despair of our age", as Murdoch calls it) is a part of the story. If something like the spiritual situation of the West turns out to be inescapable, then that will be, I suspect, because other candidates for the task of reconciling us to our place in the world prove vulnerable to the corrosive force of the drive for explanation and justification, something that is not confined to Western culture alone.

To support these responses properly would indeed require another book—perhaps several. Instead, what I shall offer in the final chapter are some sketches—vignettes and lines of narrative that will, I hope, prove to be fruitful and suggestive in thinking about the troubling and puzzling world in which we now find ourselves.

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Chapter 9

After Immortality

Dieu est mort. Marx est mort. Et moi
je ne me sens pas très bien.

—PARIS WALL SLOGAN

The Comet

In the winter of 1765–66 two *philosophes,* Denis Diderot and Étienne Falconet, began a debate about art and its audience. Diderot is, of course, one of the towering figures of the Enlightenment. His friend Falconet was a sculptor who is probably now familiar only to art historians specializing in the period. But Falconet also had ambitions as a writer (Diderot commissioned him to write the entry on sculpture for the *Encyclopédie*) and the two men continued their debate as a correspondence, apparently with the idea—not realized—of publishing it.

For whom does the artist work? Is his audience immediate—his peers, those who commission him or even himself—or is there a more distant one whom even he himself does not know? Falconet defends the former position, Diderot the latter. Falconet does not deny that the artist needs an audience, but that audience, he argues, has to be close enough to share his world. Not only will the artist not be present to experience his posthumous fame, but tastes will change and comprehension will dwindle, so no

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one can expect their work to endure indefinitely. To paint or sculpt for an unknown audience would be like pursuing a lover whom one could never meet. For Diderot, on the other hand, the author of a great work does not just conceive its audience immediately: "He hears the distant concert."[1]

In some ways, this was a debate carried on in backward-looking terms. As two "declared atheists", they looked naturally to the ancient world for ideas and models and their letters are full of references to ancient authors and examples. And, of course, ideas about art and posterity were very much part of that world. But there were also distinctively new elements. In a letter to Diderot, written on 25 December, Falconet canvasses a novel and radical possibility: "Imagine that someone told you that it is demonstrated that, in a thousand years, our globe will meet a comet [and] that it would send [art] into eternal night." How would that affect us? Falconet's claim is that it would make no difference: "Until then, everything will go on in the same way."[2]

Diderot rejects Falconet's claim. If there really were to be such a comet, then its effects would be disastrous—and they would be felt at once. It would be "goodbye to poems, speeches, temples, palaces, paintings and statues." The only reason to go on with them would be if one could persuade oneself that the astronomers were mistaken. No one would be motivated to do anything beyond "plant cabbages".[3]

Falconet was not convinced. Believers in posterity are like believers in "eternal bliss", he maintains—the one belief is as unreasonable as the other.[4] To this, Diderot responded with a long letter written only five days later. In it, his rhetoric reaches its peak. He has no problem with being told that his belief in posterity is a matter of faith. Indeed, he embraces it: "Posterity for the *philosophe* is the other world of the religious man."[5]

In his earlier letter, Diderot had challenged the idea that we should identify our selves only with our bodily selves. "The thought that I write down is me; the marble that the artist gives life to is him; it is the best part of himself at the most beautiful moments of his existence."[6] This is not a new idea and Diderot knows it—he immediately quotes Horace's "*non omnis moriar*" (not all of me will die). It follows that there is a sense in which I have a direct interest in my works surviving. Even though the organic being that created them in the first place no longer exists, my self survives in them.

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Diderot now adds another thought. Those who have dedicated themselves to posterity have been the strongest, noblest, most generous and least mercenary of human beings, he says. Yet their merits have not always been recognized. What can they hope for? Not just the praise of posterity, but something more important: that the false judgement of their own day will be corrected:

> And those *philosophes,* those ministers, those men of truth who have been the victims of popular stupidity, the atrocities of priests and the anger of tyrants, what consolation did there remain to them as they perished? It is that prejudice would pass and posterity would turn ignominy onto their enemies instead. O Posterity, holy and sacred, support of the unhappy who is oppressed; you who are just; you who are not corrupted; who revenges the good; who unmasks the hypocrite; who disciplines the tyrant; just and consoling idea, never abandon me![7]

What posterity offers to the present, then, is not just fame but justice. And this, of course, implicitly extends the subject-matter of the debate. It is no longer a question of comparing the artistic judgement of the present with the artistic judgement of the future, but their ethical and political judgements too.

It is worth contrasting the way that Diderot connects history and justice with Kant. For Kant, we can see ourselves as part of a continuing community whose final outcome is a just world, one in which individuals treat each other according to the requirements of morality—a "kingdom of ends" or, as Kant had earlier termed it, following Leibniz, a "kingdom of grace". Consolation comes to the individual by thinking of oneself as participating in the process of moving towards justice as part of a temporally extended community, the "Church invisible", and from contemplating that morally ideal state. For Diderot, the judgement of posterity on the individual will correct the injustice of the present. That too is a consoling hope for the individual, even if he or she is not alive to witness its realization.

I learned of the existence of the Diderot-Falconet correspondence through Carl Becker's once-celebrated book, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers.*[8] Nowadays, it seems, Peter Gay's ferocious critique of Becker is better known than the book itself.[9] Unfortunately, the

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main points of Gay's criticism have to be conceded: *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* is problematic, both substantively and methodologically. Becker's procedure is to pick out aspects of the understanding of history that go beyond the immediately narrative and causal—anything progressive or goal-directed—and identify them as re-appearances of biblical narrative of salvation. Thus he describes the appeal to the judgement of posterity as "essentially religious, essentially Christian".[10] He thereby obscures what is, to my mind, the most important point: the way in which such "essentially religious" ideas were transformed in being brought into a new context.

Nor does Becker differentiate properly the various forms that the understanding of history took in the period he is looking at. He makes no distinction, for example, between those conventional, Enlightenment views of history as a progress in human moral psychology and well-being from barbarism to civilization that were so typical of the mid-eighteenth century in France and Scotland and Diderot's "verdictive" conception of posterity as a corrective to the injustice of the present.

Such eighteenth-century Enlightenment accounts of historical progress, as criticized by Herder and Herzen, with their pictures of the beneficial effects of the development (and moderation) of human powers and passions, were consciously "Providentialist", at the least. History was represented as the unfolding in time of the world as the expression of divine benevolence, a view which, so far from representing an alternative to Christianity, was compatible with at least some forms of it. While there are elements of this view in Kant, Kant's idea of history as oriented towards justice, not happiness, opens up, I have argued, a radical "post-Lisbon" answer to the problem of theodicy. Furthermore, as Gay points out, to represent the Christian narrative of salvation to which Becker refers his eighteenth-century material back as a stable and uncontested background is itself quite misleading.

Nevertheless, whatever reservations one might have about his interpretive framework, Becker's last chapter, "The Uses of Posterity", does uncover some very valuable material to document the spread of a view of history close to Diderot's in France at the end of the century. Becker follows reference to Diderot and Falconet with a quotation from Condorcet. In his *Esquisse pour un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (written

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while in hiding from the Revolutionary authorities) Condorcet conjures up a vision of the future as a consolation for those who suffer injustice:

> The contemplation of this picture is an asylum in which the memory of [the virtuous man's] persecutors does not follow him, an asylum in which, living in imagination with mankind re-established in its rights and in its true nature, he can forget mankind corrupted and tormented by greed, fear, envy. It is in this asylum that he truly lives with his fellows, in a heaven which his reason has created, and which his love of humanity embellishes with the purest joys.[11]

Another victim of the Jacobins, Mme Roland, entitled the memoirs she wrote before her execution *An Impartial Appeal to Posterity.* But such ideas were shared across the spectrum, including the Jacobins themselves. Becker quotes a speech by Robespierre given to the Jacobin Club that ends as follows:

> O posterity, sweet and tender hope of humanity, thou art not a stranger to us; it is for thee that we brave all the blows of tyranny; it is thy happiness which is the price of our painful struggles: often discouraged by the obstacles that surround us, we feel the need of thy consolations; it is to thee that we confide the task of completing our labours, and the destiny of all the unborn generations of men! . . . May the martyrs of liberty occupy in thy memory the place which the heroes of imposture and aristocracy have usurped in ours; . . . may thy first impulse be to scorn traitors and hate tyrants; may thy motto be: protection, love, benevolence to the unhappy, eternal war to oppressors! Make haste, O posterity, to bring to pass the hour of equality, of justice, of happiness![12]

Robespierre's closest ally, Saint-Just, says something very similar in a passage not quoted by Becker:

> I had the touching idea that the memory of a friend of humanity must one day be precious. For the man obliged to separate himself from the world and from himself anchors himself in the future and presses posterity, innocent of present evils, to his heart . . . Circumstances are only difficult for those who recoil in the face of the grave . . .

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> I despise the dust of which I am made and which addresses you; this dust which one can persecute and put to death! But I defy one to take this independent life that I have given to myself in the ages and in the heavens . . . [13]

Undoubtedly, we are here at the birth of that distinctive and disturbing figure of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the dedicated, atheist revolutionary—that tribe of "dead men on leave", in Eugen Leviné's phrase. As the nineteenth-century anarchist Nechayev put it:

> The revolutionary is a doomed man. He has no personal interests, no business affairs, no emotions, no attachments, no property, and no name. Everything in him is wholly absorbed in the single thought and the single passion for revolution.[14]

Marxists, sheltering within Marxism's "carapace", its "hard shell of supposed fact", as G. A. Cohen called it, only rarely acknowledged their dependence on the consolations of historical immortality, but it is unmistakable in the conclusion to this speech, given by Trotsky in New York:[15]

> If our generation happens to be too weak to establish socialism over the earth, we will hand the spotless banner down to our children. The struggle which is in the offing transcends by far the importance of individuals, factions, and parties. It is the struggle for the future of all mankind. It will be severe. It will be lengthy. Whoever seeks physical comfort and spiritual calm, let him step aside. In time of reaction it is more convenient to lean on the bureaucracy than on the truth. But all those for whom the word *socialism* is not a hollow sound but the content of their moral life—forward! Neither threats, nor persecutions, nor violations can stop us! Be it even over our bleaching bones, the truth will triumph! We will blaze the trail for it. It will conquer! Under all the severe blows of fate, I shall be happy, as in the best days of my youth! Because, my friends, the highest human happiness is not the exploitation of the present but the preparation of the future.[16]

"History will absolve me!" is also the concluding sentence (and, subsequently, the title of its published version) of the speech given by Fidel Castro

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in his own defence when on trial for his life after leading the attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953.

The Last Man

But, as we have seen, the debate between Diderot and Falconet raised another, challenging idea. If posterity—whether through fame, retrospective justification, participation in a shared community through time, or however—is a substitute for the consolations of personal immortality in an afterlife, what would it mean for human history to come to an end?

The idea that the human world might come to an end was not in itself a new one. For Christianity, just as God created the world, so he will bring it to its conclusion. There will be—if one follows the Book of Revelations—a Last Trump and a literal Last Judgement. But, however it took place, that would be an act of divine intervention against the course of nature. The comet, on the other hand, would simply be the ultimate natural catastrophe. Its effect would be to eliminate posterity: it would end history, not fulfil it.

For Diderot, the knowledge of human extinction in the future would produce a kind of extinction of value that would extend backwards to the present.

We discussed a similar thought in relation to Kant in Chapter 5. On the interpretation developed there, the good will is not the source of value in the sense of an agency that brings morality into being, so much as the necessary condition for the existence of value. If fully free human agency did not exist, then the world, for Kant, would be drained of value. This would be true even if a fully deterministic world were a happy one ("the freedom of the turnspit") or if the world contained a kind of freedom that was itself arbitrary and haphazard. For Diderot, it is the continued existence of a human community that sustains value.

The idea of human extinction is a familiar theme in contemporary culture—understandably so in the age of nuclear weapons and radical climate change—but it is, in fact, a very modern one. Just as modern geology and the fossil record were calling into question biblical accounts of the earth's creation, so the idea that humanity might come to a natural

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end raises the question whether this is compatible with the Christian expectation of a Second Coming. Thus Jean-Baptiste Cousin de Grainville's *Le dernier homme,* published in 1805, is a Miltonic amalgam of the spiritual and the naturalistic: a story of a far future in which the human race accepts its own extinction as a prelude to the opening of graves and a Last Judgement as envisaged in the Book of Revelations.

Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) has no such supernatural dimension: the end of humanity comes as the result of an irresistible plague. For modern readers its main interest is that the chief characters are based on Shelley's own circle: herself (as the male narrator, Lionel) Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron. Shelley—otherwise so brilliant at sensing the changing currents in the *doxai* of her own day—gives no sense that this catastrophe might bring with it a radical change in the moral landscape. Nonetheless, one passage is very striking. In very gushing language, Lionel gives a description of the boys of Eton (where Percy Bysshe Shelley was educated, of course) and their place in the self-renewal of society:

> We had lived so long in the vicinity of Eton, that its population of young folks was well known to us. Many of them had been Alfred's playmates, [Alfred is Lionel's son] before they became his schoolfellows. We now watched this youthful congregation with redoubled interest. We marked the difference of character among the boys, and endeavoured to read the future man in the stripling. There is nothing more lovely, to which the heart more yearns than a free-spirited boy, gentle, brave, and generous. Several of the Etonians had these characteristics; all were distinguished by a sense of honour, and spirit of enterprize; in some, as they verged towards manhood, this degenerated into presumption; but the younger ones, lads a little older than our own, were conspicuous for their gallant and sweet dispositions.
>
> Here were the future governors of England; the men, who, when our ardour was cold, and our projects completed or destroyed for ever, when, our drama acted, we doffed the garb of the hour, and assumed the uniform of age, or of more equalizing death; here were the beings who were to carry on the vast machine of society; here were the lovers, husbands, fathers; here the landlord, the politician, the soldier; some fancied that they were even now ready to appear on the stage, eager to make one among the dramatis personae of active life.

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> It was not long since I was like one of these beardless aspirants; when my boy shall have obtained the place I now hold, I shall have tottered into a grey-headed, wrinkled old man. Strange system! riddle of the Sphynx, most awe-striking! that thus man remains, while we the individuals pass away. Such is, to borrow the words of an eloquent and philosophic writer, "the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression."[17]

The "eloquent and philosophic writer" on whose words "Lionel" draws is Edmund Burke and the passage comes from the *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* It points to the answer to a question that the reader may already have asked: is there also a conservative version of the idea of historical immortality?

Burke and Conservatism

The narratives of the passage from "heaven to history" encountered so far have been principally future-oriented: thinking of ourselves as engaged in a progression towards the "kingdom of ends" (Kant) or looking to the judgement of the future to correct the unjust judgement of the present (Diderot). Hegel and Marx's theories of history, needless to say, are thoroughly forward-looking, and even Fichte, in the *Addresses to the German Nation,* identifies his fellow-countrymen as bearers of the hopes of mankind. Yet the idea of historical immortality extends backwards as well as forwards. This is apparent in Fichte's *Lectures on the Scholar's Vocation* with its vision of mankind at all places and times as part of a vast, chain-connected community. So it seems plausible that there should also be a conservative version of the idea of historical immortality.

I think that the passage quoted by Shelley makes it clear that such an idea was indeed at work in Burke's thought. Whatever his religious views, Burke's defence of the ancien régime was not religiously based in the way that, say, Bishop Bossuet's support for Louis XIV or the British Jacobites'

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arguments for the restoration of the House of Stuart were. Burke's arguments go more often from politics to religion (the need for an established religion to preserve political order) than vice versa. Three points are worth noting.

Diderot and the French Revolutionaries had looked forward to the judgement of posterity, so one might think that a conservative would invoke the authority of the judgement of the past. But that is not Burke's message. Instead, he invokes the value of preserving intact through time an entity that transcends the life of individuals. Secondly, rather than the trope of the "Church invisible", Burke draws on a different source of analogy: one that combines another much older metaphor, the "body politic", with the transformed understanding of "organisms" (the organic as contrasted with the mechanical and characterized by a particular kind of integration and the capacity for self-repair) that developed in the eighteenth century.[18] Finally, the affirmation of this kind of supra-individual identity goes together with the vehement rejection of a politics of rational justification:

> It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in; glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified

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> obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprize, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness. . . .
>
> But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion. . . .
>
> On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom, as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every visto, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons; so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place.[19]

I leave the reader to decide for herself whether she finds Burke's prose, with its swords leaping from scabbards and so on, "eloquent" or risible, but its "philosophic" content, in short, is that we should not seek to remove

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the alienation of arbitrariness lest the alienation of loneliness leaves us in a worse state. The concern here is not the existential loneliness that comes from the depersonalization of a once-personal deity so much as the replacement of what had once been warm and personal forms of political authority (the French ancien régime? seriously?) with rational-legal structures of accountability.

Deliberately or not, Burke's rhetoric draws attention away from some serious flaws in his argument. The "superadded ideas" that he laments being "rudely torn off" are ones, he says, "which the heart owns, *and the understanding ratifies*". But if "the understanding ratifies" them, that is, one presumes, because they are rationally justified. In that case, of course, no advocate of accountable government would object—but they are hardly *illusions,* pleasing or otherwise. Moreover, it is disingenuous to say that a politics of justification leaves the laws "supported only by their own terrors". Rationally justified laws are supported by the claims of justice—what better support could laws have?

Still, Burke's words have resonated with many readers in his own day and since. In fact, I would go so far as to say that what we now think of as "conservative" thought—by which I mean not just the idea that hierarchy is divinely ordained or that social change is dangerous in foreseeably unpredictable ways, but the idea that historically received customs and institutions have an intrinsic value that makes them worth defending irrespective of instrumental considerations and that tradition embodies a wisdom beyond the reach of justificatory reason—is actually a modern invention that can be traced to Burke. Not for nothing did Novalis describe the *Reflections* as "a revolutionary book against the Revolution".

Mill

So far, we have connected the idea of historical immortality with revolutionary politics (Robespierre, Nechayev, Trotsky), anti-revolutionary politics (Burke) and nationalism (Fichte, Hegel). One might suspect, then, that the appeal of the idea of historical immortality was part of a yearning for collective identity (both on the Left and on the Right) in the face of the growth of modern individualism. So it is significant to find that historical

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immortality is explicitly affirmed in the thought of that arch-individualist John Stuart Mill.

Mill was a vehement (if not always public) opponent of Christianity. His objections are principally moral ones. Like Kant, he rejected the notion that human beings should be asked to worship a being understood to be "good" but whose goodness it was not open to them to comprehend fully.[20] He describes the doctrine of the dependence of salvation on a divine grace that is granted to some but not others as "the moral contradiction inseparable from every form of Christianity, which no ingenuity can resolve, and no sophistry explain away."[21] And he is repelled by the thought of a deity who could create human beings "with the certain foreknowledge" that they would be condemned to hell. "Is there any moral enormity which might not be justified by imitation of such a Deity?"[22]

But it is Mill's alternative, his own version of Comte's "Religion of Humanity", that is of particular interest, for it contains the idea that human history is a viable—indeed, superior—alternative to the Christian idea of personal immortality. Mill considers the objection that the limitations of human existence without belief in an afterlife make the Epicurean doctrine "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" the only possible view.[23] To the extent that it encourages us not to look down on pleasure, the Epicurean doctrine is, Mill says, "a rational and legitimate corollary from the shortness of life".[24] Nevertheless, he claims, it does not exclude another, more elevated, perspective:

> But that because life is short we should care for nothing beyond it, is not a legitimate conclusion; and the supposition, that human beings in general are not capable of feeling deep and even the deepest interest in things which they will never live to see, is a view of human nature as false as it is abject. Let it be remembered that if individual life is short, the life of the human species is not short—its indefinite duration is practically equivalent to endlessness; and being combined with indefinite capability of improvement, it offers to the imagination and sympathies a large enough object to satisfy any reasonable demand for grandeur of aspiration, If such an object appears small to a mind accustomed to dream of infinite and eternal beatitudes, it will expand into far other dimensions when those baseless fancies shall have receded into the past.[25]

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In support, Mill gives the example of the Romans' attitude towards their country:

> Rome was to the entire Roman people, for many generations as much a religion as Jehovah was to the Jews; nay, much more, for they never fell off from their worship as the Jews did from theirs. And the Romans, otherwise a selfish people, with no very remarkable faculties of any kind except the purely practical, derived nevertheless from this one idea a certain greatness of soul, which manifests itself in all their history where that idea is concerned and nowhere else, and has earned for them the large share of admiration, in other respects not at all deserved, which has been felt for them by most noble-minded persons from that time to this.[26]

If love of country can be so powerful, then it follows, Mill argues, that "we cannot judge it impossible that the love of that larger country, the world, may be nursed into similar strength, both as a source of elevated emotion and as a principle of duty."[27] Like Diderot and the French Revolutionaries, Mill gives the idea of history a verdictive role. However, his picture looks backwards to great models drawn from the past, not forwards to the judgement of posterity. We should see ourselves as acting as if we were observed by them:

> The thought that our dead parents or friends would have approved our conduct is a scarcely less powerful motive than the knowledge that our living ones do approve it: and the idea that Socrates, or Howard or Washington, or Antoninus, or Christ, would have sympathized with us, or that we are attempting to do our part in the spirit in which they did theirs, has operated on the very best minds, as a strong incentive to act up to their highest feelings and convictions.[28]

It is an idea that was not confined to Mill. The idea of historical immortality is also endorsed by that other great giant of Victorian progressive humanitarianism, George Eliot. In one of her poems, Eliot (who coined the word "meliorist" to describe her view) combines the "Church invisible" with Diderot's "distant concert" into an image of an invisible choir. The underlying idea is Herderian. The choir invisible "whose music is the gladness of the world" contains the voices of all who have made our minds "better by their presence", even those whose individuality is now

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lost in time. It is a "divinely human" multitude that "shall live till human Time / Shall fold its eyelids". In the meantime, Eliot hopes to join that choir herself:

> O May I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirr'd to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues.
> So to live is heaven:[29]

Walt Whitman uses a literary metaphor for his version of the idea. In his famous poem "O Me! O Life!", having listed his failures and frustrations, Whitman asks himself the question: "What good amid these, O me, O life?" To which his poem gives the following answer:

> That you are here—that life exists, and identity;
> That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse.[30]

I hope that these examples of explicit commitment to different versions of the idea of historical immortality are sufficient to make plausible the suggestion that historical immortality embedded itself as a background assumption in large parts of Western culture as the hold of the Christian narrative of judgement and personal immortality receded. Historical immortality is not to be identified with the—itself already complicated—idea of human progress, although it is clearly closely associated with it: one may believe that it is valuable for individuals to orient themselves historically, even if one doesn't believe that the present is in any significant way better than the past or that the future will be better than the present.

A natural further question is whether the idea of historical immortality is confined to the West. It is a question about which I have an open mind. That the idea of historical immortality emerged in its modern form as a result of a dialectic within a specifically Western form of religion has, I hope, been shown, but that does not mean that it might not still play a significant role in other societies. Perhaps, indeed, cultures for which ancestral

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piety has been much more central than it is in Western ones will be more likely to feel its appeal.

A point not to be neglected is that "non-Western" cultures have been heavily influenced by Western ones—even in their opposition to the West. Marxism, a Western ideology directed by its founders at the central, most industrially advanced, parts of the capitalist system, turned out to be a surprisingly powerful force in opposition to Western power on the periphery of that system. With that in mind, this passage from Frantz Fanon is very striking:

> No, we do not want to catch up with anyone. What we want to do is to go forward all the time, night and day, in the company of Man, in the company of all men. The caravan should not be stretched out, for in that case each line will hardly see those who precede it; and men who no longer recognize each other meet less and less together, and talk to each other less and less. It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget Europe's crimes, of which the most horrible was committed in the heart of man, and consisted of the pathological tearing apart of his functions and the crumbling away of his unity. And in the framework of the collectivity there were the differentiations, the stratification and the bloodthirsty tensions fed by classes; and finally, on the immense scale of humanity, there were racial hatreds, slavery, exploitation and above all the bloodless genocide which consisted in the setting aside of fifteen thousand millions of men.[31]

To follow Fanon, the task of anti-colonial thought is to challenge and correct the partiality of existing conceptions of historical immortality in order to extend, not overturn, it.

The Modern Epicurean

Mill rejects "the Epicurean doctrine" that "because life is short, we should care for nothing beyond it." But was he right to do so? Perhaps we should follow Falconet and do without the idea of historical immortality. Might

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not a version of "Epicurean doctrine" provide a sufficient alternative to the religious doctrine of the afterlife, one from which "the shadow of God" has been purged?

The Battle of Kolin is not much remembered nowadays, although it was a brutal, bloody slaughter. It was fought between Prussia and Austria on 18 June 1757 as part of Frederick the Great's long campaign to extend his territories at the Austrians' expense. This time, however, he found the Austrians well prepared and led. His army was outnumbered and 14,000 of his 32,000 men lost their lives. At the height of the fighting, Frederick is supposed to have screamed at his troops: "You damned scoundrels! Do you want to live forever?" The story became notorious around the German-speaking world. Many years later Goethe said that he was reminded of it when he read the first German translation of Lucretius's famous Epicurean poem, *De Rerum Naturae.*[32]

The association was to the point. Frederick was an avowed Epicurean (as an absolute monarch he could afford to be open about his lack of orthodox religious faith). He even published a poem (in French) "in imitation of the Third Book of Lucretius", whose subject was "the vain terrors of death and the fear of an afterlife".[33] For Frederick, death was but a tranquil sleep;[34] and dying itself like the sunset at the end of the day.[35] As for the hope of an afterlife, if it comes with the fear of being judged and punished for faults that are part of our characters, we are better off without it.

But Frederick's angry accusation to his troops points towards a dilemma. For Enlightenment materialists like Frederick, the idea of the immortal soul was no more than superstition. Yet without it—without some reason to believe that each human being has something special and unique about them—what becomes of the value of human life?

If all there is to human beings is the series of experiences, pleasurable or painful, that they go through, then, seen from an external standpoint, one stream of experiences is no different from any other. So, if it is necessary to eliminate one—or many—streams in order to bring more, longer and more pleasurable ones into existence . . . well, why not? Hence materialism encourages that characteristically modern form of political collectivism in which sacrifices that bring about the greater good are taken to be morally imperative. No doubt, Frederick was an aggressive, ruthless militarist, who ruled his kingdom with ferocious strictness, but, if he was a

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tyrant, then he was a tyrant of a particularly modern kind—one who claimed to be pursuing the common good as "the first servant of the state".

On the other hand, at the same time, the idea of human beings as just a stream of experiences leads, it seems, to a world of individuals who have a sense of their own absolute uniqueness and importance—if only to themselves. Without the prospect of personal survival after death, what do individuals have except their own particular set of pleasures and pains? Who but a monster could blame them for hanging on to it with all the strength they can?

Yet not everyone agrees that Epicureanism drives human beings back into themselves. Derek Parfit, who argued for the view that human beings are nothing but a contingently related series of experiences, saw the abandonment of the idea of an abiding self as a liberation:

> Is this truth depressing? Some may find it so. But I find it liberating, and consoling. When I believed that my existence was such a further fact, I seemed imprisoned in myself. My life seemed like a glass tunnel, through which I was moving faster every year and at the end of which there was darkness. When I changed my view, the walls of my glass tunnel disappeared. I now live in the open air. There is still a difference between my life and the lives of other people. But the difference is less. Other people are closer. I am less concerned about the rest of my own life, and more concerned about the lives of others.[36]

The image that Parfit uses to convey his view does not work as he imagines. A person in a glass tunnel is cut off from the world because she cannot touch it (probably also hear or smell it) or move around it at will. Would those things be any more possible for someone who does not believe in an abiding self than for someone who does? I see no reason to think so. On the other hand, Parfit's talk of now living "in the open air", and of other people being "closer", suggests that he believes that, once freed from the illusion of the abiding self, he—indeed, we—are released into a shared public world instead of being confined within spheres that are separate from one another. He then goes on to offer some thoughts about death.

> When I believed the Non-Reductionist View, [that there is an abiding self, not to be reduced to the set of relations between its experiences] I also cared more about my inevitable death. After my death, there

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> will be no one living who will be me. I can now redescribe this fact. Though there will later be many experiences, none of these experiences will be connected to my present experiences by chains of such direct connections as those involved in experience-memory, or in the carrying out of an earlier intention. Some of these future experiences may be related to my present experiences in less direct ways. There will later be some memories about my life. And there may later be thoughts influenced by mine, or things done as the result of my advice. My death will break the more direct relations between my present experiences and future experiences, but it will not break various other relations. This is all there is to the fact that there will be no one living who will be me. Now that I have seen this, my death seems to me less bad.[37]

In short, what matters, according to Parfit, is the totality of experiences and their relations rather than whether those relations are "direct" or "indirect" in the way that they are related to me. I disagree. The contrast between experiences that we relate to directly and those that we do not is not just a matter of greater or lesser distance.

Take some experience from your past that is very personal to you—the smell of the garden in the house where you grew up, the sound of your mother singing, whatever it is. Such experiences have a qualitative particularity that limits them to the individuals who have them. As Thomas Nagel puts it vividly in his *The View from Nowhere,* "We will not know exactly how scrambled eggs taste to a cockroach even if we develop a detailed objective phenomenology of the cockroach sense of taste."[38] It is, of course, possible that the memory you now have fails to correspond to the experience that you had at the time. Still, were the experience to be presented to you again, like Proust's madeleine dipped in tisane, you would recognize it immediately. If this is so, then it is the qualitative character of experience that gives it its essentially private and personal character, and this fact about the nature of experience is independent of whether there really is an abiding self *to whom* experience belongs. In fact, experiences that are not the experiences of an abiding self might become *more,* not *less,* isolated.

At this point, it is instructive to contrast Parfit's views on life and death with those of a very different modern philosopher, Martin Heidegger.

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A theme that runs through *Being and Time* is the way in which *Dasein* (the human being) "flees" in the face of its own death—an "existentialist" motif that connects Heidegger with Kierkegaard and, before him, to a tradition of religious thought of which Pascal is the most notable example. One of the chief forms of such "fleeing" that Heidegger identifies is what he calls "*das Man*"—an impersonal kind of human collectivity, translated as the "they". This, according to Heidegger, is a way of transforming death for the individual into something more manageable, yet less authentic:

> In Dasein's public way of interpreting, it is said that "one dies", ["*man stirbt*"] because everyone else and oneself can talk himself into saying that "in no case is it I myself", for this "one" [*dieses Man*] is *the* "*nobody*".[39]

It leads, says Heidegger, to a conception of the world as framed by an impersonal order of time, which has no connection with the temporality of the individual:

> Publicly, time is something which everyone takes and can take. In the everyday way in which we are with one another, the levelled-off sequence of "nows" remains completely unrecognizable as regards its origin in the temporality of the individual Dasein. How is "time" in its course to be touched even the least bit when a man who has been present-at-hand "in time" no longer exists? Time goes on, just as indeed it already "was" when a man "came into life". The only time one knows is the public time which has been levelled off and which belongs to everyone—and that means, to nobody.[40]

But surely, someone might respond, time really *does* go on without us, just as time was there before us. How else would physicists be able to tell us about the Big Bang or earth scientists the history of pre-Cambrian geology? But that is, I think, to miss the point. The scientists' time is a time that has spinning particles, forces and combustion in it. Is it also a time containing sounds or colours?

Dasein's time, as Heidegger considers it, is a phenomenological time, and it is the practice of extending that kind of time imaginatively beyond our own experience—beyond any human experience, indeed—that he is objecting to.

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G. E. Moore, in a famous example in *Principia Ethica,* does just that when he asks us to compare two worlds:

> Let us imagine one world exceedingly beautiful. Imagine it as beautiful as you can; put into it whatever on this earth you most admire—mountains, rivers, the sea; trees, and sunsets, stars and moon. Imagine these all combined in the most exquisite proportions, so that no one thing jars against another, but each contributes to the beauty of the whole. And then imagine the ugliest world you can possibly conceive. Imagine it simply one heap of filth, containing everything that is most disgusting to us, for whatever reason, and the whole, as far as may be, without one redeeming feature. . . . The only thing we are not entitled to imagine is that any human being ever has or ever, by any possibility, *can,* live in either, can ever see and enjoy the beauty of the one or hate the foulness of the other. Well, even so, supposing them quite apart from any possible contemplation by human beings; still, is it irrational to hold that it is better that the beautiful world should exist than the one which is ugly? Would it not be well, in any case, to do what we could to produce it rather than the other? Certainly I cannot help thinking that it would; and I hope that some may agree with me in this extreme instance.[41]

What could it mean to call a world completely unperceived beautiful or ugly—a "heap of filth"? Surely, "beautiful" and "ugly" can only mean beautiful-for-us or ugly-for-us (cockroaches, one imagines, are very likely to find heaps of filth beautiful). In applying such terms to an unperceived world, it is as though Moore is extending the human horizon beyond any possible human horizon. The idea of a public world of experience is, at best, an imaginative fiction, dependent on the continued existence of beings with perceptual capacities very much like our own. We find it in Nagel's "view from nowhere" or in the "life-world" of the phenomenologists.[42] To the extent that it plays a role, as it did for Parfit, in consoling us for our own mortality with the thought that what will be extinguished (our own individuality) is anyway a persistent kind of illusion but that what matters (the public world of experience) will continue, it seems to be another shadow cast by a no-longer-believed-in deity.

In his notebooks, Coleridge contrasts the idea of divine omnipresence with Bentham's Panopticon.

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> What comfort in the silent eye upraised to God! "Thou knowest." O! what a thought! Never to be friendless, never to be unintelligible! The omnipresence has generally been represented as a spy, a sort of Bentham's Panopticon. O to feel what the pain is to be utterly unintelligible and then—"O God, thou understands!"[43]

But the comparison could also go in the other direction. What is the "universal benevolence" and the "point of view of the universe" of the utilitarians such as Sidgwick but a transformed version of the all-seeing eye of Providence? Yet that does not mean that it cannot function as a consolation. Just as the Greeks drew an Apollonian consolation from the contemplation of the happiness of the gods on Olympus, and Bertrand Russell from the timeless realm of mathematical truth, the contemplation of a continuing world of public experience may also be consoling—whether we regard it as an illusion or not.

Utilitarianism and consequentialism (the genus of which utilitarianism is commonly thought to be a species) are significantly different from an unsparing Epicureanism, then. But has anyone ever managed to be a fully rigorous Epicurean, acknowledging nothing but the individual self and its desires, without ideals or hopes? In a letter, the poet and classical scholar A. E. Housman at least claimed that he was:

> In philosophy I am a Cyrenaic or egoistic hedonist and regard the pleasure of the moment as the only possible motive of action. As for pessimism, I think it almost as silly, though not as wicked, as optimism. George Eliot said she was a meliorist: I am a pejorist.[44]

The Extinction of Value?

I wrote above that, for Diderot, the knowledge of human extinction a thousand years in the future would produce "a kind of extinction of value", and I compared it with what (on my interpretation) Kant thought about the good will as the necessary condition for the existence of value. The idea of the extinction of value is, admittedly, not just very radical but also quite vague, and not everyone will find it convincing. Some philosophers have claimed that the very idea that value might be eroded is itself a philosoph-

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ical mistake. According to R. M. Hare in his well-known essay "Nothing Matters":

> 'The annihilation of values' (if that means 'values as a whole' and not 'some particular set of values') is a pretentious bogey, invented to scare the gullible.[45]

Human beings are, Hare says, valuing creatures and we cannot escape it. So it is just a matter of *which* values we adhere to.

> As a matter of empirical fact, a man is a valuing creature, and is likely to remain so. What may happen is that one set of values may get discarded and another set substituted, for indeed our scales of values are always changing, sometimes gradually, sometimes catastrophically. The suggestion that nothing matters naturally arises at times of perplexity like the present, when the claims upon our concern are so many and conflicting that we might indeed wish to be delivered from all of them at once. But this we are unable to do. The suggestion may have one of two opposite effects, one good and one bad. On the one hand, it may make us scrutinize more closely values to which we have given habitual allegiance, and decide whether we really prize them as much as we have been pretending to ourselves that we do. On the other, it may make us stop thinking seriously about our values at all, in the belief that nothing is to be preferred to anything else. The effect of this is not, as might be thought, to overthrow our values altogether (that, as I have said, is impossible); it merely introduces a shallow stagnation into our thought about values. We content ourselves with the appreciation of those things, like eating, which most people can appreciate without effort, and never learn to prize those things whose true value is apparent only to those who have fought hard to reach it.[46]

I disagree with Hare. Yes, so long as human beings exist they will act in goal-directed ways, make choices and have preferences. Even Diderot's doomed humanity would go on planting cabbages. But consider the "ragged urchin" in Auden's poem "The Shield of Achilles":

> That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third,
> Were axioms to him, who'd never heard

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> Of any world where promises were kept,
> Or one could weep because another wept

Perhaps Hare would say that there are values even in this world. But there is no *morality:* nothing that makes a *claim* on people, nothing that is thought of as having binding force. If that is not a world in which "nothing matters" then it is as close to it as makes not much difference. That such a world as Auden describes might be our fate is a familiar modern nightmare. But what would lead us there?

One theory (really, one family of theories) is sociological. Violence, ruthlessness and the drive to dominate and control others are as old as humanity. What is new, however, is the way that this is allied with modern technology. Modern technology—in part, military technology but, more importantly, administrative, surveillance and communication technology—gives power-holders the possibility of establishing systems of control that are more complete and enduring than ever before. As such a world continues, people would be increasingly de-humanized, robbed not just of agency and power, but of a sense of the claims made on them by values. To the extent that the rulers invoke "values" they are just part of the conditioning process, triggers for learned behaviour like the dinner-bell for Pavlov's dogs. What would really matter would be the submissiveness induced in human beings by such a panopticon-world, not whether it was operated in the name of building communism, the promotion of the Aryan race, or the greatest overall happiness.

So, even if one concedes that Hare's dismissal of the possibility of the annihilation of values is wrong, two important questions remain: Is the annihilation of values (at least in part) a *philosophical* issue? And why should the idea of the extinction of humanity threaten to bring the extinction of values with it? I have answers to those two questions for which, I hope, the argument of the rest of this book has prepared the way.

According to Hare, the question whether values are objective or subjective is of no significance for what we value. He adapts a well-known claim of Wittgenstein's (that it makes no difference to the way one lives if one is an "idealist" or a "realist") to assert the same thing about morality.

> Think of one world into whose fabric values are objectively built; and think of another in which those values have been annihilated. And remember that in both worlds the people in them go on being con-

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> cerned about the same things—there is no difference in the "subjective" concern which people have for things, only in their "objective" value. Now I ask, What is the difference between the states of affairs in these two worlds? Can any other answer be given except "None whatever"? How, therefore can we torment ourselves with doubts about which of them our own world resembles?[47]

Yet ethics is not just a question of *what* we value but also the question *why it is* that what we value should make claims upon us. And it is at this point, as we have seen, that questions about the nature and sources of value arise, both for Kant and his successors and for modern thinkers such as Rawls, Korsgaard and Bernard Williams.

Given the objections faced by voluntarism (if morality is a matter of human will, why can we not release ourselves from it? if it is a matter of divine will, why should we acknowledge its authority?) realism (if morality is a matter of fact, how can it have binding force?) and naturalism (if values are "hard-wired" into human psychology so that we have no choice but to accept them, it is still an open question whether we *should* do or not) I think that it is entirely plausible that someone who has thought about the problem but found no convincing solution might experience a disturbing change in the way that she experiences values: an erosion of the sense of their binding force. Yet would the prospect of human extinction make it more difficult for us to retain our sense of the value of values? What follows is a suggestion why it might.

In a universe without human beings, there would still be material things and, presumably, facts about them—hydrogen would still be lighter than helium. But would there still be moral facts? On the most straightforward kind of realism about morality, the answer would have to be "yes". It would still be wrong for intelligent agents (even in a universe in which no agents actually exist) to treat one another as slaves. If one finds such suppositions extravagant but recoils from the idea that values are a matter of volition, there is, however, another possibility.

Instead of thinking that values are willed or built into the absolute nature of reality, perhaps we should see them as being constituted within human communities. In that way, they will have something of the objectivity that realists want without the commitment to the existence of a domain of timeless moral facts. I think that very many modern philosophers,

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both in the English-speaking world and in Germany, who consider themselves "realists" but are not religious believers, hold something like this view. One can compare it to Kantian transcendental idealism. For Kant, it is possible for there to be "objectivity" (*Gegenständlichkeit*) without the need for things-in-themselves that exist in complete metaphysical independence. Similarly, values could be objective, not because of their existence in a non-human realm, but because they are part of human communities. The view can also go together with pragmatism (human activity is the last criterion of truth), Wittgensteinianism (thought and action are constituted by "language-games") and, of course, on one (in my view, incorrect) reading, Hegel (*Geist* is the historical, intersubjective dimension of human social existence, not a metaphysical absolute).

One important issue, of course, is whether such value-constituting communities are bounded and discrete or not. If the former, then we appear to be forced to accept that different communities will have different moral universes. The alternative would seem to be some kind of progressive semi-particularism: human cultures are linked by universal criteria that emerge and develop through time. In that way, Greek slavery would be wrong (the norms of the Greek world are open to criticism) without it being the case that individual Greek slaveholders are blameworthy (they cannot be expected to transcend the standards of their own world).

I believe that something like this view is at work behind a great deal of what is nowadays called "moral realism". But, for reasons explained in Chapter 8, such diagnostic claims are difficult to document and substantiate, to the extent that the *doxai* involved are background assumptions rather than argued for in the foreground. At any rate, *if* such assumptions are at work, it seems clear why the idea of human extinction would be threatening to our sense of values: the extinction of humanity would remove the conditions for the existence of morality itself.

In short, there are a variety of different reasons why the idea of human extinction even in the relatively distant future may be troubling. For Mill or Eliot, it would bring to an end a shared project of human improvement; for Burkean conservatives, the destruction of a collective social entity whose continued existence has value over and above the value of the lives of the individuals who make it up; for Diderot and the French revolutionaries, the loss of a verdictive authority to correct the unjust judgements of the present day; for Parfit, the loss of a continuing world of public experience;

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and, for a certain kind of moral realists, the loss of the very framework within which values are constituted. Perhaps only the Epicurean would be immune.

But this should not be surprising. After all, the idea of personal immortality, whose place the idea of historical immortality came more and more to take, was itself very complex.[48]

"The Despair of Our Age"

The impoverishment of life is an inescapable theme of modern Western culture. "The mass of men", Thoreau famously proclaimed (he did not pronounce upon women) "lead lives of quiet desperation."[49] It is the great continuing subject of modern poetry. One might mention Matthew Arnold ("this strange disease of modern life, / With its sick hurry, its divided aims"), Baudelaire ("Not to feel the horrible burden of Time that breaks your shoulders and bends you to the ground, you must always be drunk"), T. S. Eliot ("We are the hollow men / We are the stuffed men"), Wallace Stevens ("Day is desire and night is sleep. / There are no shadows anywhere."), as well as many, many others. In German thought the conviction that the modern secular world is inadequate is everywhere from Schiller ("when the gods were more human, human beings were more divine") to Adorno ("life is not alive") and Heidegger ("only a god can save us"). Iris Murdoch writes, as though it were self-evident, of "the despair of our age". Even R. M. Hare, so dismissive of existentialist talk about the annihilation of values, refers to "times of perplexity like the present".

Of course, the very fact that such apprehensions are so widespread may be a reason for suspicion. After all, the sense of living in a world with something deeply wrong with it is hardly a new one. The Greeks looked back to a Golden Age from which they had fallen away; the Romans were preoccupied with the consciousness that they had lost the virtue of their forefathers; St Paul warned the Ephesians that the times they were living in were "evil days"; and so on. Moreover, how could one tell? How can one make comparisons about happiness from one society to another? While it is possible to marshal data on health, housing, nutrition and life-expectancy, what does that settle?[50] On the other hand, how to substantiate claims about experiential loss? Perhaps the idea that the Greeks lived in a world

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of "all things shining" or that the Middle Ages, persecution and squalor notwithstanding, could draw on the solidity of a common "ontic logos" that has disappeared are just modern versions of fairy stories that begin with "once upon a time".[51] Yet the pervasiveness of this sense of malaise makes it impossible to ignore.

In the "Introduction to the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*", Marx describes religion as both an "expression of real misery" and a "protest against real misery". Substitute material well-being for misery, and the "illusory happiness" of religion will be superfluous.[52] But is it possible that unhappiness—existential discontent—is a disease of affluence itself? One, perhaps surprising, person who thought so was George Orwell. In a postscript to his book *Homage to Catalonia,* Orwell wrote:

> To raise the standard of living of the whole world to that of Britain would not be a greater undertaking than the war we have just fought. I don't claim, and I don't know who does, that that would solve anything in itself. It is merely that privation and brute labour have to be abolished before the real problems of humanity can be tackled. The major problem of our time is the decay of the belief in personal immortality, and it cannot be dealt with while the average human being is either drudging like an ox or shivering in fear of the secret police. How right the working classes are in their "materialism"! How right they are to realize that the belly comes before the soul, not in the scale of values but in point of time![53]

Orwell, as we know from *1984,* was hardly confident that, left to itself, capitalism and science would bring such a world about and had little more to say on the matter. His fellow dystopian Aldous Huxley, however, did. In his novel *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), the characters are discussing words that have become extinct or have crossed from one language to another. One of them, Mr Cardan, gives the example of "spleen": "A fine aristocratic word that; we were fools to allow it to become extinct. One has to go to France to hear it uttered now." To which Huxley's mouthpiece-character Mr Chelifer responds:

> The word may be dead . . . but the emotion, I fancy, has never flourished more luxuriantly than now. The more material progress, the more wealth and leisure, the more standardized amusements—the

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> more boredom. It's inevitable, it's the law of Nature. The people who have always suffered from spleen and who are still the principal victims, are the prosperous, leisured and educated. At present they form a relatively small minority; but in the Utopian state where everybody is well off, educated and leisured, everybody will be bored; unless for some obscure reason the same causes fail to produce the same effects. Only two or three hundred people out of every million could survive a lifetime in a really efficient Utopian state. The rest would simply die of spleen. In this way, it may be, natural selection will work towards the evolution of the super-man. Only the intelligent will be able to bear the almost intolerable burden of leisure and prosperity. The rest will simply wither away, or cut their throats—or, perhaps more probably, return in desperation to the delights of barbarism and cut one another's throats, not to mention the throats of the intelligent.[54]

This book, of course, takes Orwell and Huxley's side. So long as there is a standing need for mortal human beings to "come to terms with the world", the threat of existential discontent will not disappear. To the extent that religion played an essential role in making human beings' place in the world intelligible to them, it will not simply "wither away" with material abundance. And if traditional religion can no longer play that role convincingly, it will leave a void that something—whether it is a new form of religion or some other "shadow of God"—must fill. So the sense of malaise must be taken seriously.

It seems unlikely that one could give a single, unified explanation for such a persistent and varied set of phenomena. Nevertheless, this book has indeed presented a perspective from which to understand it. It combines three, connected, diagnoses.

(1) First, there are the consequences of the decline in the idea of personal immortality itself. The idea of personal immortality was a powerful way of coming to terms with the world, and the consequences of its decline should not be underestimated, even if, as Frederick the Great pointed out, a world in which human beings live their lives in the anticipation that they will be judged and perhaps condemned to eternal torment is not a comfortable one.

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(2) More broadly, there is the conflict between two contending drives. On the one hand, there is the drive for explanation and justification—the struggle against what I have called "the alienation of arbitrariness"—and, on the other, the drive to overcome the relational impersonality, the "alienation of loneliness", that results. On the religious plane, the requirement that God should be just—that he punishes us for all and only those actions that we performed freely and in proper knowledge of their prohibited character—erodes the idea of a God who is loving and merciful—he becomes a being, as Schiller says, "whose eye was never dimmed with tears"—and helps to push Socratic religion away from belief in an afterlife.

But these drives have consequences elsewhere too. As human beings demand to be treated as free and equal—as responsible adults who are "*mündig*"—they require corresponding political arrangements of accountability and transparency. Older ideas of deference and patronage are replaced by modern ideas of democratic citizenship and the rule of law. In consequence, political relationships become increasingly impersonal—bureaucratic and legalistic.

What is more, if we are to follow Marx, the modern market society that this political-legal order underpins—capitalism—realizes neither set of values: it is both impersonal *and* opaque. This would be disturbing (if true) even without Marx's further claims: that capitalism conceals its agency as the source of misery and exploitation beneath a surface appearance of freedom and equality, and that the capitalist division of labour produces human beings too fragmented and stunted to carry out the task of collective self-rule. For Marx, religion is "the heart of a heartless world".[55] To follow the argument of this book, however, modern religion, to the extent that it responds to the drive for justification, becomes less and less capable of providing an adequate substitute for feelings of relational closeness.

(3) Thirdly, there is the challenge of moral diversity. Kant's narrative of justified punishment by a divine being committed him, I have argued, to what I have called "moral unanimism". This connected Kant with a much longer Western tradition. Not only did Judaism (the Noahide laws)

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> and Christianity ("the conscience of mankind") assert that there were binding, universal moral principles, so did other streams of ancient thought, notably Stoicism, with the idea of the *jus gentium.* To the extent that apparent moral diversity cannot be interpreted as the realization in different contexts of shared principles (was slavery right for the Greeks but not right for us?) it is very troubling.

One response—I believe that it was the view of Bernard Williams—is that the drive for moral universalism is only the result of a morality-system centred around ideas of obligation, responsibility and guilt, of which, of course, Kantianism is a prime example. Once we have freed ourselves from such ideas, we will be able to return to a pluralistic moral world more like that of the Ancient Greeks. But things, I fear, are not so easy. Certainly, Williams's claim that one can evaluate a society ethically without committing oneself to a view about the culpability of those who lived in it is appealing: one can say that ancient slavery was bad without saying that slaveholders were doing something *wrong,* something that they had a reason not to. But such a move from *Moralität* to *Sittlichkeit* (to put it in Hegelian terms) comes at a price.

One of the things that monotheism brought with it was the idea of common humanity: that people have claims on one another just by being human, and this is a *doxa* that remains even for those who no longer hold to the religious belief under whose auspices it spread. It is what lies behind the conviction that a child starving in Africa has, in principle, exactly the same claim on our concern as a child drowning in a pond in front of us.[56] But then, if you have fed that child, should you stand by if she is subjected to "female circumcision"? Or if she is denied the opportunities for education and employment that are available to her brothers?[57] At what stage do we end up holding other societies to our own (Western) values and turn out to be moral universalists after all? It is all very well for a radical critic of human rights like Samuel Moyn to assert that there is an "umbilical linkage" between nation-states and the idea of rights and that to universalize such rights into "human rights" that are applicable at all places and times simply extends their "abstraction" and "formalism" into the international sphere, but Marxists are universalists too, albeit of a different kind.[58]

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Religion outside the Limits of Reason Alone

Both Kant and Hegel offer theodicies, in the sense of rational justifications of the goodness of the world, although one is centred on an afterlife, the other not. For Kant, God's goodness consists in creating a world of free, human agents, but a Last Judgement, presided over by a dispassionately just deity, is necessary to rectify the discrepancy between desert and outcome. Hegel's God—equally impersonal—is also open to human comprehension, in this case not through a shared moral law but because *Geist* gives a rational structure to reality as a whole. *Geist* is knowable, not by scientific investigation or experiment, but by "speculative Thought". What reconciles us to the world, on Hegel's account, is some combination of our embeddedness in our own *Sittlichkeit* and this higher, philosophical kind of reasoning. There is no need for an afterlife of judgement, reward or punishment.

But, even granting that this is a persuasive interpretation of these two thinkers, am I right to say that it represented a "point of inflection" for religion? It is not as if theistic religion disappeared in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some response to this obvious thought is important, even if it can only be very schematic.

In brief, I think Roger Scruton's misrepresentation of Kant as ". . . a believer who, as he put it, 'attacked the claims of reason in order to make room for those of faith'"[59] is more revealing than just the kind of slip that naturally creeps into the work of such a prolific writer. If we accept the idea of Kant as pushing Socratic religion—religion that combines faith with explanation and justification—to its limit, and see how, in consequence, the idea of divine justice cuts away at what had once been essential parts of religion—grace, mercy, divine love (not to mention the redemptive power of Christ's death in atoning for human sinfulness) it seems plausible to think that religion might do better if it took the other side and gave up rationalism instead.

There are some obvious ways to make religious belief immune to the claims of reason: by accepting the primacy of sacred texts; submitting to the doctrinal authority of a Church; or claiming that one's beliefs rest on direct revelation. Barricading religious belief against the threat of criticism by establishing an alternative source of epistemic authority does not simply represent a return to a pre-Enlightenment world, however. The Sea of Faith, whose "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" Matthew Arnold heard on

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Dover beach, encompassed reason, or, at least, claimed to. To follow Charles Taylor, the medieval world incorporated belief in an "ontic logos" rather than the "disengaged reason" of modern science—a different conception of reason, but reason nevertheless.[60] To get back to a time before the worm of justification had eaten its way into the apple of authenticity, one would need to return to the world of the pre-Socratic Greeks, of which we know (perhaps conveniently) so very little.

But there is another, more modern, way to "attack the claims of reason in order to make room for those of faith". This is not to give religious beliefs a privileged status but to locate religion beyond the sphere of objective reasoning entirely, so that religious belief is not *belief* in anything like the common sense of the term at all. In the early nineteenth century, the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher was the first to point along this path.

Schleiermacher was an almost exact contemporary of Hegel. He was a restless thinker and a brilliant, prolific author (and preacher). It is one of the consequences of the narrowing of the disciplinary borders of philosophy noted in Chapter 8 that he does not figure as prominently as he might in its history, however. This is regrettable to the extent that Schleiermacher lived at a period when the borders between philosophy and religion were themselves very much at issue.

"Pantheism", said Heine, "is the secret religion of Germany."[61] In Schleiermacher, it comes very close to being made explicit. Schleiermacher starts from a view of the ultimate nature of reality that had a great deal in common with other thinkers of the period like Herder, Schelling, Hegel and Goethe, although he gives a thoroughly anti-rationalist account of how human beings could come to awareness of it. For Schleiermacher, God is best understood as the principle of divine love underlying the whole of reality that manifests itself through the spiritual nature of human beings. Divine reality transcends what is knowable by the analytical methods of philosophical reason or the empirical investigation of the sciences. Unlike Hegel, for whom it points towards the need for a higher form of philosophical reason ("speculative Thought") through which to grasp the structure of *Geist,* for Schleiermacher, inspiration is the ineliminable kernel of religion:

> I ask therefore, that you turn from everything usually reckoned religion, and fix your regard on the inward emotions and dispositions, as all utterances and acts of inspired men direct.[62]

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Thus, for Schleiermacher, what matters in religion is not cosmological doctrines, dogmas, creeds or articles of faith but the spirit that underlies them (or not):

> Idea and word are simply the necessary and inseparable outcome of the heart, only to be understood by it and only within it.[63]

With this we have moved into a world quite different from Kant (or Hegel). Although Schleiermacher does have an idea of divine goodness—it is the essential content of religious experience—the idea of requiring a justification of the goodness of the world or of making ultimate reality objectively knowable is alien to the religious life, as Schleiermacher understands it. Nor, for Schleiermacher, does faith require a Last Judgement and the prospect of a future life:

> A weak, tempted heart must take refuge in the thought of a future world. But it is folly to make a distinction between this world and the next. Religious persons at least know only one.[64]

In this way, Schleiermacher stands at the origin of what one might call an *experiential* conception of religious belief. Through narrative, ritual and practices of shared worship, religion gives the believer a sense of awe, wonder, reverence and love—in short, an experience of the sacred. Such experiences are personal and (in the modern sense of that word) subjective. They cannot be expressed in the language of objective description.

This is not a kind of faith that reveals factual truths about this world or the next, or (a rapturous sense of the glory of creation and of the importance of recognizing the spiritual nature of human beings apart) any ethical principles. It cannot, then, take on the burden of giving a rational justification of the goodness of the world in the face of apparent evil; that is not its task. Instead, the ecstatic sense of divine presence that Schleiermacher's writings so vividly evoke corresponds to what Nietzsche would call the Dionysian—an antidote to the flatness of experience in the modern world, and thus, in the broader sense of the term, a form of "theodicy".

Not only is this post-Socratic form of religion one that does not set itself up in competition with scientific discovery, it is one that can be accommodated without great difficulty into liberal-democratic politics. Yes, religions require their adherents to engage in practices of worship and to conform to various disciplines and duties—sabbath observance, dietary prohibitions, sexual continence, for example—but, if what matters, in the

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end, is that these are means through which the individual searches to bring herself into contact with the divine, different religions can co-exist easily enough with one another within a single polity: they are in competition, but not in conflict.

How widespread such a post-Socratic conception of religion is within modern religious faith is very difficult to establish. My sense is that it has made very considerable inroads, as we see in the very title of William James's great work *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* At any rate, the theologian Karl Barth was in no doubt of Schleiermacher's importance:

> The nineteenth century brought with it many deviations from Schleiermacher; and many protests against him; often his ideas were distorted to the point of unrecognizability, and he was often overlooked and forgotten. But in the theological field it was nevertheless his century.[65]

(Nietzsche also makes Schleiermacher the subject of one of his better jokes. The German philosophers, he says, are "all Schleiermacher"—the name literally means "veil maker".)[66]

Still, of course, Socratic religion has not completely ceded the field. Catholicism continued its rock-ribbed opposition to "modernist" ideas through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and, as we saw in Chapter 2, even as it has opened itself up to religious pluralism after the Second Vatican Council, still claims to unite faith and reason.[67] To that extent, the issue of the justification of religious claims to divine goodness and justice has not gone away. Moreover, the "experiential turn" in religion did not go unchallenged even in Protestant countries.

Emphasizing how far Kant was committed to the idea of retributive punishment ("it is from the necessity of punishment that the inference to a future life is drawn") was a way of making vivid the distance between the liberal commitments of contemporary Kantians and Kant himself, but it would be wrong to conclude that ideas like Kant's did not resonate in his own time and after.[68] The achievement of Boyd Hilton's *The Age of Atonement* is to document quite how far Victorian British social thought was permeated by such ideas.

Hilton demonstrates that, alongside the more compassionate and humanitarian developments in Victorian religion, was a commitment to retributivism that had its roots in Malthus and Bishop Butler. Butler's *Analogy of Religion* carried the principle of personal desert from religion to

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nature to document "the tendencies of virtue to produce happiness, and of vice to produce misery", while Malthus, of course, emphasizes the misery that, allegedly, results from one particular form of human "vice".[69]

One point worth noting is that this Butler-inspired retributivism, like Kant's, was in many ways a modern doctrine. The Augustinian roots of Protestantism had emphasized humanity's collective damnation in consequence of original sin and the need for the redemptive grace of Christ's sacrifice to create even the possibility of salvation. Butler, like Kant, makes it a matter of individual agency. As Hilton writes, "while Butler's language made his theology *seem* orthodox . . . Butler's great principle—that God treats everyone according to their personal deserts—strikes 'at the very root of the whole doctrine concerning the Scheme of Redemption and Salvation so largely taught as orthodox.'"[70] Moreover, just as Kant looks to the realization of such a principle of divine justice in practice, so, as Hilton documents, the British Butlerians too used it as a guide to economic and social policy.

As for Germany, one need only remember the words to Theodor Storm's celebrated Christmas poem (set to music by Schumann) "*Knecht Ruprecht*" ("Servant Rupert"). In the tradition, Ruprecht is one of the helpers of Saint Nicholas, but in this poem he takes his commands directly from *das Christkind* (the Christ-child). The *Christkind* asks Ruprecht if he has his sack. He does, and it is full of apples, nuts and almonds for the good children ("*Denn Äpfel, Nuss und Mandelkern / fressen fromme Kinder gern*"). But the *Christkind* also wants to know if Ruprecht has his rod, ready to beat the bad children on their bottoms. He has that too. ("*. . . die Rute die ist hier. / Doch für die Kinder, nur die schlechten, / die trifft sie auf den Teil, den rechten.*") With that established, Ruprecht sets about his task of rewarding and punishing with the divine blessing: "That is well. So go with God, my faithful servant!" ("*Christkindlein sprach: So ist es recht. / So geh mit Gott, mein treuer Knecht!*")[71]

The Prince of This World

For the last thirteen years of his life, the British artist and documentary film-maker Humphrey Jennings (1907–1950) was engaged in making a compilation of texts and images aimed at presenting "the place of imagi-

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nation in the making of the modern world". It opens with an extract from *Paradise Lost* in which Milton relates how the fallen angels, led by Mammon ("the least erected Spirit that fell from heav'n") mined and smelted the metals in the soil of Hell to build their capital, Pandaemonium—the name Jennings uses as the title of his book.

> There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
> Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
> Shone with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign
> That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
> The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
> A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands
> Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
> Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
> Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on—
> Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
> From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts
> Were always downward bent, admiring more
> The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
> Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
> In vision beatific. By him first
> Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
> Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
> Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
> For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
> Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
> And digged out ribs of gold.[72]

As a starting-point for the depiction of industrial capitalism in Britain the passage is even more appropriate when one links it with William Blake's poem "And did those feet in ancient time" (a part of Blake's "prophetic book", *Milton*) with its famous evocation of the "dark Satanic mills" that disfigure England's "green and pleasant land". For orthodox Christianity, however, even though Milton's hell does seem very earth-like, the earth is not hell. It is a testing-ground beyond which lies salvation or damnation, but it is not itself damnation.

Nevertheless, the idea of the modern world as Satanic points to an important strand of religious thought that is different from the one depicted in the main body of this book. As we have seen, according to Iris

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Murdoch, the "proper name" for Kant's man is "Lucifer".[73] But against that I argued that, so far from instigating a rebellion against divine will, Kant's project is to close the gap between God and man to the point that the divine will and the human coincide in the moral law. In Kant's Socratic-Pelagian religion, everything centres on responsible human agency. Human beings are not in rebellion against the divine will, and, for Kant, Satan is not an independent agent so much as a figurative personification of the temptations of the world that pull human beings away from their duty. Thus the response to Father Charlevoix's perceptive Iroquois pupil is that Satan is not God's enemy but a part of divine goodness, when that is properly understood. Similarly, in Hegel, speculative philosophy shows how negativity ("determinate negation") is the way in which *Geist* realizes itself.

But there is a more personified, agential way of understanding the figure of Satan. According to St John's Gospel, the devil is not just "the prince of this world" (John 12:31) but also "the father of lies" (John 8:44). In perhaps the most famous chapter in the Epistles, the First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13, St Paul contrasts the world as it is with the world as it will be "when that which is perfect is come": "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). Putting those ideas together, we can see that there is more to the idea of this world as ruled by Satan than that it is dominated by greed and the pursuit of material goods: it is a world of deception.

Conventional accounts of the development of modern Western ideas of history emphasize (and rightly, I think) how a broadly Augustinian picture of the fallenness of the world and of the need for Christians to live in the world without being "of it" gave way to a picture of the world as an expression of divine goodness as expressed in Pope's *Essay on Man:*

> All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
> All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
> All discord, harmony, not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good:
> And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.[74]

Alongside this Enlightenment Providentialism, there emerged a picture of human history as a progress in which human beings came to develop,

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both in knowledge and control over nature and in self-command and behaviour.[75]

But here is a different view. As Christians came to accommodate the idea that the Second Coming might not take place in their own lifetimes, their conception of their duty of leading holy lives and preaching the gospel broadened into an idea that it was their task in this world to struggle on behalf of religious truth and that what stood opposed to them was not just ignorance (pagans who had some kind of natural religion and shared conscience but, as yet, lacked divine revelation) but active evil, the source of which was Satan himself.

This is a very different kind of religiously informed conception of human history from the progressive "providentialism" of Becker's "Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers" or the "Church invisible" of Kant, Schelling and Hegel. It might look as though it brings us back to Father Charlevoix's Iroquois pupil. If God meant human beings to struggle against evil, why does he not intervene on their side? Has the devil not become a power independent of the deity? The answer to that question, I believe, reveals that we are dealing with a radically anti-Socratic form of religion. If it is part of the divine purpose that the godly are called upon to resist Satanic temptation in this world, these temptations are not just selfishness and sensual pleasure, as in Kant, but include deception. Faith is prior to reason, and knowledge-claims that come from evil sources must always be distrusted.

It is not at all surprising, given the difficulties of Socratic religion, that anti-Socratic forms of religion should return in force, but this particular version of it has taken on great significance in the twenty-first century. What Richard Hofstadter famously called "the paranoid style in American politics" is, of course, familiar, but its religious origins are significant.[76] If I am right, the "paranoid style" has its roots in a form of religion that is not, in Blumenberg's sense, *gnostic* (evil has not become an independent principle) but, as in traditional Calvinism, it is one that makes a sharp distinction between the elect and the damned, a distinction whose justification, if there is one, transcends human beings' ability to understand. What is striking is the extreme epistemological mistrust that goes with it: what matters is not so much *what* is said as *who* is saying it, and, of course, the more malign and powerful the deceivers, the more plausible they will seem.

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For Hofstadter, the principal threat that provoked the paranoid style in his own day was Communists, who existed both outside the national community and also, albeit largely in secret, within it (although, of course, it went back to the witchcraft fears of the early New England Puritans). It is easy to see how they have been replaced by other external enemies—most obviously, after 9 / 11, the anti-Socratic religion of Islam. The sources of deception for the modern expressions of the "paranoid style" are not just outside the national community but very much within it, however: "the mainstream media" and the "educated liberal elite". This is, to say the least, dismaying for those who believe that modern democratic political communities can be held together by the power of reason and deliberation: "the forceless force of the better argument", in Habermas's phrase.[77]

Society as a Deceptive System

But it is not just those who stand in the legacy of Evangelical Protestantism who see the modern world as one of deception. For Marx and Engels, capitalism is in many ways hellish. But it is deceptive too. Its image might be less Milton's Pandaemonium than Fritz Lang's *Metropolis:* a city of light, science and leisure dependent upon a dark underground of toil and wretchedness.

According to Marx, the capitalist system is essentially self-concealing. Because labour (the origin of value) has become a commodity, the true nature of economic life is hidden, both from those who take part in it and from those who claim to analyse it:

> This phenomenal form, which makes the actual relation invisible, and, indeed, shows the direct opposite of that relation, forms the basis of all the juridical notions of both labourer and capitalist, of all the mystifications of the capitalist mode of production, of all its illusions of liberty, of all the apologetic nonsense of the vulgar economists.[78]

As the labour process has come to be governed by the exchange of commodities (the commodity "labour-power" is exchanged for wages) so its social character is concealed. Thus, for the producers:

> The social relations between their private acts of labour manifest themselves as what they are—that is, not as the immediate social re-

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> lationships of persons in their labour but as material relationships between persons and social relationships between things.[79]

But in this case there is no malign and cunning deceiver. The deception, indeed, includes those who benefit from it, the capitalist class. Yet there is a deceiving agency, albeit not a personal one: capital itself. Hegel's *Geist* was God, stripped of everything that was personal and arbitrary, realizing itself in the world. Capital is *Geist* transformed: self-preserving, self-realizing value in process. As Marx writes in the *Grundrisse:*

> Circulation, therefore, which appears as that which is immediately present on the surface of bourgeois society, exists only in so far as it is constantly mediated. Looked at in itself, it is the mediation of presupposed extremes. But it does not posit these extremes. Thus, it has to be mediated not only in each of its moments, but as a whole of mediations, as a total process itself. Its immediate being is therefore pure semblance [*reiner Schein*]. It is the phenomenon of a process taking place behind it.[80]

Hegel's *Geist* (like Kant's) was fully free ("because within it beginning and end coincide").[81] It offered individuals two kinds of reconciliation: transparent intelligibility through philosophical Thought or de facto acceptance from our embeddedness in a shared *Sittlichkeit.* For Marx, of course, reconciliation is illusory: the problem is how to escape from it.

For the early Marx, this was not a significant problem. As he and Engels wrote in *The Holy Family* (1845), material misery would make the proletariat's revolt against capitalism an "imperative need":

> Since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer removable, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative need—the practical expression of necessity—is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity, it follows that the proletariat can and must emancipate itself.[82]

Yet the proletariat too is in the grip of ideology. In a revealing remark in *The Class Struggles in France,* Marx compares the course of history to the Exodus from Egypt:

> The present generation is like the Jews whom Moses led through the wilderness. It not only has a new world to conquer, it must perish in

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> order to make room for the men who are able to cope with a new world.[83]

Thus we can see how that most fateful feature of Marxism as a political movement, the Bolshevik vanguard party, emerged on the foundations of Marxism. The role that the "scientific socialists" now took on was not just to observe the actions of the proletariat but to inform it. In Engels's words:

> To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act [of universal emancipation], to impart to the now oppressed class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.[84]

Although the goal of history is inclusive and universal, only a narrow group can see clearly how that goal is to be achieved. The party takes its legitimacy from the fact that it represents the true, long-term interests of the proletariat, but, just as with Moses and the children of Israel, their understandings may diverge. In that case, the party should not simply take direction from those it serves: it must use its superior knowledge to lead them.

Marx himself had put his finger on the problem with this kind of "pedagogic politics" in his third "Thesis on Feuerbach":

> The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.[85]

For the modern Left, the injustices of capitalism have not disappeared, of course. On the contrary, material inequality is compounded by other, cultural forms of oppression: racism, sexism, homophobia and so on. Furthermore, it is not simply the existence of injustice itself but the failure to recognize it—the lack of agreement about *what* injustice is and *where* it exists—that is the problem. Hence the continuing need for a pedagogic politics to educate the victims about the sources of their suffering and to "call out" the (most likely unaware) perpetrators and confront them with their responsibility. In this case, however, epistemic superiority does not come from possession of scientific knowledge by a vanguard party but is

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self-certifying in virtue of the authenticity of the experience of victimhood itself.

Lisbon and Auschwitz

At this point, we return to a question asked in Chapter 1. What lies behind Adorno's comparison of Auschwitz with the Lisbon Earthquake?

> The Lisbon Earthquake was enough to cure Voltaire of the Leibnizian theodicy, and that comprehensible catastrophe of "first nature" was insignificant compared with the second, social one, that escapes the human imagination in making a real Hell from human evil.[86]

In one way, the whole of this book has been an answer. If "Lisbon" is shorthand for the idea that it is no longer possible to believe that God has created the world to promote human happiness (or hold to the earlier belief that the world is as it is as a punishment for original sin and as a way of preparing it for its future redemption) what other possibility is there? Kant's vision of the world as a testing-ground, centred on free and responsible human agency, points to a last judgement and an afterlife of reward or punishment, but, at the same time, prepares the way for the modern re-emergence of the idea of "historical immortality" as an alternative form of reconciliation. So the existence of this "catastrophe" in "second nature" has importance because history and society have come to carry the significance that was once carried by religious belief. If that fails, then there will be an "extinction of value" comparable to the loss of religious faith.

But why Auschwitz? Why should it have had such morally destructive consequences? Adorno's own explanation is puzzling. What makes Auschwitz so catastrophic, he says, is that it eliminated not just individuals but individuality:

> That it was no longer the individual who died in the camps but the instance must affect the dying of those who escaped from the process. Genocide is absolute integration, which emerges wherever human beings are equalized.[87]

The idea that death has been industrialized to the point that it is no longer an *individual* who dies as an individual was by no means new. As Adorno must have known, Hegel had expressed what looks like the very

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same thought in the *Phenomenology* when he famously talked about death in the French Revolution being nothing more than the chopping-off of a cabbage-head or the taking of a drink of water.[88] Moreover, as we have seen above, Hegel praises the world-spirit for inventing the firearm in order to change the purely personal form of courage into a more impersonal and anonymous one. And, of course, there are those (like Derek Parfit, discussed earlier in this chapter) who would see the overcoming of the individuality of death as a liberation.

What follows are the outlines of a possible interpretation.

The Nazi genocide was a deliberate policy of extermination. It was not about colonial subjugation or enslavement (the policy that the Nazis applied to the Slavs). Nor was it a means to or a side-effect of the clearing of territory. The Nazis persisted with its implementation even at a point in the war when the resources it took were desperately needed for the war effort elsewhere. So why did they do it? All the signs point to an altogether horrifying conclusion: the Nazi genocide was done from conviction—an action of the very deepest evil performed in the belief that it was justified.

That belief can itself be explained in two stages. As nationalist forms of collective self-identification took hold in the nineteenth century, antisemitism, which had been a continuing ingredient in Western culture, took on a new and ferocious form. The Jews went from being (possibly Satanically driven) outsiders who threatened the religious community to cultural outsiders who threatened the national one.

Since this book has taken some of its most important ideas from Nietzsche, it seems only right to use an illustration from his writing, so here is a long paragraph from the essay "The Greek State", a handwritten essay presented to Cosima Wagner in 1872 as one of the *Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books:*

> In face of the political world of the Hellenes, I will not hide those phenomena of the present in which I believe I discern dangerous atrophies of the political sphere equally critical for art and society. If there should exist men, who as it were through birth are placed outside the national- and state-instincts, who consequently have to esteem the state only insofar as they conceive that it coincides with their own interest, then such men will necessarily imagine as the ultimate political aim the most undisturbed collateral existence of great po-

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litical communities possible, in which they might be permitted to pursue *their own* purposes without restriction. With this idea in their heads, they will promote that policy which will offer the greatest security to these purposes; whereas it is unthinkable, that they, against their intentions, guided perhaps by an unconscious instinct, should sacrifice themselves for the state-tendency, unthinkable because they lack that very instinct. All other citizens of the state are in the dark about what nature intends with her state-instinct within them, and they follow blindly; only those who stand outside this instinct know what *they* want from the state and what the state is to grant them. Therefore, it is almost unavoidable that such men should gain great influence in the state because they are allowed to consider it as a *means,* whereas all the others under the sway of those unconscious purposes of the state are themselves only means for the fulfillment of the state-purpose. In order now to attain, through the medium of the state the highest furtherance of their selfish aims, it is above all necessary, that the state be wholly freed from those awfully incalculable war-convulsions so that it may be used rationally; and thereby they strive with all their might for a condition of things in which war is an impossibility. For that purpose the thing to do is first to curtail and to enfeeble the political separatisms and factions and through the establishment of large *equipoised* state-bodies and the mutual safeguarding of them to make the successful result of an aggressive war and consequently war itself the greatest improbability; as on the other hand they will endeavor to wrest the question of war and peace from the decision of individual rulers, in order to be able rather to appeal to the egoism of the masses or their representatives; for which purpose they again need slowly to dissolve the monarchic instincts of the nations. This purpose they attain best through the most general promulgation of the liberal optimistic view of the world, which has its roots in the doctrines of the French Enlightenment and the Revolution, ie., in a wholly un-German, genuinely neo-Latin, shallow, and unmetaphysical philosophy. I cannot help seeing in the prevailing international movements of the present day, and the simultaneous promulgation of universal suffrage, the effects of the *fear of war* above everything else, yea I behold behind these movements, those truly international homeless money-hermits, as the really

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> alarmed, who, with their natural lack of the state-instinct, have learned to abuse politics as a means of the stock-exchange, and state and society as an apparatus for their own enrichment. Against the deviation of the state tendency into a money-tendency, to be feared from this side, the only remedy is war and once again war, in the emotions of which this at least becomes obvious, that the state is not founded upon the fear of the war-demon, as a protective institution for egoistic individuals, but in love to fatherland and prince, it produces an ethical impulse, indicative of a much higher destiny. If I therefore designate as a dangerous and characteristic sign of the present political situation the application of revolutionary thought in the service of a selfish stateless money-aristocracy, if at the same time I conceive of the enormous dissemination of liberal optimism as the result of modern financial affairs fallen into strange hands, and if I imagine all evils of social conditions together with the necessary decay of the arts to have either germinated from that root or grown together with it, one will have to pardon my occasionally chanting a Paean on war.[89]

The depiction of Jews as liberal, rootless internationalists who lack patriotism and use politics for financial gain—all the more wounding because Nietzsche does not name the Jews but only refers to them by demeaning antonomasias like "money-hermits" (*Geldeinsiedler*)—would run through German nationalism (and not just German nationalism) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But the Nazis added something further: an anti-semitism based on "scientific" racism. Mankind is divided fundamentally into races with different essential bodily and mental characteristics (and may, indeed, have originated separately). Although the different races can interbreed, when they do so the results are biologically and culturally catastrophic. And this is especially so when an inferior race immerses itself in the territory and culture of a superior one as a kind of parasite. Put these ideas together and an ideology emerges in which the race, beneath and beyond the "nation", becomes the target of supra-individual identification and the purification of the race the overriding goal—a goal more important than personal survival or even winning the war.

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What we have, then, is a conception of historical immortality that is thoroughly exclusionary. Just as, for Nietzsche, art has an objective value that only a few can perceive, so "race" is a value to which not everyone can aspire or on whom it makes claims. Those who stand opposed to it are not even sinful agents who have chosen evil or embodiments of "false consciousness", fit subjects for "re-education camps". They are no more than dirt to be cleaned or infection to be sterilized.

From the point of view of the victim (and Adorno explains very movingly how it is impossible for him not to take that point of view, while feeling guilt for his own survival) the existence of this way of seeing the world is morally catastrophic. Not only does it deny *his* right to existence, but its presence in the heart of his own nation is sufficient to bring down any universalistic, inclusive conception of human history.

Is Adorno right? This book has been written from the premise that each of us must find our way to that set of *doxai* that we can inhabit with some degree of comfort. Some will not withstand rational criticism and some—to me, at least, and, I hope, to my readers—are morally repulsive, but there is no single right answer. That is one lesson that I take from Adorno. That said, it seems, to me at least, that he is. To treat the Nazi period as if it were a monstrous and barbaric interruption within a continuing, progressive history is to miss its morally destructive significance.

The lesson—again, it is one I take from Adorno—is not to stop treating human beings as having equal, intrinsic value, even if we cannot find "some little nugget of humanity—some unitary soul within, some amulet or highly polished *je ne sais quoi* that would be the host of our dignity and the explanation of our worth".[90] Nor should we abandon the project of seeing mankind as a unity across time and space—to embrace, as Mill puts it, "love of that larger country, the world . . . both as a source of elevated emotion and as a principle of duty".[91] But looking at the degeneration of civilization into the horror that was Auschwitz is an awful reminder of the fragility of such commitments and a warning not to console ourselves by thinking that they rest on the firm foundation of objective moral truth allied to developing human reason. As Orwell put it, "'The truth is great and will prevail' is a prayer rather than an axiom."[92]

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Afterword

Though like Our Lord and Socrates
[Isaiah Berlin] does not publish much,
he thinks and says a great deal.

—MAURICE BOWRA TO NOEL ANNAN

This book started life as the Isaiah Berlin Lectures in the History of Ideas at Oxford. To be invited to return to the university where I had studied and taught for so long meant a very great deal to me, and I am immensely grateful to the Berlin Lectures Committee, to Corpus Christi College, my hosts, and to my engaged and patient audience for a memorable visit. Both elements of the title stirred memories for me.

Many years ago, when the prospects for academic employment in the United Kingdom were very bleak, I was interviewed on behalf of an American university by a well-known British philosopher. I did not get the job, but I did hear something of what he had to say about me. Though I had, he thought, a number of positive qualities, I was, in the end, he regretted to say, not really a philosopher but a historian of ideas. Returning to give the Berlin Lectures, I could not help thinking how far my career had been governed by the effort to try to be both (and haunted by the fear that I might, in fact, be neither).

I also thought about Isaiah Berlin.

I was an undergraduate at Oxford in the early 1970s. By then, Berlin had retired from the Chichele Chair to be President of Wolfson College,

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so he was no longer the unmissable lecturer that he had been for an older generation, and I knew him only through his reputation and his writing. Like all PPE students (my own included) I wrote the obligatory essay on "Two Concepts of Liberty", but I thought then that it could almost have been written to provoke argumentative undergraduates into objections. To mention only two of the most obvious: Does not the distinction between negative and positive liberty collapse as soon as we realize that we have to have a conception of what people might want to use freedom for ("freedom from" can only be measured with reference to "freedom to")? And is there not something deeply wrong with a theory that says that people are "free" to do something if they are not legally prohibited or physically prevented from doing it, yet lack the necessary means?

As I came to look at other ideas of Berlin's, I still remained unconvinced. The football-teaming of the history of ideas into binary oppositions is always questionable, but Berlin's division of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European thought into "Enlightenment" (characterized by "the proclamation of the autonomy of reason and the methods of the natural sciences based on observation as the sole reliable method of knowledge") and what he described as the "relativist" and "sceptical" "Counter-Enlightenment" is particularly unhelpful.[1] The German Idealists did not believe that the natural sciences were "the sole reliable method of knowledge", but nor were they sceptical or relativist. To set up the contrast as Berlin does completely misses what is perhaps their central idea: that "understanding" (*Verstand*)—the kind of observational judgement and deductive-nomological reasoning used in the sciences—is only a part of "Reason" (*Vernunft*). For Kant, it is *Vernunft,* not *Verstand,* that underlies morality and makes possible philosophical knowledge, while Hegel's idea that Reason unfolds itself in history so that there is both diversity and unity (what I have called—yet again, I apologize for the label—semi-particularism) is unthinkable without it.

Then there was politics. Like many young people at that time, I hoped for a New Left that would be equally opposed to the suppression of popular government in Prague and Saigon, and I saw the anti-communists of the 1950s as bearing a large share of the responsibility for the latter. I also disagreed with (though felt more sympathy for) Berlin's Zionism. At the same time, however, I knew that Berlin had been immensely important to many of my own teachers, so I went my own way and listened appreciatively to stories of Berlin's personal kindness and humour.

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It was twenty years later that I met him. I had reviewed his book on Hamann for the *TLS* (a transcription of some lectures that he had given many years earlier) and there followed an invitation for tea at Headington House. I accepted with alacrity (if my father had still been alive, he would have counted having a son who had had tea with Sir Isaiah as one of his proudest achievements). I had some idea of what to expect and I was not disappointed. Berlin certainly gave those he talked to his attention, and he could not have been more charming, but it was also true that, like a great improvisational comedian, he used his conversation-partner as a cue, so much of what he had to say that afternoon corresponded very closely to Michael Ignatieff's wonderful television interviews, which must have been recorded at around the same time.

I think that I played my part. I remember a slight hiccup when I unexpectedly answered "yes" to his question "You know, of course, that Kojève was called 'Kozhevnikov'?", but the flow soon resumed. In my review, I had ventured a rather cautious joke at Berlin's expense (perhaps Berlin wasn't the most obvious person to object to Hamann's prose style for being too rich) and he let me know that he had noticed it but was prepared to forgive my cheekiness. I had also grouped together some famous thinkers—Kant, Hamann, Herder, Hannah Arendt . . . and Berlin himself—as coming from the "Eastern Baltic". "Königsberg!" he said sharply, "That's not the Eastern Baltic!", for all the world like a Geordie telling someone from Leeds that they aren't a "real northerner".

But what stays with me most is the following. At some point, I must have mentioned my interest in Adorno. That provoked him. "But he wasn't serious! Not serious!", he objected. "He was a friend of mine, but he wasn't serious!" He kept this up for a couple of minutes, but I stuck to my guns until he switched tack: "Well then, you must write about him. Yes, write about him!"

I had, in fact, already done so. *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism,* my first book, started out as a doctoral dissertation, supervised by Charles Taylor, on Adorno's *Negative Dialektik.* What blew it off course was two things. The hope had been to find in Adorno a defensible alternative conception of "dialectical" philosophy to the speculative idealism of Hegel. The more I thought about it and the more closely I read Adorno and Hegel, the less convinced I became that such a thing was possible. Moreover, as I tried to explain my doubts and difficulties to my distinguished

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supervisor, I became aware that our conversations were being made more complicated by the fact that I clearly had a rather different understanding of Hegel from his. The upshot was something that happens to many theses: what had been meant to be a first chapter on Hegel as the background to Adorno became the main body of the thesis, and what should have been the thesis itself a final chapter on Adorno that most readers ignored.

At the time of my tea with Berlin, I was writing about Adorno again, this time from the perspective of social theory. *On Voluntary Servitude,* which was published in 1996, tries to analyse the theory of ideology historically, by explaining it as the outcome of the confluence of two "background beliefs" (*doxai,* as I would now call them): the idea that societies are pervaded by and kept together by "false consciousness" and the idea that society is a system with the power to sustain and reproduce itself beyond the intentions and awareness of individuals. I argued that Adorno, who was thoroughly committed to both beliefs, drew on the transposition to society of an ontology that, while it was, at least, consistent when taken as a part of Hegel's speculative idealism, was incompatible with a social theory that aspired to be "materialist" or "scientific". Adorno thought that Hegel's account of society was true (society was indeed a supra-individual, self-reproducing agent) but false (so far from being an ideal, it was just this that human beings needed to escape from).

I took (and still take) the view that, as an interpretation of Marx, this is correct (see Chapter 9) and that any reconstruction of Marxism (like that of Berlin's student and my own great friend Jerry Cohen) that dismisses such "Hegelian" elements will fail. On the other hand, the "analytical Marxists" are right too and a theory that assumes this kind of "negative-Hegelian" ontology of society cannot be defended as social science. I have been told that Berlin had a copy of my book and was reading it at the time of his death.

Those two interventions (and some others over the years as well) were fundamentally critical of Adorno—justifiably so, I still believe—but they do not explain what had first attracted me to him and keeps me coming back. In that connection, a conversation with my student, the Berlin scholar, Joshua Cherniss, comes to mind. "You know, Michael," he said to me one day, "I think that what you get from Adorno is the same thing that I get from Berlin."

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One thing that I went looking for in Adorno was a conception of philosophy that understood it as historical yet would not be either reductive (philosophy is just an epiphenomenon of processes taking place elsewhere) or teleological (the history of philosophy is the record of reason realizing itself through time). I was drawn too by the depth of Adorno's engagement with both Kant and Hegel—and his willingness to criticize both. His student Martin Puder recalls that, in the early 1960s, Adorno's doctoral colloquium operated on the following system: "In the summer to read Kant and say: Hegel is right, but, in the winter, to read Hegel and say: Kant is right."[2] The reader will, I am sure, recognize these motifs in this book. But there is something else as well that was much less clear to me at the time I met Berlin.

At the centre of Berlin's thought was the idea of "pluralism", the "conflict of values" to which he reverted so often. Yet even his greatest admirers have to admit that it is one that is hard to articulate in any interesting and defensible form. As Alan Ryan writes in his memoir of Berlin:

> How best to characterize Berlin's own understanding of pluralism is not easy to know. It is after all a fairly banal thought that in the world as we have it not everything that we want can be had simultaneously, and Berlin was certain that pluralism was not banal.[3]

Yes, it is true that, even when we choose between apples and oranges, there is no guarantee that there is some underlying common factor ("fruitiness"?) to make our choice rational, so swapping, say, one orange for four apples is not like trading a ten-dollar bill for four five-dollar bills: even if the trade is a good one, something is lost. But who seriously thought otherwise? Even the economists, with their strong affinity to utilitarianism, are untroubled. What matters, they will tell you, is not some shared factor in the goods themselves but the way in which people choose between them: their preference function.

Similarly, Berlin's supposedly "deep truth that good lives were many not one",[4] while it may indeed separate us from Plato and, perhaps, Bentham, was hardly an original idea: John Stuart Mill (and, before him, Wilhelm von Humboldt and Herder) had explored it. Even Hegel would not have denied it. *Geist* is, after all, self-differentiating, and the realized state of the *Philosophy of Right* is pluralistic, with a place—a subordinate place, but a place nonetheless—for the *Willkür* of private life. I have come to believe,

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however, that there is an important thought behind Berlin's pluralism, although Berlin himself never, to my knowledge, formulated it in a convincing way.

My guess is that the trouble—the reason why Berlin's "pluralism" seems to slip towards banality—lies in the way that the phrase "the conflict of values" so readily slides into talk about the "plurality of goods".[5] As Ryan rightly says, Berlin is not a relativist or sceptic about those goods. Nor is he a voluntarist: goods are chosen because they are valuable, not valuable because they are chosen. Hence the picture that emerges (whether Berlin intended it or not) is a kind of pluralistic consequentialism. You stand in front of a variety of paths, each of which leads to greater or lesser amounts of a kind of intrinsically valuable good. It is not true that you can only choose one path, but how far you go down each one depends on and determines how far you go down the other ones. At that point, ethics becomes like decision theory: a matter of rational choice among alternative "baskets" of goods. So long as one does not violate the canons of rationality, there is no reason for reproach in choosing one combination or another.

But there is another kind of pluralism. It is one thing to say that there are conflicting goods and that to realize one more fully you need to give up, to some extent at least, the pursuit of another. It is much more troubling to think that you might have conflicting *obligations.* For Kant, conflicts of obligation are impossible because of the nature of practical reason: "duty and obligation are concepts that express the objective practical *necessity* of certain actions and two rules opposed to each other cannot be necessary at the same time."[6] More generally, the possibility that morality could make claims on us that we cannot meet is excluded by Kant's Pelagian-Socratic religious perspective. If God is going to hold us responsible and punish us for violations of duty, then divine justice requires that duty be something we could fulfil: "ought" implies "can".

Bernard Williams, Berlin's friend and protégé, rejected almost everything about Kant's moral theory, the Kantian notion of moral obligation included, yet, oddly enough, he retains the Kantian perspective on deliberation by a rational agent in search of "practical necessity".[7] "Ethics", as Williams now calls it, is, he says, a matter of deciding on the "deliberative priority" of different kinds of "ethical consideration", each of which has "importance".[8] Thus while, for Kant, the idea that morality may make

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claims on us that are both inescapable and impossible to fulfil is excluded because that would be inconsistent with "practical reason", for Williams it is also excluded, but in his case because it rests on a mistakenly external and imperatival view about the nature of ethics.[9]

For better or worse, Adorno did assert this more radical idea, however. As he says in his *Minima Moralia,* "There is no correct life in the false one" ("*Es gibt kein richtiges Leben im falschen*").[10] Whatever choices we make will involve failure to meet claims that are legitimately laid on us, and this kind of "moral loss" is more serious than the thought that we cannot pursue every worthwhile end or that some considerations will have greater "deliberative priority" than others. For Adorno, our hands are always dirty—and not just when we engage in violent political action. In a world of deep and pervasive injustice, the attempt to withdraw from politics is culpable too. In Adorno's case, the situation is made even more complicated by his negative-Hegelian conviction that we live in Pandaemonium: a world not just of injustice but of deception, so that even understanding of the world's wrongness is elusive.

Jerry Cohen described his project of reconstructing Marx without Hegel as "non-bullshit Marxism". Perhaps I might describe mine as "non-bullshit Adorno". Whether that is possible, what it might look like, and whether I would want to defend it when it finally emerged, I am, to be honest, still unsure. Nor do I know whether Berlin would have found it at all congenial to have his "pluralism" interpreted in this more "Adornian" vein. But I do hope that he would have agreed that it is, at least, "serious".

Beyond that, there is another way in which I am indebted to Berlin: I am, intellectually speaking, his grandchild. This is so in a narrow sense if we allow the German term "*Doktorvater*". Berlin supervised Charles Taylor and Chuck supervised me. But it is true more broadly. Almost all of my most important teachers, mentors and interlocutors had been Berlin's students or his friends: Chuck apart, I should mention Alan Montefiore, Alan Ryan, Larry Siedentop, Jerry Cohen and Rüdiger Bubner. But that does not mean that I regard myself as a part of a "*Berliner Schule*"—even as a third-generation member. On the contrary, one of the things that is most remarkable and admirable about Berlin was his acceptance of disagreement.

Marx once remarked that no one had ever written about money in general with such a lack of it in particular, and something like that is all too often true of philosophy. Philosophers are in favour of dialogue, debate,

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argument and disagreement in general but are not always very good at practising them. There are some understandable reasons. Not only is philosophy very difficult, it is also—at least, for the philosophically inclined—very important: important, if you follow the argument of this book, in exactly the same way as religion is important. So it is not surprising that philosophers hang on fiercely to what we think of as our insights and are inclined to dismiss criticism as based on prejudice and misunderstanding (which, of course, since it comes from other philosophers with their own deep commitments to hang on to, it very frequently is). In short, we are rather better at disagreement in theory than in practice.

To judge by his friends and students, Berlin seems to have been an exception to this rule of thumb. One need only look at how very diverse the names just mentioned are to see that he imposed no orthodoxy. Indeed, to my mind, the most powerful of all of the criticisms of "Two Concepts of Liberty"—Charles Taylor's "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?"—was published in a *festschrift* for Berlin.[11] So my own disagreements with Chuck—which run through the whole of this book, at least implicitly—are part of the family tradition. It would be presumptuous to claim that virtue for myself, but I certainly recognize and admire it.

It is in that spirit that I hope that Berlin would have welcomed the dedication of this book to his intellectual great-grandchildren, whom he will never know, and that they will feel as free to disagree with their teacher as Berlin's pupils did with him.

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Acknowledgements

As Doctor Johnson remarked, "every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot, be recounted . . . Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure; all take their turns of retardation." This one, I am afraid, is no exception.

The pleasure of being the guest of no fewer than three Oxford colleges over the course of the last decade was not one of the causes of retardation, I hope. I am extremely grateful to Corpus Christi College, All Souls College and Wadham College for their hospitality during periods of sabbatical leave.

My original audience asked many penetrating and critical questions. I remember Ralph Walker asking in one of the question sessions after a lecture whether I thought that, alongside the Euthyphro dilemma as I had outlined it for morality, there was a similar dilemma for epistemology and metaphysics. I was not very sure at that time, but I have now come to think that, at least as far as Kant is concerned, that is a profoundly illuminating suggestion. While, as the reader will know by now, I am unpersuaded that Kant was a "constructivist" in moral theory, the case for him

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being a constructivist about human knowledge seems to me much stronger. In another book, I might have pursued the idea.

As it has developed, parts of this book have been presented to many audiences and material from it has appeared in a number of essays and articles.[1] I must single out for particular thanks the participants in a workshop held under the auspices of the Harvard European Philosophy Workshop as well as a small but intense seminar whose participants, Nate Hiatt, Selorm Ohene, Jacob Roundtree, and Richard Wang, were as constructively critical as any author could have wished. For help in tracking down particular texts and quotations I am especially grateful to Daniel Breazeale, Andrew Chitty, Tae-Yeoun Keum and Terry Pinkard. Emma Ebowe and Henry Scott were extremely engaged and helpful research assistants.

I list below what I fear is only a subset of those from whose comments and advice I have benefited: Jacob Abolafia, David Armitage, Kenneth Baynes, Eric Beerbohm, Teresa Bejan, Colin Bird, Timothy Brownlee, Amy Chandran, Joshua Cherniss, Dina Emundts, Cecile Fabre, Rainer Forst, Eckart Förster, Paul Franks, Michael Frazer, Aaron Garrett, Samuel Goldman, Peter Gordon, Gabe Gottlieb, Sarah Gustafson, Dimitri Halikias, Nicholas Hayes, Jacob Hoerger, Martin Jay, Ignat Kalinov, Sean Kelly, Andrew March, Samantha Matherne, Jake McNulty, Aurore Millet, Adrian Moore, Dick Moran, Eric Nelson, Brian O'Connor, Till van Rahden, Nancy Rosenblum, Jordan Rudinsky, Fred Rush, Tim Scanlon, Ludek Sekyra, Quentin Skinner, Lucas Stanczyk, John Tasioulas, Dennis Thompson, Laura Valentini, Dana Villa, Leif Wenar, Jonathan Wolff, Bernardo Zacka. They know how much they have contributed and I hope to have the chance to thank them again in person.

I have had the support of two great editors, the legendary Ian Malcolm of Harvard University Press, and my own adored friend, Maren Meinhardt, whose love and kindness have gone far, far beyond what can be recounted here.

One cause of delay (but, I hope, also of improvement) that *can* be recounted was the reports of three learned and engaged readers for Harvard University Press. They had criticisms to make of an earlier version of the book to which I have done my best to respond. As well as pointing to things I had missed and challenging me on many particular issues, they found the more general methodological discussion with which the book opened distracting and the book as a whole imperfectly integrated. I took the de-

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cision to follow their advice and performed the (to me) very painful surgical operation of excising what were then the first two chapters. It is not for me to say how well the patient has recovered, although it is striking that the book is now longer than it was before those chapters were removed.

Later reports make it clear that I have not persuaded them to my point of view, however. Indeed, one reviewer predicted that it is a book that will "irritate" a fair number of its readers. If that is because I have been obtuse, obscure or discourteous, then I apologize most sincerely. If, however, the reader's irritation comes from being provoked into thinking again about matters that have been taken for granted, then, even if I have not succeeded in convincing you (and remembering that Socrates, no less, described himself as a "gadfly") I cannot say that I am sorry.

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Notes

Chapter 1. Introduction

Epigraph: Pascal, *Pensées* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), p. 19.

1. Jonathan Wolff, "Academic Writing", *The Guardian,* 4 September 2007.

2. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), part 4, sect. 7.

3. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*), *Werke* 3, p. 11. [Denn wie und was von Philosophie in einer Vorrede zu sagen schicklich wäre—etwa eine historische Angabe der Tendenz und des Standpunkts, des allgemeinen Inhalts und der Resultate, eine Verbindung von hin und her sprechenden Behauptungen und Versicherungen über das Wahre—kann nicht für die Art und Weise gelten, in der die philosophische Wahrheit darzustellen sei.]

4. Recounted in Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Relationship of Philosophy to Its Past", in R. Rorty, J. Schneewind and Q. Skinner (eds.), *Philosophy in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 39–40.

5. To articulate and justify such a conception of philosophy—and, from the other side, to defend it against the charge that the kind of "history" it offers is insufficiently historical—is a large and important task. It is one to which I hope to turn in another book.

6. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage, 1974), sect. 108.

7. For one example among many see Inglehart and Norris, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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8. A clear (and combative) recent presentation of this position can be found in Steven Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress* (London: Penguin, 2018).

9. A classic articulation of this position is to be found in Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) and again in his *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

10. Friedrich Schiller, "Die Götter Griechenlands", in C. M. Wieland (ed.), *Der Deutsche Merkur* (1788); Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf" (München und Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1919); Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach" (1867).

11. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2015), p. 43. [Alle prägnanten Begriffe der modernen Staatslehre sind säkularisierte theologische Begriffe.]

12. Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1932).

13. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (*Menschliches Allzumenschliches*), Vol. 2 (Munich: DTV, 1988), 1:23. [Ein Idealist ist unverbesserlich: wirft man ihn aus seinem Himmel, so macht er sich aus der Hölle ein Ideal zurecht.]

14. The story is, of course, more complicated than this. See Michael Rosen, *Dignity: Its History and Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

15. For discussion of these issues see R. Cruft, S. M. Liao and M. Renzo (eds.), *Philosophical Foundations of Human Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

16. See, for example, Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

17. Roger Scruton, "Memo to Hawking: There Is Still Room for God", *Wall Street Journal,* 24 September 2010.

18. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Bxxxi, my emphasis.

19. Samuel Beckett, "ainsi a-t-on beau", in *Collected Poems in English and French* (New York: Grove Press, 1977), p. 46.

20. Diderot to Falconet, 15 February 1766, in *Le Pour et le Contre* (Paris: *Éditeurs Français Réunis,* 1958), p. 78. [Ô postérité sainte et sacrée! soutien du malheureux qu'on opprime, toi qui es juste, toi qu'on ne corrompt point, qui venges l'homme de bien, qui démasques l'hypocrite, qui traînes le tyran; idée sûre, idée consolante, ne m'abandonne jamais. La postérité pour le philosophe, c'est l'autre monde de l'homme religieux.]

21. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Anima Poetae: From the Unpublished Note-books of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (London: William Heinemann, 1845), p. 127.

22. Hegel to Schelling, end of January 1795, in *Briefe von und an Hegel* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952).

23. Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (*Du Contrat Social*) (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), p. 56. [car l'impulsion du seul appétit est esclavage, et l'obéissance à la loi qu'on s'est prescrite est liberté.]

24. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences II, Werke* 9, para. 248. [so ist die Natur nicht frei, sondern nur notwendig und zufällig. Denn Notwendigkeit ist Untrennbarkeit von Unterschiedenen, die noch gleichgültig erscheinen; daß aber die Abstraktion des Außersichseins auch zu ihrem Rechte kommt, ist die Zufälligkeit, die äußerliche Notwendigkeit, nicht die innere Notwendigkeit des Begriffs.]

25. Baruch Spinoza, Letter to Schuller, October 1674, in *The Correspondence of Spinoza* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), pp. 274–75.

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26. Hegel, *Jenaer Schriften, Werke* 2, p. 557.

27. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion I, Werke* 16, pp. 150–51. [daß es der Philosophie um nichts weniger zu tun ist, als die Religion umzustoßen und nun etwa zu behaupten, daß der Inhalt der Religion nicht für sich selbst Wahrheit sein könne; vielmehr ist die Religion eben der wahrhafte Inhalt, nur in Form der Vorstellung, und die Philosophie soll nicht erst die substantielle Wahrheit geben, noch hat die Menschheit erst auf die Philosophie zu warten gehabt, um das Bewußtsein der Wahrheit zu empfangen.]

28. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion I, Werke* 16, p. 192. [So ist Gott diese Bewegung in sich selbst, und nur dadurch allein lebendiger Gott. Aber dies Bestehen der Endlichkeit muß nicht festgehalten, sondern aufgehoben werden: Gott ist die Bewegung zum Endlichen und dadurch als Aufhebung desselben zu sich selbst. Im Ich, als dem sich als endlich aufhebenden, kehrt Gott zu sich zurück und ist nur Gott als diese Rückkehr. Ohne Welt ist Gott nicht Gott.]

29. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 26–27. [Aber ich habe mit der Erwähnung der Erkenntnis des Plans der göttlichen Vorsehung überhaupt an eine in unsern Zeiten an Wichtigkeit obenanstehende Frage erinnert, an die nämlich, über die Möglichkeit Gott zu erkennen, oder vielmehr, indem es aufgehört hat eine Frage zu sein, an die zum Vorurteil gewordene Lehre, daß es unmöglich sei, Gott zu erkennen. Dem geradezu entgegengesetzt, was in der Heiligen Schrift als höchste Pflicht geboten wird, nicht bloß Gott zu lieben, sondern auch zu erkennen, herrscht jetzt das Geleugne dessen vor, was ebendaselbst gesagt ist, daß der Geist es sei, der in die Wahrheit einführe, daß er alle Dinge erkenne, selbst die Tiefen der Gottheit durchdringe.]

30. Heinrich Heine, *Geständnisse,* in *Vermischte Schriften* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1854), pp. 61–62.

31. F. Schiller, "Resignation: Eine Phantasie", *Thalia* (1786).

32. J. D. Falk, *Goethe aus näherm persönlichen Umgange dargestellt* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1856).

33. Falk, *Goethe aus näherm persönlichen Umgange dargestellt,* p. 69.

34. Plato, *Republic,* 394d. See also T. Kelly, "Following the Argument Where It Leads", *Philosophical Studies* 154, no. 1 (2011), 105–24.

35. Hilary Putnam, "Realism without Absolutes", *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 1, no. 2 (2008), 180.

36. There is an extensive discussion of this topic by Michael Della Rocca in "The Taming of Philosophy", in M. Lærke, J. E. H. Smith and E. Schliesser (eds.), *Philosophy and Its History: Aims and Methods in the Study of Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Della Rocca opposes it as excessively psychologistic. As he notes, reflective equilibrium as a goal for metaphysics is endorsed explicitly by the enormously influential David Lewis ("The Taming of Philosophy", p. 183).

37. William James, "The Will to Believe", in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Dover, 1956).

38. James, "The Will to Believe", p. 11.

39. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

40. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp,* p. 183.

41. G. A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 11.

42. Michael Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

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43. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), p. 354.

44. "The difference between *Vorstellung* and Thoughts has a more particular importance because it can be said in general that philosophy does nothing else except to transform *Vorstellungen* into Thoughts." Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences I, Werke* 8, para. 20. [Der Unterschied von Vorstellung und von Gedanken hat die nähere Wichtigkeit, weil überhaupt gesagt werden kann, daß die Philosophie nichts anderes tue, als die Vorstellungen in Gedanken zu verwandeln.]

Chapter 2. An Idealist Theory of History

Epigraph: Reportedly said to Pierre Laval.

1. Karl Marx, *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* (*Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*), in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 1 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), pp. 26–27.

2. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (*Die deutsche Ideologie*), in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 3 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 569.

3. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Werke,* Vol. 3, p. 26. [Wenn in der ganzen Ideologie die Menschen und ihre Verhältnisse wie in einer Camera obscura auf den Kopf gestellt erscheinen, so geht dies Phänomen ebensosehr aus ihrem historischen Lebensprozeß hervor, wie die Umdrehung der Gegenstände auf der Netzhaut aus ihrem unmittelbar physischen.

Ganz im Gegensatz zur deutschen Philosophie, welche vom Himmel auf die Erde herabsteigt, wird hier von der Erde zum Himmel gestiegen. D.h., es wird nicht ausgegangen von dem, was die Menschen sagen, sich einbilden, sich vorstellen, auch nicht von den gesagten, gedachten, eingebildeten, vorgestellten Menschen, um davon aus bei den leibhaftigen Menschen anzukommen; es wird von den wirklich tätigen Menschen ausgegangen und aus ihrem wirklichen Lebensprozeß auch die Entwicklung der ideologischen Reflexe und Echos dieses Lebensprozesses dargestellt. Auch die Nebelbildungen im Gehirn der Menschen sind notwendige Sublimate ihres materiellen, empirisch konstatierbaren und an materielle Voraussetzungen geknüpften Lebensprozesses.]

4. They are explored in detail in my *On Voluntary Servitude: False Consciousness and the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity Press and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

5. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Werke,* Vol. 3, p. 38. [erklärt nicht die Praxis aus der Idee, erklärt die Ideenformationen aus der materiellen Praxis]

6. Henry Sidgwick, *Lectures on the Ethics of T. H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau* (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 103. For a very interesting historical exploration of self-interest theories and the challenges to them see Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

7. Amartya Sen, "Rational Fools", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 6, no. 4 (Summer 1977), 317–44.

8. See Jane Mansbridge (ed.), *Beyond Self-Interest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), and for a lucid account of the limitations of the explanations that result, written by a political economist "from the inside", see Dani Rodrik, "When Ideas Trump Interests", *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 189–208.

9. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Werke,* Vol. 3, p. 46. [die Klasse, welche die herrschende *materielle* Macht der Gesellschaft ist, ist zugleich ihre herrschende *geis-*

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tige Macht. Die Klasse, die die Mittel zur materiellen Produktion zu ihrer Verfügung hat, disponiert damit zugleich über die Mittel zur geistigen Produktion, so daß ihr damit zugleich im Durchschnitt die Gedanken derer, denen die Mittel zur geistigen Produktion abgehen, unterworfen sind.]

10. Against this, see the classic critique by Turner, Abercrombie and Hill, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980) and James C. Scott's celebrated *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

11. Quentin Skinner, "Moral Principles and Social Change", in *Visions of Politics,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 149.

12. Skinner, "Moral Principles and Social Change", p. 148.

13. Skinner, "Moral Principles and Social Change", p. 147.

14. Skinner, "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action", in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 112.

15. Skinner, "Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action", p. 112.

16. Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and Interpretation", in *Visions of Politics,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 102.

17. Skinner, "Retrospect: Studying Rhetoric and Conceptual Change", in *Visions of Politics,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 177.

18. M. Foucault, "Two Lectures", in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), pp. 93–94.

19. Many of the difficulties are raised in Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude.*

20. The version of Marx's theory sketched here is authoritatively analysed in G. A. Cohen's *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). Cohen's account is based on Marx's outline statement in the 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.*

21. Paul Redding, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/hegel/. Retrieved 25. vi.2021.

22. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit, Werke* 3, p. 28. [Daß das Wahre nur als System wirklich, oder daß die Substanz wesentlich Subjekt ist, ist in der Vorstellung ausgedrückt, welche das Absolute als *Geist* ausspricht—der erhabenste Begriff, und der der neuern Zeit und ihrer Religion angehört. Das Geistige allein ist das *Wirkliche.*]

23. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 386. [Gott wird nur so als Geist erkannt, indem er als der Dreeinige gewusst wird.]

24. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy I, Werke* 18, pp. 41–42. [Alles, was im Himmel und auf Erden geschieht—ewig geschieht—das Leben Gottes und alles, was zeitlich getan wird, strebt nur danach hin, daß der Geist sich erkenne, sich selber gegenständlich mache, sich finde, für sich selber werde, sich mit sich zusammenschliesst.].

25. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 96–97. "World-history, we see, is just the unfolding [*Auslegung*] of *Geist* in time, as nature is of the Idea in space." [Die Weltgeschichte, wissen wir, ist also überhaupt die Auslegung des Geistes in der *Zeit,* wie die Idee als Natur sich im Raume auslegt.]

26. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 74. [Denn die Weltgeschichte ist die Darstellung des göttlichen, absoluten Prozesses des Geistes in seinen höchsten Gestalten, dieses Stufenganges, wodurch er seine Wahrheit, das Selbstbewußtsein über sich erlangt.]

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27. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences II, Werke* 9, para. 247. [die Natur ist der Sohn Gottes, aber nicht als der Sohn, sondern als das Verharren im Anderssein,—die göttliche Idee als außerhalb der Liebe für einen Augenblick festgehalten. Die Natur ist der sich entfremdete Geist, der darin nur *ausgelassen* ist, ein bacchantischer Gott, der sich selbst nur zügelt und fasst; in der Natur verbirgt sich die Einheit des Begriffs. . . . von der Idee entfremdet, ist die Natur nur der Leichnam des Verstandes.]

28. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 96–97. [Die Weltgeschichte, wissen wir, ist also überhaupt die Auslegung des Geistes in der Zeit, wie die Idee als Natur sich im Raume auslegt.]

29. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 86–87. [Hier haben wir nur dieses aufzunehmen, daß jede Stufe als verschieden von der andern ihr bestimmtes eigentümliches Prinzip hat. Solches Prinzip ist in der Geschichte Bestimmtheit des Geistes,—ein besonderer Volksgeist. In dieser drückt er als konkret alle Seiten seines Bewußtseins und Wollens, seiner ganzen Wirklichkeit aus; sie ist das gemeinschaftliche Gepräge seiner Religion, seiner politischen Verfassung, seiner Sittlichkeit, seines Rechtssystems, seiner Sitten, auch seiner Wissenschaft, Kunst und technischen Geschicklichkeit. Diese speziellen Eigentümlichkeiten sind aus jener allgemeinen Eigentümlichkeit, dem besonderen Prinzipe eines Volkes zu verstehen, sowie umgekehrt aus dem in der Geschichte vorliegenden faktischen Detail jenes Allgemeine der Besonderheit herauszufinden ist. Daß eine bestimmte Besonderheit in der Tat das eigentümliche Prinzip eines Volkes ausmacht, dies ist die Seite, welche empirisch aufgenommen und auf geschichtliche Weise erwiesen werden muß.]

30. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 104. [Das Leben eines Volkes bringt eine Frucht zur Reife; denn seine Tätigkeit geht dahin, sein Prinzip zu vollführen. Diese Frucht fällt aber nicht in den Schoß des Volks zurück, das sie ausgeboren und gezeitigt hat; im Gegenteil sie wird ihm ein bittrer Trank. Lassen kann es nicht von ihm, denn es hat den unendlichen Durst nach demselben, aber das Kosten des Tranks ist seine Vernichtung, doch zugleich das Aufgehen eines neuen Prinzips.]

31. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 100. [Diese Gewohnheit (die Uhr ist aufgezogen und geht von selbst fort) ist, was den natürlichen Tod herbeiführt.]

32. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 64–65. [die Verfassung eines Volkes mit seiner Religion, mit seiner Kunst und Philosophie oder wenigstens mit seinen Vorstellungen und Gedanken, seiner Bildung überhaupt (um die weiteren äußerlichen Mächte, sowie das Klima, die Nachbarn, die Weltstellung nicht weiter zu erwähnen) eine Substanz, einen Geist ausmache.]

33. An account of the history and meaning of "culture" would be the topic of another book—indeed, of course, it has already been the subject of many (notably Kroeber and Kluckhohn's *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University* (1952)). The task is made more complicated because this to-us-now-familiar general sense of the term "culture" only came on the scene late, particularly in English. It is revealing that such classics as Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860) and Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1930) were each translated with the word "civilization", not "culture", in their titles.

34. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 65. [Die erste Produktion eines Staates ist herrisch und instinktartig. Aber auch Gehorsam und Gewalt, Furcht

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gegen einen Herrscher ist schon ein Zusammenhang des Willens. Schon in rohen Staaten findet dies statt, daß der besondere Wille der Individuen nicht gilt, daß auf die Partikularität Verzicht getan wird, daß der allgemeine Wille das Wesentliche ist.]

35. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences II, Werke* 9, para. 246, *Zusatz.* [alle Bildung reduziert sich auf den Unterschied der Kategorien. Alle Revolutionen, in den Wissenschaften nicht weniger als in der Weltgeschichte, kommen nur daher, daß der Geist jetzt zum Verstehen und Vernehmen seiner, um sich zu besitzen, seine Kategorien geändert hat, sich wahrhafter, tiefer, in sich inniger und einiger mit sich erfassend.]

36. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy I, Werke* 18, p. 73. [Sie ist die höchste Blüte,—sie, der Begriff er ganzen Gestalt des Geistes, das Bewusstsein und das geistige Wesen des ganzen Zustandes, der Geist der Zeit, als sich denkender Geist vorhanden.]

37. This is the guiding thread of E. H. Gombrich's *In Search of Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

38. Heine, "Lutezia II: Berichte über Politik, Kunst und Volksleben LX", in *Sämtliche Werke,* Vol. 14 (Leipzig and Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1898), part 1, p. 94. [Mein großer Lehrer, der selige Hegel, sagte mir einst: wenn man die Träume aufgeschrieben hätte, welche die Menschen während einer bestimmten Periode geträumt haben, so würde einem aus der Lektüre dieser gesammelten Träume ein ganz richtiges Bild vom Geiste jener Periode aufsteigen.]

39. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals,* in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), sect. 28.

40. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), sect. 3.

41. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy,* sect. 15.

42. Josef Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Papal Address at the University of Regensburg, "Three Stages in the Program of De-Hellenization", 12 September 2006, https://zenit.org/articles/papal-address-at-university-of-regensburg/.

43. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy,* sect. 18.

44. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 132–33.

45. Plato, *Euthyphro,* 10a.

46. Frederick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 30.

47. Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism,* p. 31.

48. Kant's close connections with the tradition of Natural Law are traced by J. B. Schneewind in "Kant and Natural Law Ethics", *Ethics* 104, no. 1 (Oct. 1993), 53–74.

49. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy,* in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill,* Vol. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 102–103. The point about Mill's underlying character is well made in the title of Richard Reeves's biography *John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand* (New York: Atlantic Books, 1990).

50. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 28.

51. Rousseau, *Émile,* in *Œuvres complètes de J.-J. Rousseau,* Vol. 2 (Paris: A. Houssiaux, 1852–1853), Book IV, pp. 577–78. [C'est l'abus de nos facultés qui nous rend malheureux et méchants. Nos chagrins, nos soucis, nos peines, nous viennent de nous. Le mal moral est incontestablement notre ouvrage, et le mal physique ne serait rien sans nos vices, qui nous l'ont rendu sensible. N'est-ce pas pour nous conserver que la nature nous fait sentir nos besoins? La douleur du corps n'est-elle pas un signe que la machine se dérange, et un avertissement d'y pourvoir? La mort . . . Les méchants n'empoisonnent-ils

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pas leur vie et la nôtre? Qui est-ce qui voudrait toujours vivre? La mort est le remède aux maux que vous vous faites; la nature a voulu que vous ne souffrissiez pas toujours. Combien l'homme vivant dans la simplicité primitive est sujet à peu de maux! Il vit presque sans maladies ainsi que sans passions, et ne prévoit ni ne sent la mort; quand il la sent, ses misères la lui rendent désirable: dès lors elle n'est plus un mal pour lui. Si nous nous contentions d'être ce que nous sommes, nous n'aurions point à déplorer notre sort; mais pour chercher un bien-être imaginaire, nous nous donnons mille maux réels. Qui ne sait pas supporter un peu de souffrance doit s'attendre à beaucoup souffrir. Quand on a gâté sa constitution par une vie déréglée, on la veut rétablir par des remèdes; au mal qu'on sent on ajoute celui qu'on craint; la prévoyance de la mort la rend horrible et l'accélère; plus on la veut fuir, plus on la sent; et l'on meurt de frayeur durant toute sa vie, en murmurant contre la nature des maux qu'on s'est faits en l'offensant.

Homme, ne cherche plus l'auteur du mal; cet auteur, c'est toi-même. Il n'existe point d'autre mal que celui que tu fais ou que tu souffres, et l'un et l'autre te vient de toi. Le mal général ne peut être que dans le désordre, et je vois dans le système du monde un ordre qui ne se dément point. Le mal particulier n'est que dans le sentiment de l'être qui souffre; et ce sentiment, l'homme ne l'a pas reçu de la nature, il se l'est donné. La douleur a peu de prise sur quiconque, ayant peu réfléchi, n'a ni souvenir ni prévoyance. Otez nos funestes progrès, ôtez nos erreurs et nos vices, ôtez l'ouvrage de l'homme, et tout est bien.]

52. *Von den Ursachen der Erdeschütterungen bei Gelegenheit des Unglücks, welches die westlichen Länder von Europa gegen Ende des vorigen Jahres betroffen hat.* Ak. 1:417–72.

53. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:60. [Man möchte also immer den Stoiker auslachen, der in den heftigsten Gichtschmerzen ausrief: Schmerz, du magst mich noch so sehr foltern, ich werde doch nie gestehen, daß du etwas Böses (*kakon,* malum) seist! er hatte doch recht.]

54. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:111.

55. Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice", Ak. 8:284. [Das aber der Mensch seine Pflicht ganz uneigennützig ausüben solle und sein Verlangen nach Glückseligkeit völlig vom Pflichtbegriffe absondern müsse, um ihn ganz rein zu haben: dessen ist er sich mit der größten Klarheit bewußt; oder, glaubte er nicht es zu sein, so kann von ihm gefordert werden, daß er es sei, so weit es in seinem Vermögen ist: weil eben in dieser Reinigkeit der wahre Werth der Moralität anzutreffen ist, und er muß es also auch können.]

56. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:130. [Daher ist auch die Moral nicht eigentlich die Lehre, wie wir uns glücklich machen, sondern wie wir der Glückseligkeit würdig werden sollen.]

57. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* 5:129–30. [die größte Glückseligkeit mit dem größten Maße sittlicher (in Geschöpfen möglicher) Vollkommenheit als in der genausten Proportion verbunden vorgestellt wird.]

58. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:130. [wenn Religion dazu kommt, tritt auch die Hoffnung ein, der Glückseligkeit dereinst in dem Maße teilhaftig zu werden, als wir darauf bedacht gewesen, ihrer nicht unwürdig zu sein.]

59. Kant, *On the Failure of All Philosophical Attempts at Theodicy,* Ak. 8:257.

60. Kant, *On the Failure of All Philosophical Attempts at Theodicy,* Ak. 8:260. [Es ist merkwürdig, daß unter allen Schwierigkeiten, den Lauf der Weltbegebenheiten mit der Göttlichkeit ihres Urhebers zu vereinigen, keine sich dem Gemüt so heftig aufbringt, als

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die von dem Anschein einer darin mangelnden Gerechtigkeit. Trägt es sich zu (ob es zwar selten geschieht), daß ein ungerechter, vornehmlich Gewalt habender Bösewicht nicht ungestraft aus der Welt entwischt: so frohlockt der mit dem Himmel gleichsam versöhnte, sonst parteilose Zuschauer. Keine Zweckmäßigkeit der Natur wird ihn durch Bewunderung derselben so in Affect setzen und die Hand Gottes gleichsam daran vernehmen lassen. Warum? Die ist hier moralisch und einzig von der Art, die man in der Welt einigermaßen wahrzunehmen hoffen kann.]

61. Kant, *On the Failure of All Philosophical Attempts at Theodicy,* Ak. 8:258. [Daher geht auch die Klage über den Mangel einer Gerechtigkeit, die sich im Loose, welches den Menschen hier in der Welt zu Theil wird, zeige, nicht darauf, daß es den Guten hier nicht wohl, sondern daß es den Bösen nicht übel geht (obzwar, wenn das erstere zu dem letztern hinzu kommt, der Contrast diesen Anstoß noch vergrößert). Denn in einer göttlichen Regierung kann auch der beste Mensch seinen Wunsch zum Wohlergehen nicht auf die göttliche Gerechtigkeit, sondern muß ihn jederzeit auf seine Güte gründen: weil der, welcher bloß seine Schuldigkeit thut, keinen Rechtsanspruch auf das Wohlthun Gottes haben kann.]

62. Kant, *On the Failure of All Philosophical Attempts at Theodicy,* Ak. 8:257. [die Strafe in der Ausübung der Gerechtigkeit keineswegs als bloßes Mittel, sondern als Zweck in der gesetzgebenden Weisheit gegründet: die Übertretung wird mit Übeln verbunden, nicht damit ein anderes Gute herauskomme, sondern weil diese Verbindung an sich selbst, d. i. moralisch notwendig und gut ist.]

63. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:490. [sondern vielmehr umgekehrt aus der Notwendigkeit der Bestrafung auf ein künftiges Leben die Folgerung gezogen wird]

64. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:489. [es ist nicht ein besonderes richtendes Wesen, was sie ausübt (denn da würden Widersprüche desselben mit Rechtsprinzipien vorkommen), sondern die *Gerechtigkeit,* gleich als Substanz (sonst die *ewige* Gerechtigkeit genannt), die, wie das *Fatum* (Verhängnis) der alten philosophierenden Dichter, noch über dem Jupiter ist, spricht das Recht nach der eisernen, unablenkbaren Notwendigkeit aus, die für uns weiter unerforschlich ist.]

65. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:490–91. [Denn, bei der etwaigen großen Menge der Verbrecher, die ihr Schuldenregister immer so fortlaufen lassen, würde die Strafgerechtigkeit den *Zweck* der Schöpfung nicht in der *Liebe* des Welturhebers (wie man sich doch denken muß), sondern in der strengen Befolgung des *Rechts*setzen (das Recht selbst zum *Zweck* machen, der in der *Ehre* Gottes gesetzt wird), welches, da das letztere (die Gerechtigkeit) nur die einschränkende Bedingung des ersteren (der Gütigkeit) ist, den Prinzipien der praktischen Vernunft zu widersprechen scheint, nach welchen eine Weltschöpfung hätte unterbleiben müssen, die ein, der Absicht ihres Urhebers, die nur Liebe zum Grunde haben kann, so widerstreitendes Produkt geliefert haben würde. Man sieht hieraus: daß in der Ethik, als reiner praktischer Philosophie der inneren Gesetzgebung, nur die moralischen Verhältnisse des *Menschen* gegen den Menschen für uns begreiflich sind: was aber zwischen Gott und dem Menschen hierüber für ein Verhältnis obwalte, die Grenzen derselben gänzlich übersteigt und uns schlechterdings unbegreiflich ist; wodurch dann bestätigt wird, was oben behauptet ward: daß die Ethik sich nicht über die Grenzen der wechselseitigen Menschenpflichten erweitern könne.]

66. M. O'C. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", in Rush Rhees (ed.), *Recollections of Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 108.

67. See Chapter 7 below.

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68. John Rawls, "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy", in E. Förster (ed.), *Kant's Transcendental Deductions* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 95.

69. Rawls, "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy", pp. 96–97.

70. Rawls, "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy", p. 97.

71. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics,* Ak. 27:9–10. [Können wir auch ohne Gottes Daseyn und seines arbitrii vorausgesetzt: alle Verbindlichkeiten interne herleiten? Responsio: nicht blos affirmative sondern dies ist ex natura rei eher, und wir schliessen daher auf Gottes Willkühr.

Vom arbitrio diuino kann ich selbst nicht die gehorigen begriffe der Güte haben, wenn nicht der Begriff vom Moralisch Guten vorausgeschickt würde: sonst ist bei Gott blos das arbitrium physice blos gut. Kurz das Urteil über Gottes Vollkommenes arbitrium sezt die Untersuchung der Vollkommenheit moralis voraus.

Gesetzt ich habe Gottes arbitrium gewust, woher ist die Nothwendigkeit daß ichs soll: wenn ich nicht aus der Natur der Sache die Verbindlichkeit schon herleite—Gott wills, warum soll ichs—er wird strafen:—alsdenn ists schädlich nicht an sich lasterhaft: so gehorcht man dem Despoten—dies ist alsdenn keine Sünde stricte sondern politische Unklugheit—und warum wills Gott? Warum straft ers: weil ich verbindlich dazu bin, nicht weil er Macht hat zu strafen. Selbst die application des arbitrii Diuini aufs factum als ein Grund sezt die begriffe der Verbindlichkeit voraus—und da dieses die natürliche Religion ausmacht, so ist dies ein Theil nicht aber der Grundsaz der Moral.—Es ist wahrscheinlich daß da Gott der Grund aller Dinge durchs arbitrium ist, so auch hier, Ja er ist der Grund davon nicht per arbitrium, sondern da er der Grund der Möglichkeit ist, so ist er auch der Materiale Grund (da in ihm alle data sind) von Geometrischen Wahrheiten, und Moralität—in ihm ist also selbst Moralität und sein arbitrium ist also nicht der Grund—Der Streit der Reformierten und Lutheraner vom arbitrio Diuino und absoluto decreto gründet sich darauf, daß auch in Gott Moralität seyn muss; und vom göttlichen Arbitrio selbst schwindet aller Begriff wenn nicht moralität vorausgesetzt wird, diese aber kann nicht aus der Welt bewiesen werden, (da blos möglich) weil die Güte der Welt physische Folgen blos seyn können—Wie schrecklich ist aber ein Gott ohne Moralität.]

72. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A818–19, B846–47. [Denn diese waren es eben, deren innere praktische Notwendigkeit uns zu der Voraussetzung einer selbständigen Ursache, oder eines weisen Weltregierers führte, um jenen Gesetzen Effekt zu geben, und daher können wir sie nicht nach diesem wiederum als zufällig und vom bloßen Willen abgeleitet ansehen, insonderheit von einem solchen Willen, von dem wir gar keinen Begriff haben würden, wenn wir ihn nicht jenen Gesetzen gemäß gebildet hätten. Wir werden, soweit praktische Vernunft uns zu führen das Recht hat, Handlungen nicht darum für verbindlich halten, weil sie Gebote Gottes sind, sondern sie darum als göttliche Gebote ansehen, weil wir dazu innerlich verbindlich sind.]

73. T. B. Macaulay, "Review of The Ecclesiastical and Political History of the Popes of Rome, during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, by Leopold Ranke", in *Critical and Historical Essays Contributed to the Edinburgh Review,* Vol. 3 (London: Longmans, 1848), p. 208.

74. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

75. Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785–1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

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76. Two outstanding modern studies, each worthy of being read alongside Hilton, are Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism,* and Denys Leighton, *The Greenian Moment* (Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2004).

77. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement,* p. ix.

Chapter 3. Kant's Anti-Determinism

Epigraphs: Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), p. 111; C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Kegan Paul, 1930), Ch. 5.

1. Christine Korsgaard, "Morality as Freedom", in *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 183.

2. Allen Wood, *Kantian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 138.

3. P. F. Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment", in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1974).

4. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:448. [Ein jedes Wesen, das nicht anders als *unter der Idee der Freiheit* handeln kann ist eben darum in praktischer Rücksicht wirklich frei, d. i. es gelten für daßelbe alle Gesetze, die mit der Freiheit unzertrennlich verbunden sind, ebenso also ob sein Wille auch an sich selbst und in der theoretischen Philosophie gültig für frei erklärt würde.]

5. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:458–59. [wurde die Vernunft alle ihre Grenzen überschreiten, wenn sie es sich zu *erklären* unterfinge, *wie* reine Vernunft praktisch sein könne, welches völlig einerlei mit der Aufgabe sein würde, zu erklären, *wie Freiheit möglich sei*.]

6. Roger Scruton, *Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 75–76.

7. This is a point that Wood himself would not deny, I believe. The first two of his many books on Kant were *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970) and *Kant's Rational Theology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978).

8. Ak. 5:98. See J. Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated* (London: J. Johnson, 1777).

9. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:101. [Der Mensch wäre Marionette oder ein Vaucansonsches Automat, gezimmert und aufgezogen von dem obersten Meister aller Kunstwerke, und das Selbstbewußtein würde es zwar zu einem denkenden Automate machen, in welchem aber das Bewußtsein seiner Spontaneität, wenn sie für Freiheit gehalten wird, bloße Täuschung wäre, indem sie nur komparativ so genannt zu werden verdient, weil die nächsten bestimmenden Ursachen seiner Bewegung und eine lange Reihe derselben zu ihren bestimmenden Ursachen hinauf zwar innerlich sind, die letzte und höchste aber doch gänzlich in einer fremden Hand angetroffen wird. Daher sehe ich nicht ab, wie diejenigen, welche noch immer dabei beharren, Zeit und Raum für zum Dasein der Dinge an sich selbst gehörige Bestimmungen anzusehen, hier die Fatalität der Handlungen vermeiden wollen.]

10. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:96. [die Handlungen des Menschen, ob sie gleich durch ihre Bestimmungsgründe, die in der Zeit vorhergehen, notwendig sind, dennoch frei nennen, weil es doch innere, durch unsere eigenen Kräfte hervorgebrachte Vorstellungen, dadurch nach veranlassenden Umständen erzeugte Begierden und mithin nach unserem eigenen Belieben bewirkte Handlungen sind.]

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11. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:96. [ist ein elender Behelf, womit sich noch immer einige hinhalten lassen und so jenes schwere Problem mit einer kleinen Wortklauberei aufgelöst zu haben meinen, an dessen Auflösung Jahrtausende vergeblich gearbeitet haben.]

12. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:96. [psychologische Freiheit (wenn man ja dieses Wort von einer bloß inneren Verkettung der Vorstellungen der Seele brauchen will).]

13. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:96–97. [mithin keine transzendentale Freiheit übrig lassen, welche als Unabhängigkeit von allem Empirischen und also von der Natur überhaupt gedacht werden muß, sie mag nun als Gegenstand des inneren Sinnes bloß in der Zeit, oder auch der äußeren Sinne im Raume und der Zeit zugleich betrachtet werden.]

14. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:97. [etwa die psychologische und komparative, nicht transzendentale, d. i. absolute, zugleich . . . so würde sie im Grunde nichts besser als die Freiheit eines Bratenwenders sein, der auch, wenn er einmal aufgezogen worden, von selbst seine Bewegungen verrichtet.]

15. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:97. [transzendentale, d. i. absolute, zugleich.]

16. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:101. [das Bewußtein seiner Spontaneität . . . bloße Täuschung wäre.]

17. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:448, my emphasis. [ist eben darum in praktischer Rücksicht wirklich frei, d. i. es gelten für dasselbe alle Gesetze, die mit der Freiheit unzertrennlich verbunden sind, ebenso also ob sein Wille auch an sich selbst und in der theoretischen Philosophie gültig für frei erklärt würde.]

18. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:448. [Diesen Weg, die Freiheit nur als von vernünftigen Wesen bei ihren Handlungen bloß *in der Idee* zum Grunde gelegt zu unserer Absicht hinreichend anzunehmen, schlage ich deswegen ein, damit ich mich nicht verbindlich machen dürfte, die Freiheit auch in ihrer theoretischen Absicht zu beweisen. Denn wenn dieses letztere auch unausgemacht gelassen wird, so gelten doch dieselben Gesetze für ein Wesen, das nicht anders als unter der Idee seiner eigenen Freiheit handeln kann, die ein Wesen, das wirklich frei wäre, verbinden würden. Wir können uns hier also von der Last befreien, die die Theorie drückt.]

19. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:455. [Natur wird durch Erfahrung bestätigt und muss selbst unvermeidlich vorausgesetzt werden, wenn Erfahrung, d. i. nach allgemeinen Gesetzen zusammenhängende Erkenntnis der Gegenstände der Sinne, möglich sein soll.]

20. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:455. [Indessen muß dieser Scheinwiderspruch wenigstens auf überzeugende Art vertilgt werden, wenn man gleich, wie Freiheit möglich sei, niemals begreifen könnte. Denn wenn sogar der Gedanke von der Freiheit sich selbst, oder der Natur, die ebenso notwendig ist, widerspricht, so müßte sie gegen die Naturnotwendigkeit durchaus aufgegeben werden.]

21. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:456. [Also ist es nicht in das Belieben des Philosophen gesetzt, ob er den scheinbaren Widerstreit heben, oder ihn unangerührt lassen will; denn im letzteren Falle ist die Theorie hierüber bonum vacans, in dessen Besitz sich der Fatalist mit Grunde setzen und alle Moral aus ihrem ohne Titel besessenen vermeinten Eigentum verjagen kann.]

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22. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:459. [Wo aber Bestimmung nach Naturgesetzen aufhört, da hört auch alle *Erklärung* auf, und es bleibt nichts übrig als *Verteidigung.*]

23. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:456. [eine unnachlaßliche Aufgabe der spekulativen Philosophie]

24. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* p. 110.

25. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* p. 112.

26. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* pp. 113–15.

27. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A554, B582. [In der ersten Absicht geht man seinen empirischen Charakter bis zu den Quellen desselben durch, die man in der schlechten Erziehung, übler Gesellschaft, zum Teil auch in der Bösartigkeit eines für Beschämung unempfindlichen Naturells, aufsucht, zum Teil auf den Leichtsinn und Unbesonnenheit schiebt; wobei man denn die veranlassenden Gelegenheitsursachen nicht aus der Acht läßt.]

28. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A555, B583. [Dieser Tadel gründet sich auf ein Gesetz der Vernunft, wobei man diese als eine Ursache ansieht, welche das Verhalten des Menschen, unangenehmen aller genannten empirischen Bedingungen, anders habe bestimmen können und sollen.]

29. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A450, B478. [Weil aber dadurch doch einmal das Vermögen, eine Reihe in der Zeit ganz von selbst anzufangen, bewiesen (obzwar nicht eingesehen) ist, so ist es uns nunmehr auch erlaubt, mitten im Laufe der Welt verschiedene Reihen, der Kausalität nach, von selbst anfangen zu lassen, und den Substanzen derselben ein Vermögen beizulegen, aus Freiheit zu handeln. Man lasse sich aber hierbei nicht durch einen Mißverstand aufhalten: daß, da nämlich eine sukzessive Reihe in der Welt nur einen komparativ ersten Anfang haben kann, indem doch immer ein Zustand der Dinge in der Welt vorhergeht, etwa kein absolut erster Anfang der Reihen während dem Weltlaufe möglich sei. Denn wir reden hier nicht vom absolut ersten Anfange der Zeit nach, sondern der Kausalität nach. Wenn ich jetzt (zum Beispiel) völlig frei, und ohne den notwendig bestimmenden Einfluß der Natursachen, von meinem Stuhle aufstehe, so fängt in dieser Begebenheit, samt deren natürlichen Folgen ins Unendliche, eine neue Reihe schlechthin an, obgleich der Zeit nach diese Begebenheit nur die Fortsetzung einer vorhergehenden Reihe ist. Denn diese Entschließung und Tat liegt gar nicht in der Abfolge bloßer Naturwirkungen, und ist nicht eine bloße Fortsetzung derselben, sondern die bestimmenden Natursachen hören oberhalb derselben, in Ansehung dieses Ereignisses, ganz auf, die zwar auf jene folgt, aber daraus nicht *erfolgt,* und daher zwar nicht der Zeit nach, aber doch in Ansehung der Kausalität, ein schlechthin erster Anfang einer Reihe von Erscheinungen genannt werden muß.]

30. See Ak. 6:49–50. Kant also distinguishes between "determinism" and "predeterminism" in the Vigilantius Lecture Notes of 1793 (that is, lectures that were given at the same period as *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* was written and then revised) in which he calls the philosopher's conception of determinism "erroneous" and that, assuming as it does that human beings are "determined with respect to the time-order", it should be called "predeterminism, not determinism". Ak. 27:502–503.

31. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:47. [Und doch gebietet die Pflicht es zu sein, sie gebietet uns aber nichts, als was uns thunlich ist.]

32. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:48. [Das ist: wenn er den obersten Grund seiner Maximen, wodurch er ein böser Mensch war, durch eine einzige

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unwandelbare Entschließung umkehrt, (und hiemit einen neuen Menschen anzieht); so ist er sofern dem Prinzip und der Denkungsart nach ein fürs Gute empfängliches Subjekt; aber nur in continuirlichem Wirken und Werden ein guter Mensch: d. i. er kann hoffen, daß er bei einer solchen Reinigkeit des Prinzips, welches er sich zur obersten Maxime seiner Willkür genommen hat, und der Festigkeit desselben, sich auf dem guten (obwohl schmalen) Wege eines beständigen Fortschreitens vom Schlechten zum Bessern befinde.]

33. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:48. [Dies ist für denjenigen, der den intelligiblen Grund des Herzens (aller Maximen der Willkür) durchschauet . . . d. i. für Gott so viel, als wirklich ein guter (ihm gefälliger) Mensch sein; und in sofern kann diese Veränderung als Revolution betrachtet werden.]

34. C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory,* Ch. 5.

Chapter 4. Freedom without Arbitrariness

Epigraph: e. e. cummings, "of all the blessings which to man", in *Collected Poems,* Vol. 2 (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), p. 544.

1. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:446. [Der Wille ist eine Art von Kausalität lebender Wesen, so fern sie vernünftig sind, und Freiheit würde diejenige Eigenschaft dieser Kausalität sein, da sie unabhängig von fremden sie bestimmenden Ursachen wirkend sein kann: so wie Naturnotwendigkeit die Eigenschaft der Kausalität aller vernunftlosen Wesen, durch den Einfluss fremder Ursachen zur Tätigkeit bestimmt zu werden. Die angeführte Erklärung der Freiheit ist negativ und daher, um ihr Wesen einzusehen, unfruchtbar; allein es fließt aus ihr ein positiver Begriff derselben, der desto reichhaltiger und fruchtbarer ist.]

2. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:446–47. [Die Naturnotwendigkeit war eine Heteronomie der wirkenden Ursachen; denn jede Wirkung war nur nach dem Gesetze möglich, daß etwas anderes die wirkende Ursache zur Kausalität bestimmte; was kann denn wohl die Freiheit des Willens sonst sein als Autonomie, d. i. die Eigenschaft des Willens, sich selbst ein Gesetz zu sein?]

3. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:227. [Das Gesetz, was uns a priori und unbedingt durch unsere eigene Vernunft verbindet, kann auch als aus dem Willen eines höchsten Gesetzgebers, d.i. eines solchen, der lauter Rechte und keine Pflichten hat (mithin dem göttlichen Willen), hervorgehend ausgedrückt werden, welches aber nur die Idee von einem moralischen Wesen bedeutet, dessen Wille für alle Gesetz ist, ohne ihn doch als Urheber desselben zu denken.]

4. Fichte, Letter to Karl Leonhard Reinhold, 8 January 1800, in H. Schulz (ed.), *Briefwechsel* (Leipzig, 1925).

5. Schelling to Hegel, 8 February 1795, in Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel.*

6. Cristoph Jamme and Helmut Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism* (Das "älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus"), in C. Jamme and H. Schneider (eds.), *Mythologie der Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), pp. 11–14, 11. [die erste Idee ist natürlich die Vorstellung von mir selbst, als einem absolut freien Wesen.]

7. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke,* 12, p. 30. [die Philosophie aber lehrt uns, daß alle Eigenschaften des Geistes nur durch die Freiheit bestehen, alle nur Mittel für die Freiheit sind, alle nur diese suchen und hervorbringen].

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8. Rousseau, *The Social Contract,* p. 56. [car l'impulsion du seul appétit est esclavage, et l'obéissance à la loi qu'on s'est prescrite est liberté.]

9. See Chapter 1.

10. A. J. Ayer, "Freedom and Necessity", in *Philosophical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1954).

11. D. Dennett, *Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

12. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:446. [Da der Begriff einer Kausalität den von Gesetzen bei sich führt, nach welchen durch etwas, was wir Ursache nennen, etwas anderes, nämlich die Folge, gesetzt werden muss: so ist die Freiheit, ob sie zwar nicht eine Eigenschaft des Willens nach Naturgesetzen ist, darum doch nicht gar gesetzlos, sondern muss vielmehr eine Kausalität nach unwandelbaren Gesetzen, aber von besonderer Art sein; denn sonst wäre ein freier Wille ein Unding.]

13. The best account of the distinction remains J. R. Silber's "The Ethical Significance of Kant's *Religion*", in I. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960).

14. Lewis White Beck, "Kant's Two Conceptions of the Will in Their Political Context", in *Studies in the Philosophy of Kant* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

15. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:226. [Von dem Willen gehen die Gesetze aus; von der Willkür die Maximen.]

16. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:213–14. [Die Freiheit der Willkür ist jene Unabhängigkeit ihrer Bestimmung durch sinnliche Antriebe; dies ist der negative Begriff derselben. Der positive ist: das Vermögen der reinen Vernunft für sich selbst praktisch zu sein. Dieses ist aber nicht anders möglich, als durch die Unterwerfung der Maxime einer jeden Handlung unter die Bedingung der Tauglichkeit der erstern zum allgemeinen Gesetze.]

17. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:50. [Den Begriff der Freiheit mit der Idee von Gott, als einem notwendigen Wesen, zu vereinigen, hat gar keine Schwierigkeit: weil die Freiheit nicht in der Zufälligkeit der Handlung (daß sie gar nicht durch Gründe determiniert sei), d.i. nicht im Indeterminism (daß Gutes oder Böses zu thun Gott gleich möglich sein müsse, wenn man seine Handlung frei nennen sollte), sondern in der absoluten Spontaneität besteht, welche allein beim Prädeterminism Gefahr läuft, wo der Bestimmungsgrund der Handlung in der vorigen Zeit ist, mithin so daß jetzt die Handlung nicht mehr in meiner Gewalt, sondern in der Hand der Natur ist, mich unwiderstehlich bestimmt; da dann, weil in Gott keine Zeitfolge zu denken ist, diese Schwierigkeit wegfällt.]

18. Spinoza, Letter to Schuller, October 1674, pp. 274–75.

19. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A144, B183.

20. J. B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 521.

21. Fichte, "Review of *Aenesidemus*", in D. Breazeale (ed.), *Early Philosophical Writings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 64. [Die erste unrichtige Voraussetzung, welche seine Aufstellung zum Grundsatze aller Philosophie veranlaßte, war wohl die, daß man von einer Thatsache ausgehen müsse. Allerdings müssen wir einen realen, und nicht bloß formalen, Grundsatz haben; aber ein solcher muß nicht eben eine That*sache,* er kann auch eine That*handlung* ausdrücken; wenn es erlaubt ist, eine Behauptung zu wagen, die an diesem Orte weder erklärt, noch erwiesen werden kann.]

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22. Fichte, "Outline of the Distinctive Character of the *Wissenschaftslehre*", in Breazeale, *Early Philosophical Writings,* p. 276. [Die Freiheit, oder was das gleiche heißt, das unmittelbare Handeln des Ich, als solches, ist der Vereinigungspunkt der Idealität, und Realität. Das Ich *ist* frei, indem und dadurch daß es sich frei sezt, sich befreit: und es sezt sich frei, oder befreit sich, indem es frei ist. Bestimmung und Seyn, sind Eins; Handelndes, und Behandeltes sind Eins; eben indem das Ich sich zum Handeln bestimmt, handelt es in diesem Bestimmen; und indem es handelt, bestimmt es sich.]

23. F. W. J. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenständen*) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977).

24. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom,* p. 77. [Frei ist, was nur den Gesetzen seines eigenen Wesens gemäß handelt, und von nichts anderem weder in noch außer ihm bestimmt ist.]

25. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom,* p. 77. [die Ungereimtheit des Zufälligen]

26. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom,* p. 77. [der empirischen auf Zwang beruhenden]

27. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom,* p. 77. [Hier liegt der Punkt, bei welchem Notwendigkeit und Freiheit vereinigt werden müssen, wenn sie überhaupt vereinbar sind. Wäre jenes Wesen ein totes Sein und in Ansehung des Menschen ein ihm bloss gegebenes, so wäre, da die Handlung aus ihm nur mit Notwendigkeit folgen kann, die Zurechnungsfähigkeit und alle Freiheit aufgehoben. Aber eben jene inner Notwendigkeit ist selber die Freiheit, das Wesen des Menschen ist wesentlich *seine eigene Tat;* Notwendigkeit und Freiheit stehen ineinander, als *ein* Wesen, das nur von Verschiedenen Seiten betrachtet als das eine oder andere erscheint, an sich Freiheit, formell Notwendigkeit.]

28. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11. [da die ganze Metaphysik künftig in die Moral fällt.]

29. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11. [Mit dem freyen selbstbewussten Wesen tritt zugleich eine ganze Welt—aus dem Nichts hervor—die einzig wahre und gedenkbare Schöpfung aus Nichts.]

30. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences II,* Werke 9, para. 248. [so ist die Natur nicht frei, sondern nur notwendig und zufällig. Denn Notwendigkeit ist Untrennbarkeit von Unterschiedenen, die noch gleichgültig erscheinen; daß aber die Abstraktion des Außersichseins auch zu ihrem Rechte kommt, ist die Zufälligkeit, die äußerliche Notwendigkeit, nicht die innere Notwendigkeit des Begriffs.]

31. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 15, *Zusatz.* [In der Willkür ist das enthalten, daß der Inhalt nicht durch die Natur meines Willens bestimmt ist, der meinige zu sein, sondern durch *Zufälligkeit;* ich bin ebenso abhängig von diesem Inhalt, und dies ist der Widerspruch, der in der Willkür liegt. Der gewöhnliche Mensch glaubt, frei zu sein, wenn ihm willkürlich zu handeln erlaubt ist, aber gerade in der Willkür liegt, daß er nicht frei ist.]

32. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 7, *Zusatz.* [Hier ist man nicht einseitig in sich, sondern man beschränkt sich gern in Beziehung auf ein Anderes, weiss sich aber in dieser Beschränkung als sich selbst. In der Bestimmtheit soll sich der Mensch nicht bestimmt fühlen, sondern indem man das Andere als Anderes betrachtet, hat man darin erst Selbstgefühl. . . . die Freiheit ist ein bestimmtes zu wollen, aber in dieser Bestimmtheit bei sich zu sein und wieder in das Allgemeine zurückzukehren.]

33. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 15, *Zusatz.* [Wenn ich das Vernünftige will, so handle ich nicht als partikulares Individuum, sondern nach den

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Begriffen der Sittlichkeit überhaupt: in einer sittlichen Handlung mache ich nicht mich selbst, sondern die Sache geltend. Der Mensch aber, indem er etwas Verkehrtes tut, läßt seine Partikularität am meisten hervortreten. Das Vernünftige ist die Landstraße, wo jeder geht, wo niemand sich auszeichnet.]

Chapter 5. Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Kant

Epigraphs: The Pirates of Penzance; or, The Slave of Duty (1879), written by W. S. Gilbert, composed by Arthur Sullivan; *Do the Right Thing* (1989), written and directed by Spike Lee, produced by 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks.

1. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A805, B833.

2. Onora O'Neill (Nell), *Acting on Principle: An Essay on Kantian Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), p. i.

3. O'Neill, *Acting on Principle,* p. 2.

4. Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York: Hafner Press, 1948), p. 1.

5. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 187.

6. A. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Wood, *Kantian Ethics.*

7. Wood, *Kantian Ethics,* p. 1.

8. Wood, *Kantian Ethics,* p. 2.

9. O'Neill, *Acting on Principle,* p. viii.

10. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 79–81.

11. See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981), especially Chs. 4 and 5.

12. Wood, *Kantian Ethics,* p. 138.

13. Rawls, "A Kantian Conception of Equality", in *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 264.

14. Rawls, "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy", p. 497.

15. J. Rawls, "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics", in *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

16. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:421. [Der kategorische Imperativ ist also nur ein einziger und zwar dieser: handle nur nach derjenigen Maxime, durch die du zugleich wollen kannst, daß sie ein allgemeines Gesetz werde.]

17. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:424. [Einige Handlungen sind so beschaffen, daß ihre Maxime ohne Widerspruch nicht einmal als allgemeines Naturgesetz gedacht werden kann; weit gefehlt, daß man noch wollen könne, es sollte ein solches werden. Bei andern ist zwar jene innere Unmöglichkeit nicht anzutreffen, aber es ist doch unmöglich, zu wollen, daß ihre Maxime zur Allgemeinheit eines Naturgesetzes erhoben werde, weil ein solcher Wille sich selbst widersprechen würde. Man sieht leicht: daß die erstere der strengen oder engeren (unnachlaßlichen) Pflicht, die zweite nur der weiteren (verdienstlichen) Pflicht widerstreite.]

18. "It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a good will." Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:393. [Es ist überall nichts in der Welt, ja überhaupt auch außer derselben zu denken möglich, was ohne Einschränkung für gut könnte gehalten werden, als allein ein guter Wille.]

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19. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:428. [dessen Dasein an sich selbst einen absoluten Wert hat]

20. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:428. [so würde in ihm und nur in ihm allein der Grund eines möglichen kategorischen Imperativs, d. i. praktischen Gesetzes, liegen]

21. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:428. [als Zweck an sich selbst, nicht bloß als Mittel zum beliebigen Gebrauche für diesen oder jenen Willen.]

22. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:429. [Handle so, daß du die Menschheit sowohl in deiner Person, als in der Person eines jeden andern jederzeit zugleich als Zweck, niemals bloß als Mittel brauchst.]

23. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:443. [die systematische Verbindung verschiedener vernünftiger Wesen durch gemeinschaftliche Gesetze]

24. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:436. [alle Maximen aus eigener Gesetzgebung zu einem möglichen Reiche der Zwecke, als einem Reiche der Natur, zusammenstimmen sollen]

25. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:436–37. [Man tut aber besser, wenn man in der sittlichen Beurteilung immer nach der strengen Methode verfährt und die allgemeine Formel des kategorischen Imperativs zum Grunde legt: handle nach der Maxime, die sich selbst zugleich zum allgemeinen Gesetze machen kann.]

26. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:381–82. [Es gibt keinen Fall, wo der Mensch schon von Natur bestimmt wäre, ein Gegenstandes Genusses des andern zu sein als diesen, wovon die Geschlechter Neigung der Grund ist. Dies ist die Ursache warum man sich scheut solche Neigung zu haben, und warum alle strenge Moralisten und die als heilige angesehn [*sic*] werden wollen, diese Neigung zu unterdrücken und zu entbehren gesucht haben . . . Weil die Geschlechts-Neigung keine Neigung ist, die ein Mensch gegen den andern als Menschen hat, sondern eine Neigung gegen das Geschlecht; so ist diese Neigung ein Principium der Erniedrigung der Menschheit, eine Quelle, ein Geschlecht dem andern vorzuziehen und es aus Befriedigung der Neigung zu entehren. Die Neigung die man zum Weibe hat, geht nicht auf es als auf einen Menschen; vielmehr ist einem Mann die Menschheit am Weibe gleichgültig und nur das Geschlecht der Gegenstand seiner Neigung.]

27. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:359–60.

28. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:399. [werfe ich meine Person wieder weg, also versetz ich mich hindurch unter das Thier und entehre die Menschheit.]

29. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:333. "Even if a civil society were to be dissolved with all its members in agreement (e.g. if a people inhabiting an island decided to separate and disperse throughout the world), the last murderer remaining in prison would first have to be executed, so that each has done to him what his deeds deserve and blood guilt does not cling to the people for not having insisted on his punishment; for otherwise the people can be regarded as collaborators in this public violation of justice." [Selbst, wenn sich die bürgerliche Gesellschaft mit aller Glieder Einstimmung auflösete (z.B. das eine Insel bewohnende Volk beschlösse, auseinander zu gehen, und sich in alle Welt zu zerstreuen), müßte der letzte im Gefängnis befindliche Mörder vorher hingerichtet werden, damit jedermann das widerfahre, was seine Taten wert sind, und die Blutschuld nicht auf dem Volke hafte, das auf diese Bestrafung nicht gedrungen hat; weil es als Teilnehmer an dieser öffentlichen Verletzung der Gerechtigkeit betrachtet werden kann.]

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30. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:332–33. [Das Strafgesetz ist ein kategorischer Imperativ, und, wehe dem! welcher die Schlangenwindungen der Glückseligkeitslehre durchkriecht, um etwas aufzufinden, was durch den Vorteil, den es verspricht, ihn von der Strafe, oder auch nur einem Grade derselben entbinde, nach dem pharisäischen Wahlspruch: »es ist besser, daß *ein* Mensch sterbe, als daß das ganze Volk verderbe«; denn, wenn die Gerechtigkeit untergeht, so hat es keinen Wert mehr, daß Menschen auf Erden leben. Welche Art aber und welcher Grad der Bestrafung ist es, welche die öffentliche Gerechtigkeit sich zum Prinzip und Richtmaße macht? Kein anderes, als das Prinzip der Gleichheit (im Stande des Züngleins an der Wage der Gerechtigkeit), sich nicht mehr auf die eine, als auf die andere Seite hinzuneigen. Also: was für unverschuldetes Übel du einem anderen im Volk zufügst, das tust du dir selbst an. Beschimpfst du ihn, so beschimpfst du dich selbst; bestiehlst du ihn, so bestiehlst du dich selbst; schlägst du ihn, so schlägst du dich selbst; tötest du ihn, so tötest du dich selbst. Nur das *Wiedervergeltungsrecht* (ius talionis), aber, wohl zu verstehen, vor den Schranken des Gerichts (nicht in deinem Privaturteil), kann die Qualität und Quantität der Strafe bestimmt angeben; alle andere sind hin und her schwankend, und können, anderer sich einmischenden Rücksichten wegen, keine Angemessenheit mit dem Spruch der reinen und strengen Gerechtigkeit enthalten.]

31. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:490. [sondern vielmehr umgekehrt aus der Notwendigkeit der Bestrafung auf ein künftiges Leben die Folgerung gezogen wird]

32. Parfit, *On What Matters,* Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 272.

33. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:424. [Einige Handlungen sind so beschaffen, daß ihre Maxime ohne Widerspruch nicht einmal als allgemeines Naturgesetz gedacht werden kann.]

34. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:422. [würde das Versprechen und den Zweck, den man damit haben mag, selbst unmöglich machen, indem niemand glauben würde, daß ihm was versprochen sei, sondern über alle solche Äußerung als eitles Vorgeben lachen würde.]

35. For example, F. H. Bradley writes: "Morality is thus as inconsistent as theft. 'Succour the poor' both negates *and* presupposes (hence posits) poverty." Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 155. And Edward Caird: "it is not, strictly speaking, the case that the maxim of such acts [as lying and stealing] is self-contradictory when universalized, but rather that it is contradictory with a certain presupposed order in the life of rational beings. Universal lying, universal stealing, etc., are contradictory to the idea of an order based on the maintenance of truth and private property." Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant,* Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1889), p. 213. From the other point of view, Mill has a similar objection: "when [Kant] begins to deduce from this precept ['So act, that the rule on which thou actest would admit of being adopted as a law by all rational beings.'] any of the actual duties of morality, he fails, almost grotesquely, to show that there would be any contradiction, any logical (not to say physical) impossibility, in the adoption by all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct. All he shows is that the consequences of their universal adoption would be such as no one would choose to incur." Mill, *Utilitarianism,* in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill: Volume X - Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 207.

36. C. Korsgaard, Editor's Preface to the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. xix. See also Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Ch. 3.

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37. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:422. [ich mache es mir aus Selbstliebe zum Prinzip, wenn das Leben bei seiner längern Frist mehr Übel droht, als es Annehmlichkeit verspricht, es mir abzukürzen.]

38. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:422. [Da sieht man aber bald, daß eine Natur, deren Gesetz es wäre, durch dieselbe Empfindung, deren Bestimmung es ist, zur Beförderung des Lebens anzutreiben, das Leben selbst zu zerstören, ihr selbst widersprechen und also nicht als Natur bestehen würde, mithin jene Maxime unmöglich als allgemeines Naturgesetz stattfinden könne und folglich dem obersten Prinzip aller Pflicht gänzlich widerstreite.]

39. Although it is not unreasonable to translate *Bestimmung* as "determination", given that Kant uses it so often in logical-ontological contexts (for instance, in his discussion of the "*durchgängige Bestimmung*" of reality in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Opus Postumum*) *Bestimmung* also carries a much more teleological sense. Thus it is elsewhere properly translated as "vocation" (as in Fichte's "The Vocation of a Scholar"). For an illuminating discussion see Günter Zöller, "Die Bestimmung der Bestimmung des Menschen bei Mendelssohn und Kant", in V. Gerhardt, R.-P. Horstmann and R. Schumacher (eds.), *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung: Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses,* Vol. 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 476–90.

40. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 94.

41. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* pp. 100–101.

42. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 96.

43. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 102.

44. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 102.

45. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:424. [Bei andern ist zwar jene innere Unmöglichkeit nicht anzutreffen, aber es ist doch unmöglich, zu wollen, daß ihre Maxime zur Allgemeinheit eines Naturgesetzes erhoben werde, weil ein solcher Wille sich selbst widersprechen würde.]

46. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:423. [Er sieht sich aber in bequemen Umständen und zieht vor, lieber dem Vergnügen nachzuhängen, als sich mit Erweiterung und Verbesserung seiner glücklichen Naturanlagen zu bemühen.]

47. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:424. [Noch fragt er aber: ob außer der Übereinstimmung, die seine Maxime der Verwahrlosung seiner Naturgaben mit seinem Hange zur Ergötzlichkeit an sich hat, sie auch mit dem, was man Pflicht nennt, übereinstimme. Da sieht er nun, daß zwar eine Natur nach einem solchen allgemeinen Gesetze immer noch bestehen könne, obgleich der Mensch (so wie die Südsee-Einwohner) sein Talent rosten ließe und sein Leben bloß auf Müßiggang, Ergötzlichkeit, Fortpflanzung, mit einem Wort auf Genuss zu verwenden bedacht wäre; allein er kann unmöglich wollen, daß dieses ein allgemeines Naturgesetz werde, oder als ein solches in uns durch Naturinstinkt gelegt sei. Denn als ein vernünftiges Wesen will er notwendig, daß alle Vermögen in ihm entwickelt werden, weil sie ihm doch zu allerlei möglichen Absichten dienlich und gegeben sind.]

48. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 99.

49. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 99.

50. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:429.

51. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* p. 139.

52. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 111.

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53. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* p. 140.

54. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:429–30. [Denn der, den ich durch ein solches Versprechen zu meinen Absichten brauchen will, kann unmöglich in meine Art, gegen ihn zu verfahren, einstimmen und also selbst den Zweck dieser Handlung enthalten.]

55. The Rawlsian idea of a morality that would be justifiable to all through their hypothetical consent has been developed by Rawls's successor, T. M. Scanlon. Of the enormous literature debating the kind of consent that might be involved, see particularly Johann Frick, "Contractualism and Social Risk", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 43, no. 3 (Summer 2015), 175–223.

56. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:430. [in Ansehung der zufälligen (verdienstlichen) Pflicht gegen sich selbst ist's nicht genug, daß die Handlung nicht der Menschheit in unserer Person als Zweck an sich selbst widerstreite, sie muss auch dazu zusammenstimmen. Nun sind in der Menschheit Anlagen zu größerer Vollkommenheit, die zum Zwecke der Natur in Ansehung der Menschheit in unserem Subjekt gehören; diese zu vernachlässigen, würde allenfalls wohl mit der Erhaltung der Menschheit als Zwecks an sich selbst, aber nicht der Beförderung dieses Zwecks bestehen können.]

57. Wood, *Kantian Ethics,* p. 57.

58. Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 151.

59. Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment,* p. 148.

60. O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason,* p. 128, my emphasis.

61. H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative* (London: Hutchinson, 1947); A. R. C. Duncan, *Practical Reason and Morality* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957); T. C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

62. T. C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative,* p. 116.

63. T. C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative,* p. 117.

64. T. C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative,* pp. 116–17.

65. O'Neill, *Acting on Principle,* p. 2.

66. Kant, Ak. 20:44: "I myself am by inclination an inquirer. I feel the whole thirst for knowledge and yearning restlessness to advance in it and the satisfaction with each increase in it. There was a time when I thought that this alone could constitute the honour of mankind and I scorned the masses who know nothing. Rousseau corrected me. This blinding preference vanished. I learned to honour human beings and I would think myself much more useless than the common workers, did I not believe that this consideration could give value to all others, to establish the rights of mankind." [Ich bin selbst aus Neigung ein Forscher. Ich fühle den ganzen Durst nach Erkenntnis und die begierige Unruhe, darin weiterzukommen, oder auch die Zufriedenheit bei jedem Erwerb. Es war eine Zeit, da ich glaubte, dies alles könnte die Ehre der Menschheit machen, und ich verachtete den Pöbel, der von nichts weiß. Rousseau hat mich zurecht gebracht. Dieser verblendende Vorzug verschwindet. Ich lerne die Menschen ehren und würde mich viel unnützer finden als die gemeinen Arbeiter, wenn ich nicht glaubte, daß diese Betrachtung allen übrigen einen Wert geben könne, die Rechte der Menschheit herzustellen.]

67. Rousseau, *Letter to d'Alembert* (*Lettre à d'Alembert*), in *Collection complète des œuvres de J. J. Rousseau,* Vol. 6 (Geneva, 1782–89), p. 450. [Le cœur de l'homme est toujours droit sur tout ce qui ne se rapporte pas personnellement à lui. Dans les querelles dont nous sommes purement Spectateurs, nous prenons a l'instant le parti de la justice, et il a

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point d'acte de méchanceté qui ne nous donne une vive indignation, tant que nous n'en tirons aucun profit: mais quand notre intérêt s'y mêle, bientôt nos sentimens se corrompent; et c'est alors seulement que nous préférons le mal qui nous est utile, au bien que nous fait aimer la nature.]

68. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:402, my emphasis. [hiermit stimmt die gemeine Menschenvernunft in ihrer praktischen Beurteilung auch vollkommen überein und hat das gedachte Prinzip jederzeit vor Augen.]

69. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:403–404. [So sind wir denn in der moralischen Erkenntnis der gemeinen Menschenvernunft bis zu ihrem Prinzip gelangt, welches sie sich zwar freilich nicht so in einer allgemeinen Form abgesondert denkt, aber doch jederzeit wirklich vor Augen hat und zum Richtmaße ihrer Beurteilung braucht. Es wäre hier leicht zu zeigen, wie sie mit diesem Kompasse in der Hand in allen vorkommenden Fällen sehr gut Bescheid wisse, zu unterscheiden, was gut, was böse, pflichtmäßig, oder pflichtwidrig sei, wenn man, ohne sie im mindesten etwas Neues zu lehren, sie nur, wie Sokrates tat, auf ihr eigenes Prinzip aufmerksam macht, und daß es also keiner Wissenschaft und Philosophie bedürfe, um zu wissen, was man zu tun habe, um ehrlich und gut, ja sogar um weise und tugendhaft zu sein.]

70. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:404. [Wäre es demnach nicht ratsamer, es in moralischen Dingen bei dem gemeinen Vernunfturteil bewenden zu lassen und höchstens nur Philosophie anzubringen, um das System der Sitten desto vollständiger und fasslicher, imgleichen die Regeln derselben zum Gebrauche (noch mehr aber zum Disputieren) bequemer darzustellen, nicht aber um selbst in praktischer Absicht den gemeinen Menschenverstand von seiner glücklichen Einfalt abzubringen und ihn durch Philosophie auf einen neuen Weg der Untersuchung und Belehrung zu bringen?]

71. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:404–405. [Es ist eine herrliche Sache um die Unschuld, nur es ist auch wiederum sehr schlimm, daß sie sich nicht wohl bewahren lässt und leicht verführt wird.]

72. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:405. [Der Mensch fühlt in sich selbst ein mächtiges Gegengewicht gegen alle Gebote der Pflicht, die ihm die Vernunft so hochachtungswürdig vorstellt, an seinen Bedürfnissen und Neigungen, deren ganze Befriedigung er unter dem Namen der Glückseligkeit zusammenfasst.]

73. T. C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative,* p. 134.

74. T. M. Greene, "The Historical Context and Religious Significance of Kant's *Religion*", in Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York: Harper, 1960), p. lii.

75. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:404. [Im praktischen aber fängt die Beurteilungskraft dann eben allererst an, sich recht vorteilhaft zu zeigen, wenn der gemeine Verstand alle sinnliche Triebfedern von praktischen Gesetzen ausschließt. Er wird alsdann sogar subtil, es mag sein, daß er mit seinem Gewissen oder anderen Ansprüchen in Beziehung auf das, was recht heißen soll, schikanieren, oder auch den Wert der Handlungen zu seiner eigenen Belehrung aufrichtig bestimmen will.]

76. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:393. [Es ist überall nichts in der Welt, ja überhaupt auch außer derselben zu denken möglich, was ohne Einschränkung für gut könnte gehalten werden, als allein ein guter Wille.]

77. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:434–35. [Im Reiche der Zwecke hat alles entweder einen Preis, oder eine Würde. Was einen Preis hat, an dessen Stelle kann auch etwas anderes als Äquivalent gesetzt werden; was dagegen über allen Preis

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erhaben ist, mithin kein Äquivalent verstattet, das hat eine Würde. Was sich auf die allgemeinen menschlichen Neigungen und Bedürfnisse bezieht, hat einen Marktpreis; das, was, auch ohne ein Bedürfnis vorauszusetzen, einem gewissen Geschmacke, d. i. einem Wohlgefallen am bloßen zwecklosen Spiel unserer Gemütskräfte, gemäß ist, einen Affektionspreis; das aber, was die Bedingung ausmacht, unter der allein etwas Zweck an sich selbst sein kann, hat nicht bloß einen relativen Wert, d. i. einen Preis, sondern einen innern Wert, d. i. Würde. Nun ist Moralität die Bedingung, unter der allein ein vernünftiges Wesen Zweck an sich selbst sein kann, weil nur durch sie es möglich ist, ein gesetzgebendes Glied im Reiche der Zwecke zu sein. Also ist Sittlichkeit und die Menschheit, so fern sie derselben fähig ist, dasjenige, was allein Würde hat.]

78. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:462. [Die Menschheit selbst ist eine Würde; denn der Mensch kann von keinem Menschen (weder von anderen noch so gar von sich selbst) bloß als Mittel, sondern muß jederzeit zugleich als Zweck gebraucht werden, und darin besteht eben seine Würde (die Persönlichkeit).]

79. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:396, my emphasis. [so muss die wahre Bestimmung derselben sein, einen nicht etwa in anderer Absicht als Mittel, sondern an sich selbst guten Willen hervorzubringen . . . Dieser Wille darf also zwar nicht das einzige und das ganze, aber er muss doch das höchste Gut und zu allem Übrigen, selbst allem Verlangen nach Glückseligkeit, die Bedingung sein.]

80. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:435. [das aber, was die Bedingung ausmacht, unter der allein etwas Zweck an sich selbst sein kann, hat nicht bloß einen relativen Wert, d. i. einen Preis, sondern einen innern Wert, d. i. Würde.]

81. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:428. [Gesetzt aber, es gäbe etwas, dessen Dasein an sich selbst einen absoluten Wert hat, was als Zweck an sich selbst ein Grund bestimmter Gesetze sein könnte, so würde in ihm und nur in ihm allein der Grund eines möglichen kategorischen Imperativs, d. i. praktischen Gesetzes, liegen.]

82. "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder and reverence the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within.*" Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:161. [Zwei Dinge erfüllen das Gemüt mit immer neuer und zunehmenden Bewunderung und Ehrfurcht, je öfter und anhaltender sich das Nachdenken damit beschäftigt: *Der bestirnte Himmel über mir, und das moralische Gesetz in mir.*]

83. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:428.

84. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* p. 158.

85. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* pp. 100–101.

86. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:341. [Weit gefehlt, daß diese Pflichten die niedrigsten sind, sie haben vielmehr den ersten Rang, und sind unter allen die wichtigsten, denn ohne noch erst zu erklären, was die Pflicht gegen sich selbst sey, so kann man sagen: Wenn ein Mensch seine eigne Person entehrt, was kann man von dem noch fordern?]

87. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:347. [Das principium der Pflichten gegen sich selbst bestehet nicht in der Selbstgunst, sondern in der Selbstschätzung, das heißt unsre Handlungen müssen mit der Würde der Menschheit übereinstimmen. Man könnte auch hier sagen, so wie es beim Recht heißt: neminem laede, also noli naturam humanam in te ipso laedere.]

88. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:342. [Der Selbstmord ist die höchste Verletzung der Pflichten gegen sich selbst.]

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89. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Vigilantius,* Ak. 27:593. [Er ist zwar proprietarius davon, d.i. er schaltet und waltet darüber, aber als über eine Person, d.i. das phänomenon erscheint insoweit, als er über denselben als Sache disponieren will, durch das noumenon eingeschränkt.]

90. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:343. [Die Pflichten gegen uns selbst . . . sind unabhängig von allen Vorteilen, und gehn nur auf die Würde der Menschheit. Sie beruhen darauf, daß wir in Ansehung unserer Person keine ungebundne Freiheit haben, daß die Menschheit in unserer eignen Person hochgeschürzt werden müße, weil ohne dieses der Mensch ein Gegenstand der Verachtung ist, welches ein absoluter Tadel ist, weil er nicht nur in Ansehung anderer, sondern auch an sich selbst nichts werth ist. Die Pflichten gegen sich selbst sind die oberste Bedingung und das principium aller Sittlichkeit, denn der Werth der Person macht den moralischen Werth aus.]

91. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Vigilantius,* Ak. 27:627. [Nun ist aber der Selbstmord dem Begriff des Rechtes der Menschheit in meiner eignen Person zuwider. Die Menschheit aber ist ein an sich unverletzbares Heiligtum; in demselben ist meine Persönlichkeit, oder das Recht der Menschheit in meiner Person ebenso unverletzbar enthalten.]

92. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* p. 126.

93. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:371. [denn das Leben ist an und für sich selbst auf keine Weise hoch zu schätzen, sondern nur in sofern muss ich mein Leben zu erhalten suchen als ich werth bin zu leben.]

94. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:377. [Die Menschheit in unsrer Person ist ein Gegenstand der höchsten Achtung und in uns unverletzlich. In den Fällen wo der Mensch dadurch entehrt wird, da ist der Mensch verbunden, lieber sein Leben aufzuopfern als seine Menschheit in seiner Person zu entehren. Denn ehrt er seine Menschheit in seiner Person wenn sie von andern soll entehrt werden. Kann der Mensch sein Leben nicht anders erhalten als durch Entehrung seiner Menschheit, so soll er es lieber aufopfern. Denn setzt er zwar thierisches Leben in Gefahr, allein er fühlt doch, daß er so lange er gelebet, ehrenwerth gelebet hat. Es liegt nicht daran, daß der Mensch lange lebe (denn der Mensch verliert nicht durch den Zufall sein Leben, sondern nur die Verlängerung der Jahre seines Lebens, das Urtheil ist ihm schon von der Natur gesprochen, einmal zu sterben), sondern daß er so lang er lebt, ehrenwerth lebe, und die Würde der Menschheit nicht entehre. Kann er nun länger nicht so leben, so kann er gar nicht leben; denn ist sein moralisch Leben zum Ende. Das moralische Leben ist aber denn zum Ende, wenn es mit der Würde der Menschheit nicht mehr übereinstimmt.]

95. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:429. [Die größte Verletzung der Pflicht des Menschen gegen sich selbst, bloß als moralisches Wesen betrachtet (die Menschheit in seiner Person), ist das Widerspiel der Wahrhaftigkeit: die *Lüge.*]

96. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:429. [Durch jene macht er sich in anderer, durch diese aber, was noch mehr ist, in seinen eigenen Augen zum Gegenstande der Verachtung, und verletzt die Würde der Menschheit in seiner eigenen Person.]

97. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:393. [ein vernünftiger unparteiischer Zuschauer sogar am Anblicke eines ununterbrochenen Wohlergehens eines Wesens, das kein Zug eines reinen und guten Willens ziert, nimmermehr ein Wohlgefallen haben kann, und so der gute Wille die unerlässliche Bedingung selbst der Würdigkeit glücklich zu sein auszumachen scheint.]

98. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:332. [denn, wenn die Gerechtigkeit untergeht, so hat es keinen Wert mehr, daß Menschen auf Erden leben.]

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99. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:385. [Sie sind: *Eigene Vollkommenheit—fremde Glückseligkeit.*]

100. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:124. [der Zustand eines vernünftigen Wesens in der Welt, dem es, im Ganzen seiner Existenz, *alles nach Wunsch und Willen geht.*]

101. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:385. [sich seinen Zweck nach seinen eigenen Begriffen von Pflicht zu setzen]

102. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:436–37. [Werdet nicht der Menschen Knechte. Laßt euer Recht nicht ungeahndet von anderen mit Füßen treten. Macht keine Schulden, für die ihr nicht volle Sicherheit leistet. Nehmt nicht Wohltaten an, die ihr entbehren könnt, und seid nicht Schmarotzer, oder Schmeichler, oder gar (was freilich nur im Grad von dem Vorigen unterschieden ist) Bettler. Daher seid wirtschaftlich, damit ihr nicht bettelarm werdet. Das Klagen und Winseln, selbst das bloße Schreien bei einem körperlichen Schmerz ist euer schon unwert, am meisten, wenn ihr euch bewußt seid, ihn selbst verschuldet zu haben: Daher die Veredlung (Abwendung der Schmach) des Todes eines Delinquenten durch die Standhaftigkeit, mit der er stirbt. Das Hinknien oder Hinwerfen zur Erde, selbst um die Verehrung himmlischer Gegenstände sich dadurch zu versinnlichen, ist der Menschenwürde zuwider, so wie die Anrufung derselben in gegenwärtigen Bildern; denn ihr demütigt euch alsdann nicht unter einem *Ideal,* das euch eure eigene Vernunft vorstellt, sondern unter einem *Idol,* was euer eigenes Gemächsel ist.]

103. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:390.

104. Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 454.

105. See Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age,* especially the chapter "The 'Trial' of Theoretical Curiosity".

Chapter 6. From Heaven to History

Epigraph: Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik,* p. 298.

1. Walter Benjamin to Gerhard Scholem, 31 January 1918, in Walter Benjamin, *Briefe,* Vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), p. 171: "I think that, if we were to spend a little time looking at his ideas, we should soon see the spiritual physiognomy that looks out of it: that of an intellectual man of violence, a mystic of violence, the worst kind that there is: but still a mystic." [Ich glaube, wir würden, wenn wir uns seine Sachen auf kurze Zeit vornehmen würden, bald auf die geistige Physiognomie kommen die daraus blickt: die eines intellektuellen Gewaltmenschen, eines Mystikers der Gewalt, die schlechteste Sorte die es gibt: aber auch Mystiker].

2. For example, by Hannah Arendt. Hannah Arendt, "Postscriptum to Thinking", in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 5.

3. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 340. [. . . die erscheinende Dialektik der Endlichkeit dieser Geister, aus welcher der *allgemeine* Geist, der *Geist der Welt,* als unbeschränkt ebenso sich hervorbringt, als er es ist, der sein Recht—und sein Recht ist das allerhöchste—an ihnen in der *Weltgeschichte,* als dem *Weltgerichte* ausübt.]

4. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:393.

5. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:393. [ein vernünftiger unparteiischer Zuschauer sogar am Anblicke eines ununterbrochenen Wohlergehens eines Wesens, das kein Zug eines reinen und guten Willens ziert, nimmermehr ein Wohlgefallen haben kann, und so der gute Wille die unerlässliche Bedingung selbst der Würdigkeit glücklich zu sein auszumachen scheint.]

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6. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:396. [Dieser Wille darf also zwar nicht das einzige und das ganze, aber er muss doch das höchste Gut und zu allem Übrigen, selbst allem Verlangen nach Glückseligkeit, die Bedingung sein.]

7. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:129–30. [Das moralische Gesetz gebietet, das höchste mögliche Gut in einer Welt mir zum letzten Gegenstande alles Verhaltens zu machen. Dieses aber kann ich nicht zu bewirken hoffen, als nur durch die Übereinstimmung meines Willens mit dem eines heiligen und gütigen Welturhebers, und, obgleich in dem Begriffe des höchsten Guts, als dem eines Ganzen, worin die größte Glückseligkeit mit dem größten Maße sittlicher (in Geschöpfen möglicher) Vollkommenheit, als in der genausten Proportion verbunden vorgestellt wird, *meine eigene Glückseligkeit* mit enthalten ist: so ist doch nicht sie, sondern das moralische Gesetz (welches vielmehr mein unbegrenztes Verlangen danach auf Bedingungen strenge einschränkt) der Bestimmungsgrund des Willens, der zur Beförderung des höchsten Guts angewiesen wird.

Daher ist auch die Moral nicht eigentlich die Lehre, wie wir uns glücklich *machen,* sondern wie wir der Glückseligkeit *würdig* werden sollen. Nur dann, wenn Religion dazu kommt, tritt auch die Hoffnung ein, der Glückseligkeit dereinst in dem Maße teilhaftig zu werden, als wir darauf bedacht gewesen, ihrer nicht unwürdig zu sein.]

8. Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be True in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice" ("Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis"), Ak. 8:284. ["Ich für mein Teil gestehe, daß ich diese Teilung der Ideen in meinem *Kopfe* sehr wohl begreife, daß ich aber diese Teilung der Wünsche und Bestrebungen in meinem *Herzen* nicht finde, daß es mir sogar unbegreiflich ist, wie irgend ein Mensch sich bewußt werden kann, sein Verlangen nach Glückseligkeit selbst rein abgesondert, und also die Pflicht ganz uneigennützig ausgeübt zu haben."

Ich antworte zuvörderst auf das letztere. Nämlich ich räume gern ein, daß kein Mensch sich mit Gewißheit bewußt werden könne, seine Pflicht ganz uneigennützig *ausgeübt zu haben:* denn das gehört zur inneren Erfahrung, und es würde zu diesem Bewußtsein seines Seelenzustandes eine durchgängig klare Vorstellung aller sich dem Pflichtbegriffe, durch Einbildungskraft, Gewohnheit und Neigung, beigesellenden Nebenvorstellungen und Rücksichten gehören, die in keinem Falle gefordert werden kann; auch überhaupt kann das Nichtsein von etwas (mithin auch nicht von einem in Geheim gedachten Vorteil) kein Gegenstand der Erfahrung sein.]

9. Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May Be True in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice", Ak. 8:284. [Das aber der Mensch seine Pflicht ganz uneigennützig ausüben solle und sein Verlangen nach Glückseligkeit völlig vom Pflichtbegriffe absondern müsse, um ihn ganz rein zu haben: dessen ist er sich mit der größten Klarheit bewußt; oder, glaubte er nicht es zu sein, so kann von ihm gefordert werden, daß er es sei, so weit es in seinem Vermögen ist: weil eben in dieser Reinigkeit der wahre Werth der Moralität anzutreffen ist, und er muß es also auch können.]

10. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:490. [sondern vielmehr umgekehrt aus der Notwendigkeit der Bestrafung auf ein künftiges Leben die Folgerung gezogen wird]

11. Michael Sandel, "Introduction", in M. Sandel (ed.), *Liberalism and Its Critics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), pp. 3–4.

12. For example, those included in Hans Reiss's well-known collection *Kant's Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970): "Idea for a Universal History", "What Is Enlightenment?", "Theory and Practice", "Perpetual Peace" and "Doctrine of Right" from the *Metaphysics of Morals.*

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13. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:230. [Das Recht ist also der Inbegriff der Bedingungen, unter denen die Willkür des einen mit der Willkür des andern nach einem allgemeinen Gesetze der Freiheit zusammen vereinigt werden kann.]

14. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:230. [Der Begriff des Rechts, sofern er sich auf eine ihm korrespondierende Verbindlichkeit bezieht (d.i. der moralische Begriff derselben), betrifft *erstlich* nur das äußere und zwar praktische Verhältnis einer Person gegen eine andere, sofern ihre Handlungen als Facta aufeinander (unmittelbar, oder mittelbar) Einfluß haben können. Aber *zweitens* bedeutet er nicht das Verhältnis der Willkür auf den *Wunsch* (folglich auch auf das bloße Bedürfnis) des anderen, wie etwa in den Handlungen der Wohltätigkeit oder Hartherzigkeit, sondern lediglich auf die *Willkür* des anderen. *Drittens* in diesem wechselseitigen Verhältnis der Willkür kommt auch gar nicht die *Materie* der Willkür, d.i. der Zweck, den ein jeder mit dem Objekt, was er will, zur Absicht hat, in Betrachtung, z.B. es wird nicht gefragt, ob jemand bei der Ware, die er zu seinem eigenen Handel von mir kauft, auch seinen Vorteil finden möge, oder nicht, sondern nur nach der *Form* im Verhältnis der beiderseitigen Willkür, sofern sie bloß als *frei* betrachtet wird, und ob durch die Handlung eines von beiden sich mit der Freiheit des andern nach einem allgemeinen Gesetze zusammen vereinigen lasse.]

15. Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:470. [Die letzte Bestimmung des menschlichen Geschlechts ist die moralische Vollkommenheit, so fern sie durch die Freyheit des Menschen bewirkt wird, wodurch alsdenn der Mensch der größten Glückseligkeit fähig ist. Gott hätte die Menschen schon so vollkommen machen und jedem die Glückseligkeit haben austeilen können, allein alsdenn wäre es nicht aus dem innern principio der Welt entsprungen. Das innere principium der Welt aber ist die Freyheit. Die Bestimmung des Menschen ist also, seine größte Vollkommenheit durch seine Freyheit zu erlangen. Gott will nicht allein, daß wir sollen glücklich seyn, sondern wir sollten uns glücklich machen, das ist die wahre Moralität. Der allgemeine Zweck der Menschheit ist die höchste moralische Vollkommenheit; wenn sich nun alle so verhalten möchten, daß ihr Verhalten mit dem allgemeinen Zweck übereinstimmen möchte, so wäre dadurch die höchste Vollkommenheit erreicht.]

16. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:97–98. [das höchste sittliche Gut durch die Bestrebung der einzelnen Person zu ihrer eigenen moralischen Vollkommenheit allein nicht bewirkt wird, sondern eine Bereinigung derselben in ein Ganzes zu eben demselben Zwecke zu einem System wohlgesinnter Menschen erfordert . . . einer allgemeinen Republik nach Tugendgesetzen.]

17. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:98. [daß diese Pflicht die Voraussetzung einer andern Idee, nämlich der eines höhern moralischen Wesens, bedürfen werde, durch dessen allgemeine Veranstaltung die für sich unzulänglichen Kräfte der Einzelnen zu einer gemeinsamen Wirkung vereinigt werden.]

18. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:100–101. [Ein moralisches Volk Gottes zu stiften, ist also ein Werk dessen Ausführung nicht von Menschen, sondern nur von Gott selbst erwartet werden kann. Deswegen ist aber doch dem Menschen nicht erlaubt, in Ansehung dieses Geschäftes unthätig zu sein, und die Vorsehung walten zu lassen, als ob ein Jeder nur seiner moralischen Privatangelegenheit nachgehen, das Ganze der Angelegenheit des menschlichen Geschlechts aber (seiner moralischen Bestimmung nach) einer höhern Weisheit überlassen dürfe. Er muß vielmehr so verfahren, als ob Alles auf ihn ankomme, und nur unter dieser Bedingung darf er hoffen, daß höhere Weisheit seiner wohlgemeinten Bemühung die Vollendung werde angedeihen lassen.]

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19. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:101. [Ein ethisches gemeines Wesen unter der göttlichen moralischen Gesetzgebung ist eine Kirche, welche, sofern sie kein Gegenstand möglicher Erfahrung ist, die unsichtbare Kirche heißt (eine bloße Idee von der Vereinigung aller Rechtschaffenen unter der göttlichen unmittelbaren aber moralischen Weltregierung, wie sie jeder von Menschen zu stiftenden zum Urbilde dient). Die sichtbare ist die wirkliche Vereinigung der Menschen zu einem Ganzen, das mit jenem Ideal zusammenstimmt.]

20. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:98. [einer allgemeinen Republik nach Tugendgesetzen]

21. Friedrich Schiller, *Schiller's Works,* Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: George Barrie, 1883), p. 35.

22. See E. C. Wilm, "The Kantian Studies of Schiller", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 7, no. 2 (April 1908), 126–33.

23. A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936), Ch. 9.

24. "What could it mean for the human being, as we know him here, to have been made for an unlimited expansion of the powers of soul, to a continual expansion of his perceptions and powers—made, indeed, for the state as the goal of his species, and all preceding generations properly for the last alone, which is to be enthroned on the ruined scaffolding of the happiness of the rest?" J. G. Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (*Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*), *Werke* 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989), Bk. VIII, Ch. 5. [Was z.B. könnte es heißen, daß der Mensch, wie wir ihn hier kennen, zu einem unendlichen Wachstum seiner Seelenkräfte zu einer fortgehenden Ausbreitung seiner Empfindungen und Wirkungen, ja gar, daß er für den Staat, als das Ziel seines Geschlechts, und alle Generationen desselben eigentlich nur für die letzte Generation gemacht sein, die auf dem zerfallenen Gerüst der Glückseligkeit aller vorhergehenden throne?]

25. Quoted in I. Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 105.

26. Although Hannah Arendt has claimed that it does. Arendt's objection and the appropriate response to it (as well as others who have made a similar objection) are discussed in a long footnote by Allen Wood in *Kant's Ethical Thought,* pp. 389–90. I differ with Wood about Kant on several matters, but I very much agree with him when he writes there: "As Kant sees quite clearly, [the charge of using the happiness of earlier generations as a means to the happiness of later ones] depends on presupposing that *human happiness* must be God's final end in history." The interpretation developed in this book is framed around denying exactly that mistaken assumption.

27. Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends,* p. 153.

28. Voltaire, *La Philosophie de l'histoire* (Paris, 1765).

29. Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind,* Bk. 15, Ch. 5. [Die Fortpflanzung der Geschlechter und Traditionen knüpfte also auch die menschliche Vernunft aneinander, nicht als ob sie in jedem einzelnen nur ein Bruch des Ganzen wäre, eines Ganzen, das in einem Subjekt nirgend existieret, folglich auch nicht der Zweck des Schöpfers sein konnte, sondern weil es die Anlage und Kette des ganzen Geschlechts so mit sich führte. Wie sich die Menschen fortpflanzen, pflanzen die Tiere sich auch fort, ohne daß eine allgemeine Tiervernunft aus ihren Geschlechtern werde; aber weil Vernunft allein den Beharrungsstand der Menschheit bildet, mußte sie sich als Charakter des Geschlechts fortpflanzen; denn ohne sie war das Geschlecht nicht mehr.]

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30. Herder, *Another Philosophy of History* (*Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit*), *Werke* 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989), p. 41. [Der Mensch] muss durch verschiedne Lebensalter hindurch! alle offenbar im Fortgange! Ein Streben aufeinander in Kontinuität! Zwischen jedem sind scheinbare Ruheplätze, Revolutionen! Veränderungen! und dennoch hat jedes ein Mittelpunkt seiner Glückseligkeit in sich selbst!]

31. Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind,* Bk. XV, Ch. 1. [Der Zweck einer Sache, die nicht bloß ein totes Mittel ist, muss in ihr selbst liegen. Wären wir dazu geschaffen, um wie der Magnet sich nach den Norden kehrt, einen Punkt der Vollkommenheit, der außer uns ist und den wir nie erreichen könnten, mit ewig-vergeblicher Mühe nachzustreben: so würden wir als blinde Maschinen nicht nur uns, sondern selbst das Wesen bedauern dürfen, das uns zu einem Tantalischen Schicksal verdammte, indem es unser Geschlecht bloß zu seiner, einer Schadenfrohen, ungöttlichen Augenweide schuf.]

32. Herder, *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind,* Bk. IX, Ch. 4. [. . . der natürlichste Staat ist also auch *Ein* Volk, mit einem Nationalcharakter. Jahrtausende lang erhält sich dieser in ihm und kann, wenn seinem mitgebornen Fürsten daran liegt, am natürlichsten ausgebildet werden: denn ein Volk ist sowohl eine Pflanze der Natur als eine Familie; nur jenes mit mehreren Zweigen. Nichts scheint also dem Zweck der Regierungen so offenbar entgegen, als die unnatürliche Vergrößerung der Staaten, die wilde Vermischung der Menschen-Gattungen und Nationen unter einem Szepter. Der Menschenszepter ist viel zu schwach und klein, daß so widersinnige Teile in ihn eingeimpft werden könnten; zusammengeleimt werden sie also in eine brechliche Maschiene, die man Staats-Maschiene nennet, ohne inneres Leben und Sympathie der Theile gegen einander.]

33. Herder, "On Human Immortality" ("Über die menschliche Unsterblichkeit: Eine Vorlesung"), in *Zerstreute Blätter: Vierte Sammlung* (Gotha: Carl Wilhelm Ettinger, 1792), p. 157. [Unsterblich nämlich und allein unsterblich ist, was in der Natur und Bestimmung des Menschengeschlechts, in seiner fortgehenden Tätigkeit, im unverrückten Gange desselben zu seinem Ziel, der möglichstbesten Ausarbeitung seiner Form wesentlich liegt; was also seiner Natur nach fortdauren, auch unterdruckt immer wiederkommen, und durch die fortgesetzte, vermehrte Tätigkeit der Menschen immer mehr Umfang, Haltung und Würksamkeit erlangen muß: das *rein-Wahre, Gute und Schöne*.]

34. Herder, "On Human Immortality", p. 165. [Zum Übergange dieses Beitrages in den gesammten ewigen Schatz der Menschheit gehört nothwendig eine *Ablegung unseres Ich,* d. i. eine Entäußerung seines Selbstes und der Vorurtheile, die an diesem Selbst haften. Wollten wir, wenn wirs auch könnten, Welt und Nachwelt mit unsern Schwächen beschenken? Nein! Der Nektar der Unsterblichkeit, der Lebenssaft, durch welchen das Wahre und Gute keimet, ist ein reiner Saft; alles mit Persönlichkeit Vermischte muß in den Abgrund; in den Gefässen und Triebwerken der großen Weltmaschiene muß es so lange geläutert werden, bis der Bodensatz sinket.]

35. Of course, the word *Geist* had already had a long and complicated history in German philosophy, theology and literature, but the article in the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* notes that its use as a "collective singular" was part of a general tendency that took place in what Reinheit Koselleck called the "great time of singularizations" and dates that usage from "around 1800". As we can see, however, Herder is clearly anticipating it here. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer and Gottfried Gabriel (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 1971–2007).

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36. Herder, "On Human Immortality", p. 175. [Wie also des Menschen eigenstes Vermögen mehr oder minder ein umfassender Geist ist, der mit Hülfe der Vorzeit aus seinem Jetzt auf die Zukunft wirket: so sind die *Mittel,* die er in Händen hat, oder die er, eben dieser seiner Natur nach, sich selbst erschaffet, *offenbare Werkzeuge und Symbole dieser thätigen Fortwirkung.* Ich rechne hiezu vorzüglich *Sprache, Schrift, Wissenschaft, Kunst,* und die Kunst der Künste, *Gesetzgebung und Staatseinrichtung;* sie sind die großen und kleinen Schiffe, mittelst welcher er den Ocean der Zeiten durchsegelt.]

37. Fichte, "Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation", in D. Breazeale (ed.), *Early Philosophical Writings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 144–84.

38. Fichte, "Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation", p. 168. [Wenn wir die entwickelte Idee auch nur ohne alle Beziehung auf uns selbst betrachten, so erblicken wir doch wenigstens ausser uns eine Verbindung, in der keiner für sich selbst arbeiten kann, ohne für alle andere zu arbeiten, oder für den anderen arbeiten, ohne zugleich für sich selbst zu arbeiten—indem der glückliche Fortgang Eines Mitgliedes glücklicher Fortgang für Alle, und der Verlust des Einen Verlust für Alle ist: ein Anblick, der schon durch die Harmonie, die wir in dem allermannigfaltigsten erblicken, uns innig wohlthut und unseren Geist mächtig emporhebt.]

39. Fichte, "Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation", p. 168. [Das Gefühl unserer Würde und unserer Kraft steigt, wenn wir uns sagen, was jeder unter uns sich sagen kann: mein Daseyn ist nicht vergebens und zwecklos; ich bin ein nothwendiges Glied der grossen Kette, die von Entwickelung des ersten Menschen zum vollen Bewusstseyn seiner Existenz bis in die Ewigkeit hinausgeht; alles, was jemals gross und weise und edel unter den Menschen war,—diejenigen Wohlthäter des Menschengeschlechts, deren Namen ich in der Weltgeschichte aufgezeichnet lese, und die mehreren, deren Verdienste ohne ihre Namen vorhanden sind,—sie alle haben für mich gearbeitet;—ich bin in ihre Ernte gekommen;—ich betrete auf der Erde, die sie bewohnten, ihre Segen verbreitenden Fusstapfen. Ich kann, sobald ich will, die erhabene Aufgabe, die sie sich aufgegeben hatten, ergreifen, unser gemeinsames Brudergeschlecht immer weiser und glücklicher zu machen; ich kann da fortbauen, wo sie aufhören mussten; ich kann den herrlichen Tempel, den sie unvollendet lassen mussten, seiner Vollendung näher bringen.]

40. Fichte, "Some Lectures concerning the Scholar's Vocation", pp. 168–69. ["Aber ich werde aufhören müssen, wie sie"; dürfte sich jemand sagen.—O! es ist der erhabenste Gedanke unter allen: ich werde, wenn ich jene erhabene Aufgabe übernehme, nie vollendet haben; ich kann also, so gewiss die Übernehmung derselben meine Bestimmung ist, ich kann nie aufhören, *zu wirken* und mithin nie aufhören *zu seyn.* Das, was man Tod nennt, kann mein Werk nicht abbrechen; denn mein Werk soll vollendet werden, und es kann in keiner Zeit vollendet werden, mithin ist meinem Daseyn keine Zeit bestimmt,—und ich bin ewig. Ich habe zugleich mit der Übernehmung jener grossen Aufgabe die Ewigkeit an mich gerissen. Ich hebe mein Haupt kühn empor zu dem drohenden Felsengebirge, und zu dem tobenden Wassersturz, und zu den krachenden, in einem Feuermeere schwimmenden Wolken, und sage: ich bin ewig, und ich trotze eurer Macht! Brecht alle herab auf mich, und du Erde und du Himmel, vermischt euch im wilden Tumulte, und ihr Elemente alle,—schäumet und tobet, und zerreibet im wilden Kampfe das letzte Sonnenstäubchen des Körpers, den ich mein nenne;—mein Wille allein mit seinem festen Plane soll kühn und kalt über den Trümmern des Weltalls schweben; denn ich habe meine Bestimmung ergriffen, und die ist dauernder, als ihr; sie ist ewig, und ich bin ewig, wie sie.]

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41. The subject is explored in Frank Manuel's classic *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

42. J. G. Fichte, *Lectures on Logic and Metaphysics* (*Logik und Metaphysik nach Platners philosoph. Aphorismen*), in *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,* Vol. 4 (Munich: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962–2012), 3, p. 344. [Die Vorstellungen der meisten Menschen über das Leben jenseits des Grabes sind nicht viel anders—, Eine, die übelste von allen hat überhand genommen, die Vorstellung eines Concerts, wo nur Halleluja gesungen wird.—wobei ich wenigstens die unausstehlichste Langweile mir denke.]

43. Daniel Breazeale, "Editor's Introduction", in D. Breazeale (ed.), *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 40–45 gives a succinct and judicious summary. A comprehensive documentation is in W. Röhr (ed.), *Appellation an das Publikum* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1987). See also M. Rosen, "Fichte's Way", *The Nation,* 2 September 2013, pp. 33–35.

44. Friedrich Karl Forberg, "*Entwickelung des Begriffs der Religion*", in W. Röhr (ed.), *Appellation an das Publikum* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1987), pp. 23–36, 23 [Religion ist nichts anderes als ein *praktischer Glaube an eine moralische Weltregierung;* oder um denselben Begriff in einer bekannten geheiligten Sprache auszudrücken, ein *lebendiger Glaube an das Reich Gottes, welches kommen wird auf die Erde.*]

45. Forberg, "*Entwickelung des Begriffs der Religion*", p. 35. [Glaube an die Unsterblichkeit der Tugend und Glaube an ein Reich Gottes auf Erden]

46. Kant, "Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" ("*Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?*"), Ak. 8:37.

47. G. Eliot, "The Natural History of German Life", in *The Essays of George Eliot* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), p. 176.

48. Hölderlin to Hegel, 26 January 1795, in Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel.*

49. Hegel to Schelling, end of January 1795, in Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel.*

50. Hegel to Schelling, end of January 1795, in Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel.* [Vernunft und Freiheit bleiben unsre Losung, und unser Vereinigungspunkt die unsichtbare Kirche.]

51. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11.

52. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11. [die Frage ist diese: Wie muß eine Welt für ein moralisches Wesen beschaffen sein? Ich möchte unserer langsamen, an Experimenten mühsam schreitenden Physik einmal wieder Flügel geben.]

53. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11. [Ihr seht von selbst, daß hier alle die Ideen, vom ewigen Frieden u.s.w. nur *untergeordnete* Ideen einer höheren Idee sind: Zugleich will ich hier die Prinzipien für eine *Geschichte der Menschheit* niederlegen und das ganze elende Menschenwerk von Staat, Verfassung, Regierung, Gesetzgebung bis auf die Haut entblößen.]

54. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11. [Endlich kommen die Ideen von einer moralischen Welt, Gottheit, Unsterblichkeit,— Umsturz alles Afterglaubens, Verfolgung des Priestertums, das neuerdings Vernunft heuchelt, durch die Vernunft selbst.]

55. Jamme and Schneider, *The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism,* p. 11. [Absolute Freiheit aller Geister, die die intellektuelle Welt in sich tragen und weder Gott noch Unsterblichkeit *außer sich* suchen dürfen.]

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56. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B395. [Die Metaphysik hat zum eigentlichen Zwecke ihrer Nachforschung nur drei Ideen: Gott, Freiheit und Unsterblichkeit, so daß der zweite Begriff, mit dem ersten verbunden, auf den dritten, als einen notwendigen Schlußsatz, führen soll.]

57. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation* (*Reden an die deutsche Nation*) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2008).

58. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* 8th Address. [Der Glaube des edeln Menschen an die ewige Fortdauer seiner Wirksamkeit auch auf dieser Erde gründet sich demnach auf die Hoffnung der ewigen Fortdauer des Volkes, aus dem er selber sich entwickelt hat, und der Eigenthümlichkeit desselben.]

59. F. Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), translated by E. Wilkinson and L. Willoughby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

60. F. Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), Letter 6. [Jene Polypennatur der griechischen Staaten, wo jedes Individuum eines unabhängigen Lebens genoss und, wenn es Not tat, zum Ganzen werden konnte, machte jetzt einem kunstreichen Uhrwerk Platz, wo aus der Zusammenstückelung unendlich vieler, aber lebloser Teile ein mechanisches Leben im Ganzen sich bildet. Auseinandergerissen wurden jetzt der Staat und die Kirche, die Gesetze und die Sitten; der Genuß wurde von der Arbeit, das Mittel vom Zweck, die Anstrengung von der Belohnung geschieden.]

61. F. Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), Letter 6. [Zugleich voll Form und voll Fülle, zugleich philosophierend und bildend, zugleich zart und energisch sehen wir sie die Jugend der Phantasie mit der Männlichkeit der Vernunft in einer herrlichen Menschheit vereinigen.]

62. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* 8th Address. [ohne Einmischung und Verderbung durch irgend ein Fremdes und in das Ganze dieser Gesetzgebung nicht Gehöriges.]

63. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* 8th Address. [so muss hiebei zugleich erhellen, daß nur der Deutsche—der ursprüngliche, und nicht in einer willkürlichen Satzung erstorbene Mensch, wahrhaft ein Volk hat, und auf eins zu rechnen befugt ist, und daß nur er der eigentlichen und vernunftgemässen Liebe zu seiner Nation fähig ist.]

64. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* 14th Address. [Ist in dem, was in diesen Reden dargelegt worden, Wahrheit, so seid unter allen neueren Völkern ihr es, in denen der Keim der menschlichen Vervollkommnung am entschiedensten liegt, und denen der Vorschritt in der Entwickelung derselben aufgetragen ist. Gehet ihr in dieser eurer Wesenheit zu Grunde, so gehet mit euch zugleich alle Hoffnung, des gesamten Menschengeschlechtes auf Rettung aus der Tiefe seiner Übel zu Grunde. . . . Es ist daher kein Ausweg: wenn ihr versinkt, so versinkt die ganze Menschheit mit, ohne Hoffnung einer einstigen Wiederherstellung.]

65. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* 8th Address. [Wer nicht zuvörderst sich als ewig erblickt, der hat überhaupt keine Liebe, und kann auch nicht lieben ein Vaterland, dergleichen es für ihn nicht gibt. Wer zwar vielleicht sein unsichtbares Leben, nicht aber eben also sein sichtbares Leben, als ewig erblickt, der mag wohl einen Himmel haben, und in diesem sein Vaterland; aber hienieden hat er kein Vaterland, denn auch dieses wird nur unter dem Bilde der Ewigkeit, und zwar der sichtbaren und versinnlichten Ewigkeit erblickt, und er vermag daher auch nicht sein Vaterland zu lieben.]

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66. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation,* 8th Address. [Die Verheissung eines Lebens auch hienieden über die Dauer des Lebens hienieden hinaus,—allein diese ist es, die bis zum Tode fürs Vaterland begeistern kann.]

67. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:490. [aus der Notwendigkeit der Bestrafung auf ein künftiges Leben die Folgerung gezogen wird]

68. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences I, Werke* 8, para. 20. [Der Unterschied von Vorstellung und von Gedanken hat die nähere Wichtigkeit, weil überhaupt gesagt werden kann, daß die Philosophie nichts anderes tue, als die Vorstellungen in Gedanken zu verwandeln.]

69. J. H. Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel* (London: Longman and Green, 1865); K. Marx, *Capital* (*Das Kapital*) I, "Afterword to the Second Edition" ("Nachwort zur zweiten Auflage"), in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), pp. 18–28.

70. See Chapter 1 above.

71. Although it was common through the nineteenth century (see J. H. Stirling, for example) this is a minority approach among modern Hegel scholars. Examples, however, are Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Raymond Plant, *Hegel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Laurence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit, 1770–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

72. I have defended such an interpretation. See particularly *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

73. T. Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

74. In the English-speaking world, three contemporary interpreters have been the most significant advocates of this kind of reading of Hegel: Terry Pinkard, Robert Pippin and Robert Brandom. Apart from Pinkard's commentary on the *Phenomenology,* see, for example, R. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and R. Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019). J. N. Findlay, Wilfrid Sellars and Klaus Hartmann were important precursors, however. For a discussion of the objections to this kind of interpretation see M. Rosen, "From *Vorstellung* to Thought: Is a 'Non-metaphysical' View of Hegel Possible?", in D. Henrich and R.-P. Horstmann (eds.), *Stuttgarter Hegelkongress 1987: Metaphysik nach Kant?* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1988), pp. 248–62.

75. P. Redding, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel".

76. Hegel, *The Science of Logic I, Werke* 5, p. 44. [Die Logik ist sonach als das System der reinen Vernunft, als das Reich des reinen Gedankens zu fassen. Dieses Reich ist die Wahrheit, wie sie ohne Hülle an und für sich selbst ist. Man kann sich deswegen ausdrücken, daß dieser Inhalt die Darstellung Gottes ist, wie er in seinem ewigen Wesen vor der Erschaffung der Natur und des endlichen Geistes ist. Anaxagoras wird als derjenige gepriesen, der zuerst den Gedanken ausgesprochen habe, daß der Nus, der Gedanke, das Princip der Welt, daß das Wesen der Welt als der Gedanke bestimmt ist. Er hat damit den Grund zu einer Intellektualansicht des Universums gelegt, deren reine Gestalt die Logik seyn muß.]

77. Hegel, *The Science of Logic I, Werke* 5, p. 43. [Die reine Wissenschaft setzt somit die Befreiung von dem Gegensatze des Bewußtseyns voraus. Sie enthält den Gedanken,

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insofern er eben so sehr die Sache an sich selbst ist, oder die Sache an sich selbst, insofern sie ebenso sehr der reine Gedanke ist.]

78. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 27–28. [Ich habe deshalb die Erwähnung, daß unser Satz, die Vernunft regiere die Welt und habe sie regiert, mit der Frage von der Möglichkeit der Erkenntnis Gottes zusammenhängt, nicht unterlassen wollen, um nicht den Verdacht zu vermeiden, als ob die Philosophie sich scheue oder zu scheuen habe, an die religiösen Wahrheiten zu erinnern, und denselben aus dem Wege ginge, und zwar, weil sie gegen dieselben, sozusagen, kein gutes Gewissen habe. Vielmehr ist es in neueren Zeiten so weit gekommen, daß die Philosophie sich des religiösen Inhalts gegen manche Art von Theologie anzunehmen hat. In der christlichen Religion hat Gott sich geoffenbart, das heißt, er hat dem Menschen zu erkennen gegeben, was er ist, so daß er nicht mehr ein Verschlossenes, Geheimes ist; es ist uns mit dieser Möglichkeit, Gott zu erkennen, die Pflicht dazu auferlegt. Gott will nicht engherzige Gemüter und leere Köpfe zu seinen Kindern, sondern solche, deren Geist von sich selbst arm, aber reich an Erkenntnis seiner ist, und die in diese Erkenntnis Gottes allein allen Wert setzen. Die Entwicklung des denkenden Geistes, welche aus dieser Grundlage der Offenbarung des göttlichen Wesens ausgegangen ist, muß dazu endlich gedeihen, das, was dem fühlenden und vorstellenden Geiste zunächst vorgelegt worden, auch mit dem Gedanken zu erfassen; es muß endlich an der Zeit sein, auch diese reiche Produktion der schöpferischen Vernunft zu begreifen, welche die Weltgeschichte ist.]

79. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 28. [Unsre Betrachtung ist insofern eine Theodizee, eine Rechtfertigung Gottes, welche Leibniz metaphysisch auf seine Weise in noch unbestimmten, abstrakten Kategorien versucht hat, so daß das Übel in der Welt begriffen, der denkende Geist mit dem Bösen versöhnt werden sollte. In der Tat liegt nirgend eine größere Aufforderung zu solcher versöhnenden Erkenntnis als in der Weltgeschichte. Diese Aussöhnung kann nur durch die Erkenntnis des Affirmativen erreicht werden, in welchem jenes Negative zu einem Untergeordneten und Überwundenen verschwindet, durch das Bewußtsein, teils was in Wahrheit der Endzweck der Welt sei, teils daß derselbe in ihr verwirklicht worden sei, und nicht das Böse neben ihm sich letzlich geltend gemacht habe.]

80. "God wanted to drive Adam out so that he would not be immortal. This, too, is expressed in a simple, childlike image. For the wishes of human beings, there are two 'directions'. One line is directed toward living in undisturbed happiness, in harmony with oneself and external nature; it is the animals that remain in this unity, while humanity has to pass beyond it. The other line answers rather to the wish to live eternally. And the representation of the tree of life is formed in accord with this latter wish. When we consider it more closely it is directly evident that this is only a childlike representation. Human being as a single living thing, its singular life, its natural life, must die. So on the one hand, it is said that human beings in Paradise and without sin would be immortal; they would be able to live forever. For, if outward death were only a consequence of sin, then humanity in Paradise would be implicitly immortal; they would be able to live forever. On the other hand, however, it is also said that human beings will become immortal for the first time when they have eaten of the tree of life—but it cannot be assumed that they would have eaten of the tree of life without sin, for this was forbidden them.

The fact of the matter is that humanity is immortal only through cognitive knowledge, for only in the activity of thinking is its soul pure and free rather than mortal and animal-like. Cognition and thought are the root of human life, of human immortality as

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a totality within itself. The animal soul is submerged in corporeality, while spirit is a totality within itself. This is the first point that is represented." Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion: Band 3: Die vollendete Religion* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1984), pp. 227–28.

[Weiter wird vorgestellt, im Paradies habe noch ein zweiter Baum, der Baum des Lebens gestanden; Gott wollte Adam aus [dem Paradies] jagen, damit er nicht unsterblich wäre. Auch dies ist in einfacher, kindlicher Vorstellung gesprochen. Für die Wünsche des Menschen gibt es zwei Linien; die eine ist darauf gerichtet, in ungestörtem Glück, in Harmonie mit sich selbst und der äußeren Natur zu leben, und das Tier ist es, was in dieser Einheit bleibt, während der Mensch darüber hinauszugehen hat. Die andere Linie geht etwa auf den Wunsch, ewig zu leben. Und die Vorstellung vom Lebensbaum ist nach diesem letzten Wunsche geformt. Wenn wir es nun näher betrachten, so zeigt sich sogleich, daß dies nur eine kindliche Vorstellung ist. Der Mensch als einzelnes Lebendiges, seine einzelne Lebendigkeit, Natürlichkeit, muß sterben. Einerseits nämlich wird vorgestellt, der Mensch in Paradies ohne Sünde sei unsterblich; er würde leben können ewiglich. Denn wenn der äußerliche Tod nur eine Folge der Sünde wäre, so wäre der Mensch im Paradies an sich unsterblich. Auf der anderen Seite wird aber auch vorgestellt, der Mensch würde erst unsterblich werden, wenn er vom Baumes des Lebens äße—aber ohne Sünde wäre der Fall nicht anzunehmen, daß er vom Baum des Lebens äße; denn dies war ihm verboten.—Die Sache nun ist überhaupt diese, daß der Mensch unsterblich ist nur durch das Erkennen; denn nur als denkend ist er keine sterbliche, tierische, sondern eine reine, freie Seele. Das Erkennen, Denken ist die Wurzel seines Lebens, seiner Unsterblichkeit als Totalität in sich selbst. Die tierische Seele ist in die Körperlichkeit versenkt, dagegen der Geist ist Totalität in sich selbst. Dies ist die erste Vorstellung.]

81. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 74. [Denn die Weltgeschichte ist die Darstellung des göttlichen, absoluten Prozesses des Geistes in seinen höchsten Gestalten, dieses Stufenganges, wodurch er seine Wahrheit, das Selbstbewußtsein über sich erlangt.]

82. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 343. [Die Geschichte des Geistes ist seine *Tat,* denn er ist nur, was er tut, und seine Tat ist, sich, und zwar hier als Geist, zum Gegenstande seines Bewußtseins zu machen, sich für sich selbst auslegend zu erfassen. Dies Erfassen ist sein Sein und Prinzip, und die *Vollendung* seines Erfassens ist zugleich seine Entäußerung und sein Obergang.]

83. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit, Werke* 3, pp. 32–33. [Dies vergangene Dasein ist schon erworbnes Eigentum des allgemeinen Geistes, der die Substanz des Individuums oder seine unorganische Natur ausmacht.—Die Bildung des Individuums in dieser Rücksicht besteht, von seiner Seite aus betrachtet, darin, daß es dies Vorhandene erwerbe, seine unorganische Natur in sich zehre und für sich in Besitz nehme. Dies ist aber ebensosehr nichts anders, als daß der allgemeine Geist oder die Substanz sich ihr Selbstbewußtsein gibt, oder ihr Werden und Reflexion in sich.]

84. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, pp. 86–87. [jede Stufe als verschieden von der andern ihr bestimmtes eigentümliches Prinzip hat. Solches Prinzip ist in der Geschichte Bestimmtheit des Geistes,—ein besonderer Volksgeist. In dieser drückt er als konkret alle Seiten seines Bewußtseins und Wollens, seiner ganzen Wirklichkeit aus; sie ist das gemeinschaftliche Gepräge seiner Religion, seiner politischen Verfassung, seiner Sittlichkeit, seines Rechtssystems, seiner Sitten, auch seiner Wissenschaft, Kunst und technischen Geschicklichkeit. Diese speziellen Eigentümlichkeiten sind aus

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jener allgemeinen Eigentümlichkeit, dem besonderen Prinzipe eines Volkes zu verstehen, sowie umgekehrt aus dem in der Geschichte vorliegenden faktischen Detail jenes Allgemeine der Besonderheit herauszufinden ist. Daß eine bestimmte Besonderheit in der Tat das eigentümliche Prinzip eines Volkes ausmacht, dies ist die Seite, welche empirisch aufgenommen und auf geschichtliche Weise erwiesen werden muß.]

85. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 133, *Zusatz.* [Das Wesentliche des Willens ist mir Pflicht: wenn ich nun nichts weiß, als daß das Gute mir Pflicht ist, so bleibe ich noch beim Abstrakten derselben stehen. Die Pflicht soll ich um ihrer selbst willen tun, und es ist meine eigene Objektivität im wahrhaften Sinne, die ich in der Pflicht vollbringe; indem ich sie tue, bin ich bei mir selbst und frei. Es ist das Verdienst und der hohe Standpunkt der Kantischen Philosophie im Praktischen gewesen, diese Bedeutung der Pflicht hervorgehoben zu haben.]

86. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 57. [Der Standpunkt des freien Willens, womit das Recht und die Rechtswissenschaft anfängt, ist über den unwahren Standpunkt, auf welchem der Mensch als Naturwesen und nur als an sich seiender Begriff, der Sklaverei daher fähig ist, schon hinaus. . . . Die Sklaverei fällt in den Übergang von der Natürlichkeit der Menschen zum wahrhaft sittlichen Zustande: sie fällt in eine Welt, wo noch ein Unrecht Recht ist. Hier gilt das Unrecht und befindet sich ebenso notwendig an seinem Platz.]

87. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 57. [Hält man die Seite fest, daß der Mensch an und für sich frei sei, so verdammt man damit die Sklaverei. Aber daß jemand Sklave ist, liegt in seinem eigenen Willen, so wie es im Willen eines Volkes liegt, wenn es unterjocht wird. Es ist somit nicht bloß ein Unrecht derer, welche Sklaven machen oder welche unterjochen, sondern der Sklaven und Unterjochten selbst.]

88. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 166.

89. L. Feuerbach, *Gedanken über Tod und Unsterblichkeit aus dem Papieren eines Denkers, nebst einem Anhang theologisch-satyrischer Xenien, herausgegeben von seiner Freunde* (Nürnberg: J. A. Stein, 1830).

90. F. Richter, *Die neue Unsterblichkeitslehre. Gespräch einer Abendgesellschaft als Supplement zu Wielands Euthanasia* (Breslau: Georg Friedrich Aderholz, 1833).

91. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 342. [Die Weltgeschichte ist ferner nicht das bloße Gericht seiner Macht, d. i. die abstrakte und vernunftlose Notwendigkeit eines blinden Schicksals, sondern weil er an und für sich Vernunft, und ihr Fürsichsein im Geiste Wissen ist, ist sie die aus dem Begriffe nur seiner Freiheit notwendige Entwicklung der Momente der Vernunft und damit seines Selbstbewußtseins und seiner Freiheit, die Auslegung und Verwirklichung des allgemeinen Geistes.]

92. See in particular Adorno, *Negative Dialektik,* and Adorno, *Zur Lehre von der Geschichte und von der Freiheit (1964/65)* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

93. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 258, *Zusatz.* [Der Staat an und für sich ist das sittliche Ganze, die Verwirklichung der Freiheit, und es ist absoluter Zweck der Vernunft, daß die Freiheit wirklich sei. Der Staat ist der Geist, der in der Welt steht und sich in derselben mit Bewußtsein realisiert.]

94. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 145, *Zusatz.* [Weil die sittlichen Bestimmungen den Begriff der Freiheit ausmachen, sind sie die Substantialität oder das allgemeine Wesen der Individuen, welche sich dazu nur als ein Accidentelles verhalten. Ob das Individuum sei, gilt der objektiven Sittlichkeit gleich, welche allein das Bleibende und die Macht ist, durch welche das Leben der Individuen regiert wird.]

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95. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 258, *Zusatz.* [Bei der Freiheit muß man nicht von der Einzelnheit, vom einzelnen Selbstbewußtsein ausgehen, sondern nur vom Wesen des Selbstbewußtseins; denn der Mensch mag es wissen oder nicht, dies Wesen realisiert sich als selbständige Gewalt, in der die einzelnen Individuen nur Momente sind. Es ist der Gang Gottes in der Welt, daß der Staat ist; sein Grund ist die Gewalt der sich als Wille verwirklichenden Vernunft.]

96. The object of this sketch is to help clarify the issues at stake, not to provide a detailed engagement with Hegel's interpreters. However, it does appear to fit, in outline at least, Terry Pinkard's view. Pinkard writes: "Agents are self-conscious, metaphysically social in their self-consciousness; they make this abstract agency real and specific in different forms of life, and these forms of life progressively undermine themselves in history. Metaphorically, *Geist* ('we') reached this conclusion by forcing itself into a self-conception of all as free and equal, and it cannot rationally backtrack from that. Since everything that came before had broken down, 'we' were now forced to turn our thoughts to how well we had made that idea real and, with our new regard for impartial truth, 'we' discovered our colonialism, our racism, our sexism and our disregard for our natural context to be really at odds with all we took ourselves to have become. What 'we' had now philosophically and practically learned is that, from the shape of agency assumed in the democratic *polis* of Ancient Greece through the self-alienated selves of early modern Europe, all the way up to the post-revolutionary view that 'all are free', the history of the world is none other than the way in which the idea of freedom and equality has been forced on us by 'we' ourselves and now demands to be made real." "The Spirit of History", *Aeon,* 13 June 2019, https://aeon.co/essays/what-is-history-nobody-gave-a-deeper-answer-than-hegel. See also T. Pinkard, *Does History Make Sense?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

97. J. Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 349.

98. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 324, *Zusatz.* [Ewiger Friede wird häufig als ein Ideal gefordert, worauf die Menschheit zugehen müsse. Kant hat so einen Fürstenbund vorgeschlagen, der die Streitigkeiten der Staaten schlichten sollte, und die heilige Allianz hatte die Absicht, ungefähr ein solches Institut zu sein. Allein der Staat ist Individuum, und in der Individualität ist die Negation wesentlich enthalten. Wenn also auch eine Anzahl von Staaten sich zu einer Familie macht, so muß sich dieser Verein als Individualität einen Gegensatz kreieren und einen Feind erzeugen.]

99. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 324. [In dem Angegebenen liegt das sittliche Moment des Krieges, der nicht als absolutes Übel und als eine bloß äußerliche Zufälligkeit zu betrachten ist, welche, sei es in was es wolle, in den Leidenschaften der Machthabenden oder der Völker, in Ungerechtigkeiten u.s.f., überhaupt in solchem, das nicht sein soll, seinen somit selbst zufälligen Grund habe. Was von der Natur des Zufälligen ist, dem widerfährt das Zufällige, und dieses Schicksal eben ist somit die Notwendigkeit—wie überhaupt der Begriff und die Philosophie den Gesichtspunkt der bloßen Zufälligkeit verschwinden macht und in ihr, als dem Schein, ihr Wesen, die Notwendigkeit, erkennt.]

100. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 324. [Es gibt eine sehr schiefe Berechnung, wenn bei der Forderung dieser Aufopferung der Staat nur als bürgerliche Gesellschaft, und als sein Endzweck nur die Sicherung des Lebens und Eigentums der Individuen betrachtet wird; denn diese Sicherheit wird nicht durch die Aufopferung dessen erreicht, was gesichert werden soll; im Gegenteil.]

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101. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 345. [Gerechtigkeit und Tugend, Unrecht, Gewalt und Laster, Talente und ihre Taten, die kleinen und die großen Leidenschaften, Schuld und Unschuld, Herrlichkeit des individuellen und des Volkslebens, Selbständigkeit, Glück und Unglück der Staaten und der Einzelnen haben in der Sphäre der bewußten Wirklichkeit ihre bestimmte Bedeutung und Wert, und finden darin ihr Urteil und ihre, jedoch unvollkommene, Gerechtigkeit. Die Weltgeschichte fällt außer diesen Gesichtspunkten.]

102. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 351. [Aus derselben Bestimmung geschieht, daß zivilisierte Nationen andere, welche ihnen in den substantiellen Momenten des Staates zurückstehen (Viehzuchttreibende die Jägervölker, die Ackerbauenden beide u. s. f.), als Barbaren mit dem Bewußtsein eines ungleichen Rechts, und deren Selbständigkeit als etwas Formelles betrachten und behandeln.]

103. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 324, *Zusatz.* [Im Frieden dehnt sich das bürgerliche Leben mehr aus, alle Sphären hausen sich ein, und es ist auf die Länge ein Versumpfen der Menschen; ihre Partikularitäten werden immer fester und verknöchern. Aber zur Gesundheit gehört die Einheit des Körpers, und wenn die Teile in sich hart werden, so ist der Tod da.]

104. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 328. [Der Gehalt der Tapferkeit als Gesinnung liegt in dem wahrhaften absoluten Endzweck, der Souveräne Tat des Staates; Wirklichkeit dieses Endzwecks als Werk der Tapferkeit hat das Hingeben der persönlichen Wirklichkeit zu ihrer Vermittlung. Diese Gestalt enthält daher die Härte der höchsten Gegensätze: die Entäußerung selbst, aber als Existenz der Freiheit; die höchste Selbständigkeit des Fürsichseins, deren Existenz zugleich in dem Mechanischen einer äußeren Ordnung und des Dienstes ist, gänzlichen Gehorsam und Abtun des eigenen Meinens und Räsonnierens, so Abwesenheit des eigenen Geistes, und intensivste und umfassende augenblickliche Gegenwart des Geistes und Entschlossenheit, das feindseligste und dabei persönlichste Handeln gegen Individuen, bei vollkommen gleichgültiger, ja guter Gesinnung gegen sie als Individuen.]

105. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 328. [Das Prinzip der modernen Welt, der Gedanke und das Allgemeine, hat der Tapferkeit die höhere Gestalt gegeben, daß ihre Äußerung mechanischer zu sein scheint und nicht als Tun dieser besonderen Person, sondern nur als Gliedes eines Ganzen, ebenso daß sie als nicht gegen einzelne Personen, sondern gegen ein feindseliges Ganze überhaupt gekehrt, somit der persönliche Mut als ein nicht persönlicher erscheint. Jenes Prinzip hat darum das Feuergewehr erfunden, und nicht eine zufällige Erfindung dieser Waffe hat die bloß persönliche Gestalt der Tapferkeit in die abstraktere verwandelt.]

106. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 29. See Chapter 8 below.

107. T. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1920).

Chapter 7. Autonomy and Alienation

Epigraph: George MacDonald, *David Elginbrod* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1863).

1. Pascal, *Pensées,* 434.

2. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* B779.

3. Kant, *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,* Ak. 28:1114. [Gott ist der alleinige Weltbeherrscher; er regiert als Monarch, aber nicht als Despot. Denn er will seine Befehle aus Liebe, nicht aus knechtischer Furcht befolgt sehen.]

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4. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good,* pp. 79–81.

5. "Thus the vocation of reason must be to produce a will, not so much as a means to other purposes, but good in itself . . . This will need not indeed be the sole and complete good, but it must be the highest good and the condition of every other, even of all demands for happiness." Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:396. [so muss die wahre Bestimmung derselben sein, einen nicht etwa in anderer Absicht als Mittel, sondern an sich selbst guten Willen hervorzubringen . . . Dieser Wille darf also zwar nicht das einzige und das ganze, aber er muss doch das höchste Gut und zu allem Übrigen, selbst allem Verlangen nach Glückseligkeit, die Bedingung sein.]

6. Heinrich Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (*Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*) (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1887).

7. Thus one of the best-known modern treatments of theodicy has the title *Evil and the God of Love*—John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: Macmillan, 1966).

8. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:79.

9. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:79. [Der P. Charlevoix berichtet: daß da er seinem Irokesischen Katechismusschüler alles Böse vorerzählte, was der böse Geist in die zu Anfang gute Schöpfung hineingebracht habe, und wie er noch beständig die besten göttlichen Veranstaltungen zu vereiteln suche, dieser mit Unwillen gefragt habe: aber warum schlägt Gott den Teufel nicht todt? auf welche Frage er treuherzig gesteht, daß er in der Eile keine Antwort habe finden können.]

10. Goethe, *Faust,* Part One, Scene III.

11. For a historical discussion of providentialism see M. Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude: False Consciousness and the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity Press and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), especially Chs. 4 and 5.

12. See M. Rosen, *Hegel's Dialectic and Its Criticism,* especially Ch. 2; Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 28. See Chapter 6 above.

13. William Cowper, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" (1774).

14. I. Kant, "On Perpetual Peace", Ak. 8:363. [Daß in den kalten Wüsten am Eismeer noch das Moos wächst, welches das *Renntier* unter dem Schnee hervorscharrt, um selbst die Nahrung, oder auch das Angespann des Ostjaken oder Samojeden zu sein; oder daß die salzichten Sandwüsten doch noch dem *Kamel,* welches zu Bereisung derselben gleichsam geschaffen zu sein scheint, um sie nicht unbenutzt zu lassen, enthalten, ist schon bewundernswürdig.]

15. I. Kant, "On Perpetual Peace", Ak. 8:363. [Am meisten aber erregt die Vorsorge der Natur durch das Treibholz Bewunderung, was sie (ohne daß man recht weiß, wo es herkommt) diesen gewächslosen Gegenden zubringt, ohne welches Material sie weder ihre Fahrzeuge und Waffen, noch ihre Hütten zum Aufenthalt zurichten könnten.]

16. Kant, *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,* Ak. 28:1097–98. [Aber auch selbst im Schmerze liegen Triebfedern zur Thätigkeit, und man könnte ihn selbst daher gar wohlthätig nennen. So sind die Stechfliegen an sumpfigen Orten für den Menschen ein Ruf der Natur, die Pfützen auszutrocknen und urbar zu machen, um jener unangenehmen Gäste los zu werden.]

17. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit,* "Die Verwirklichung des vernünftigen Selbstbewusstseins: Die Lust und die Notwendigkeit", *Werke* 3, p. 271.

18. Kant, "The Conflict of the Faculties", Ak. 7:63. [Daß es aber nicht Gott sein könne, dessen Stimme er zu hören glaubt, davon kann er sich wohl in einigen Fällen überzeugen; denn wenn das was ihm durch sie geboten wird, dem moralischen Gesetz

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zuwider ist, so mag die Erscheinung ihm noch so majestätisch und die ganze Natur überschreitend dünken: er muß sie doch für Täuschung halten. Zum Beispiel kann die Mythe von dem Opfer dienen, das Abraham auf göttlichen Befehl durch Abschlachtung und Verbrennung seines einzigen Sohnes (das arme Kind trug unwissend noch das Holz hinzu)-bringen wollte. Abraham hätte auf diese vermeinte göttliche Stimme antworten müssen: "Daß ich meinen guten Sohn nicht tödten solle, ist ganz gewiß; daß aber du, der du mir erscheinst, Gott sei, davon bin ich nicht gewiß und kann es auch nicht werden", wenn sie auch vom (sichtbaren) Himmel herabschallte.]

19. Kant, *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,* Ak. 28:1087. [aber dann wird auch seine Gerechtigkeit unerbittlich seyn. Denn ein Richter, der verzeihet, lässt sich gar nicht denken! Er muss vielmehr alles Verhalten streng nach Gesetzen der Heiligkeit abwägen, und einem jeden nur daß Maaß von Glückseligkeit zu Theil werden lassen, das seiner Würdigkeit proportioniert ist. . . . Gott kann uns selbst, als der Allgütige, seiner Wohlthaten würdig machen; aber ohne daß wir, vermöge unserer Moralität derselben würdig würden, uns dennoch der Glückseligkeit theilhaftig machen, das kann er, der Gerechte, nicht.]

20. For a discussion of the trajectory to Weber see Peter E. Gordon, *Metaphysics at the Moment of Its Fall: Secularization and Social Thought in the 20th Century,* Ch. 1, "Excursus on Disenchantment". Forthcoming.

21. Schiller, *Schiller's Poems and Plays* (London: George Routledge, 1889), p. 161. [Fühllos selbst für ihres Künstlers Ehre, / Gleich dem todten Schlag der Pendeluhr, / Dient sie knechtisch dem Gesetz der Schwere, / Die entgötterte Natur.]

22. Kant's writings on religion only appeared in the 1790s and Schiller had little acquaintance with Kant's writing before that time, although it is true that he had attended lectures on Kant by Reinhold and that Reinhold's reception of Kant was very much informed by the implications of Kantianism for religion. See Wilm, "The Kantian Studies of Schiller".

23. See W. Frühwald, "Die Auseinandersetzung um Schillers Gedicht Die Götter Griechenlandes", in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft,* 1969, 251–71.

24. Goethe's comic poem "*Der Zauberlehrling*" ("The Sorcerer's Apprentice") is a well-known contemporary example.

25. Rainer Forst has given an interpretation of Kant as a critic of alienation. Forst writes that ". . . alienation (as *Entfremdung*) should be understood as a particular form of individual and social heteronomy that can only be overcome by a dialectical combination of individual and collective autonomy, recovering a deontological sense of normative authority. If we think about alienation in Kantian terms, the main source of alienation is a denial of standing or, in the extreme, losing a sense of oneself as a rational normative authority equal to all others." "Noumenal Alienation: Rousseau, Kant and Marx on the Dialectics of Self-Determination", *Kantian Review* 22, no. 4 (2017), 523. Forst does not, however, consider the troubling possibility that the Kantian drive to replace heteronomy with rational justification might bring alienation of a different kind.

26. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:446. [Der Wille ist eine Art von Kausalität lebender Wesen, so fern sie vernünftig sind, und Freiheit würde diejenige Eigenschaft dieser Kausalität sein, da sie unabhängig von fremden sie bestimmenden Ursachen wirkend sein kann: so wie Naturnotwendigkeit die Eigenschaft der Kausalität aller vernunftlosen Wesen, durch den Einfluss fremder Ursachen zur Tätigkeit bestimmt zu werden.]

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27. K. Marx, "On the Jewish Question" ("Zur Judenfrage"), in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 1 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 355.

28. Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment", Ak. 8:35.

29. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:446–47. [was kann denn wohl die Freiheit des Willens sonst sein als Autonomie, d. i. die Eigenschaft des Willens, sich selbst ein Gesetz zu sein?]

30. T. H. Huxley, "On Descartes' 'Discourse Touching the Method of Using One's Reason Rightly and of Seeking Scientific Truth'" (1870), in *Collected Essays,* Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1893–94), pp. 192–93.

31. Rawls, "Themes in Kant's Moral Philosophy", p. 97.

32. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:435–36.

33. I make no strong claims about this interpretation's accuracy, but it does seem to me the most natural reading of a great deal of Plato's work—for instance, the *Symposium.*

34. B. Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), pp. 68–69.

35. Korsgaard, "Realism and Constructivism in Twentieth Century Moral Philosophy", *Journal of Philosophical Research* 28, supplement (2003), 114.

36. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 102.

37. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity,* pp. 129–30.

38. G. A. Cohen, "Reason, Humanity and the Moral Law", in C. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 177.

39. Onora O'Neill's phrase. O'Neill, *Acting on Principle,* p. 2.

40. Among the many discussions of the alleged "abstractness" of Kantian morality, see particularly Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (1876); C. Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); A. Wood, "Hegel's Ethics", in F. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 211–33. An account of the issues from the point of view of their legacy in Marxism is given in M. Rosen, "The Marxist Critique of Morality and the Theory of Ideology", in E. Harcourt (ed.), *Morality, Reflection and Ideology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 21–43.

41. "Whoever could read his most eulogized work . . . without feeling that he were in a madhouse, would qualify as an inmate of Bedlam." Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* pp. 16, 54.

42. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* p. 55.

43. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* p. 55.

44. Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality,* p. 55.

45. F. Schiller, *On Grace and Dignity* (*Über Anmut und Würde*) (1793), in *Kallias oder über die Schönheit. Über Anmut und Würde* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 1971).

46. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Ak. 6:23. [Ich gestehe gern: daß ich dem Pflichtbegriffe gerade um seiner Würde willen keine Anmut beigesellen kann. Denn er enthält unbedingte Nöthigung, womit Anmut in geradem Widerspruch steht. Die Majestät des Gesetzes (gleich dem auf Sinai) flößt Ehrfurcht ein (nicht Scheu, welche zurückstößt, auch nicht Reiz, der zur Vertraulichkeit einladet), welche Achtung des Untergebenen gegen seinen Gebieter, in diesem Fall aber, da dieser in uns selbst liegt, ein Gefühl des Erhabenen unserer eigenen Bestimmung erweckt, was uns mehr hinreißt als alles Schöne.]

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47. Kant, *Lectures on Ethics,* Ak. 27:490. [Gewiß ist es hiernach aber auch, daß jede Verpflichtung schlechthin mit einem moralischen Zwang vergesellschaften ist, und es der Natur der Pflicht widerspricht, gern Pflichten auf sich ruhen zu haben: vielmehr ist es nothwendig, daß die Triebe des Menschen ihm Abneigung gegen die Erfüllung der moralischen Gesetze machen und solche nur durch die Auctorität der letzteren überwunden werden, ohne daß man doch sagen kann, daß sie qualvollen oder despotischen Befehlen gleich zu achten wären. Es läßt sich daher, angenommen, daß die Erfüllung der moralischen Gesetze vom Menschen nur unter einer Nöthigung erreicht werden könne, nicht behaupten, daß solche auch mit einer Anmut verbunden sey, wie Schiller.]

48. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:86, my emphases. [sondern bloß ein Gesetz aufstellst welches von selbst wider Willen Verehrung (wenngleich nicht immer Befolgung) erwirbt, vor dem alle Neigungen verstummen, wenn sie gleich insgeheim ihm entgegenwirken.]

49. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5:86. [Es kann nichts minderes sein, als was den Menschen über sich selbst (als einen Teil der Sinnenwelt) erhebt, was ihn an eine Ordnung der Dinge knüpft, die nur der Verstand denken kann, und die zugleich die ganze Sinnenwelt . . . unter sich hat.]

50. Hegel, *The Spirit of Christianity* (*Der Geist des Christentums*), in *Frühe Schriften, Werke* 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), pp. 322–23. [Auf diese Art könnte man erwarten, daß Jesus gegen die Positivität moralischer Gebote, gegen bloße Legalität gearbeitet hätte, daß er gezeigt hätte, das Gesetzliche sei ein Allgemeines und seine ganze Verbindlichkeit liege in seiner Allgemeinheit, weil einesteils jedes Sollen, jedes Gebotene zwar als ein Fremdes sich ankündigt, anderenteils aber als Begriff (die Allgemeinheit) ein Subjektives ist, wodurch es als Produkt einer menschlichen Kraft, des Vermögens der Allgemeinheit, der Vernunft, seine Objektivität, seine Positivität, Heteronomie verliert und das Gebotene [als] in einer Autonomie des menschlichen Willens gegründet sich darstellt.]

51. Hegel, *The Spirit of Christianity, Werke* 1, p. 323. [Durch diesen Gang ist aber die Positivität nur zum Teil weggenommen; und zwischen dem tungusischen Schamanen mit dem Kirche und Staat regierenden europäischen Prälaten oder dem Mogulitzen mit dem Puritaner und dem seinem Pflichtgebot Gehorchenden ist nicht der Unterschied, daß jene sich zu Knechten machen, dieser frei wäre; sondern daß jener den Herrn außer sich, dieser aber den Herrn in sich trägt, zugleich aber sein eigener Knecht ist.]

52. Hegel, *The Spirit of Christianity, Werke* 1, p. 331. [die Wiedervergeltung und die Gleichheit derselben ist das heilige Prinzip aller Gerechtigkeit, das Prinzip, auf dem jede Staatsverfassung ruhen muß. Aber Jesus fordert im allgemeine Aufgebung des Rechts, Erhebung über die ganze Sphäre der Gerechtigkeit oder Ungerechtigkeit durch Liebe, in welcher, mit dem Rechte, auch dies Gefühl der Ungleichheit und das Soll dieses Gefühls, das Gleichheit fordert, d.i. der Haß gegen Feinde verschwindet.]

53. B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Fontana, 1985), p. 7.

54. Gilbert and Sullivan's sub-title for *The Pirates of Penzance.*

55. B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy,* p. 15.

56. W. Benjamin, "Unbekannte Anekdoten aus Kants Leben", in *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976); R. Langton, "Duty and Desolation", *Philosophy* 67, no. 262 (October 1992), 481–505.

57. This information and that which follows is drawn from W. Baum, "Der Klagenfurter Herbert-Kreis zwischen Aufklärung und Romantik", *Revue Internationale de Phi-*

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losophie 50, no. 197 (3) (1996), 483–514. See also W. Berger and T. Macho (eds.), *Kant als Liebesratgeber: Eine Klagenfurter Episode* (Vienna: Verlag des Verbandes der wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1989).

58. Karl Varnhagen (Rahel's husband) edited the papers of Johann Benjamin Erhard. K. A. Varnhagen von Ense (ed.), *Denkwürdigkeiten des Philosophen und Arztes Johann Benjamin Erhard* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1830).

59. Letter from Maria von Herbert to Kant, August 1791, in I. Kant, *Briefwechsel* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1972).

60. Letter from Kant to Maria von Herbert (draft), Spring 1792, in Kant, *Briefwechsel.* [Wenn nun eine solche Umwandlung der Denkungsart Ihrem geliebtem Freunde offenbar geworden—wie denn Aufrichtigkeit ihre unverkennbare Sprache hat—so wird nur Zeit dazu erfordert, um die Spuren jenes rechtmässigen, selbst auf Tugendbegriffe gegründeten Unwillens desselben nach und nach auszulöschen und den Kaltsinn in eine noch fester gegründete Neigung zu verändern. Gelingt aber das letztere nicht, so war die vorige Wärme der Zuneigung desselben auch mehr physisch also moralisch und würde nach der flüchtigen Natur derselben auch ohne das mit der Zeit von selbst geschwunden sein; ein Unglück, dergleichen uns im Leben mancherlei aufstösst und wobei man sich mit Gelassenheit finden muss, da überhaupt der Wert des letzteren, sofern es in dem besteht, was wir Gutes geniessen können, von Menschen überhaupt viel zu hoch angeschlagen wird.]

61. "Since the sexual impulse is not an inclination that one human has for another, *qua* human, but an inclination for their sex, it is therefore a *principium* of the debasement of humanity, a source for the preference of one sex over the other, and the dishonouring of that sex by satisfying the inclination. The desire of a man for a woman is not directed to her as a human being; on the contrary, the woman's humanity is of no concern to him, and the only object of his desire is her sex." Kant, *Moral Philosophy: Collins,* Ak. 27:381–82. [Weil die Geschlechts-Neigung keine Neigung ist, die ein Mensch gegen den andern als Menschen hat, sondern eine Neigung gegen das Geschlecht; so ist diese Neigung ein Principium der Erniedrigung der Menschheit, eine Quelle, ein Geschlecht dem andern vorzuziehen und es aus Befriedigung der Neigung zu entehren. Die Neigung die man zum Weibe hat, geht nicht auf es als auf einen Menschen; vielmehr ist einem Mann die Menschheit am Weibe gleichgültig und nur das Geschlecht der Gegenstand seiner Neigung.]

62. Letter from Maria von Herbert to Kant, January 1793, in Kant, *Briefwechsel.* [ich möchte wiessen, zu welcher lebensweisse ihre philosophie sie führte, und ob es ihnen auch nicht der Muhe werth war, sich ein Weib zu nehmen oder sich irgend wem vom ganzen Herzen zu widmen, noch ihr Ebenbild fortzupflanzen, ich hab ihr Porträt von Leibpzig bey Bause in Stich bekomen, in welchen ich wohl einen Moralischen Ruhigen Tiefen aber keinen Scharfen Sinn enteke, den mir die Kritik der reinen Vernunft doch Vor allen anderen versicherte, auch bin ich nicht zufrieden dass ich sie nicht in's mitte Gesicht sehen kann.]

63. See Chapter 3 above

64. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:332. See Chapter 5 above.

65. But, as its admirers must concede, *The Magic Flute* also contains some very stark racism and misogyny.

66. "In diesen heil'gen Hallen, / Kennt man die Rache nicht. / Und ist ein Mensch gefallen, / Führt Liebe ihn zur Pflicht." ("Within these sacred portals / revenge is unknown, / and if a man has fallen, / love guides him back to duty.")

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67. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom,* p. 77. [Frei ist, was nur den Gesetzen seines eigenen Wesens gemäß handelt, und von nichts anderem weder in noch außer ihm bestimmt ist.]

68. Redding, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel". See Chapter 2 above.

69. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy I, Werke* 18, pp. 41–42. [Im Geiste ist es anders. Er ist Bewußtsein, frei, darum, daß in ihm Anfang und Ende zusammenfällt. . . . Das, für welches das Andere ist, ist dasselbe als das Andere. Nur dadurch ist der Geist bei sich selbst in seinem Anderen. Die Entwicklung des Geistes ist Herausgehen, Sichauseinanderlegen und zugleich Zusichkommen.

Dies Beisichsein des Geistes, dies Zusichselbstkommen desselben kann als sein höchstes, absolutes Ziel ausgesprochen werden. Nur dies will er, und nichts anderes. Alles, was im Himmel und auf Erden geschieht—ewig geschieht—, das Leben Gottes und alles, was zeitlich getan wird, strebt nur danach hin, daß der Geist sich erkenne, sich selber gegenständlich mache, sich finde, für sich selber werde, sich mit sich zusammenschließe. Er ist Verdoppelung, Entfremdung, aber um sich selbst finden zu können, um zu sich selbst kommen zu können. Nur dies ist Freiheit; frei ist, was nicht auf ein Anderes sich bezieht, nicht von ihm abhängig ist. Der Geist, indem er zu sich selbst kommt, erreicht dies, [ein] freier zu sein. Nur hier tritt wahrhaftes Eigentum, nur hier wahrhafte eigene Überzeugung ein. In allem anderen als im Denken kommt der Geist nicht zu dieser Freiheit. So im Anschauen, den Gefühlen: ich finde mich bestimmt, bin nicht frei, sondern *bin so,* wenn ich auch ein Bewußtsein über diese meine Empfindung habe. Im Willen hat man bestimmte Zwecke, bestimmtes Interesse; ich bin zwar frei, indem dies das Meinige ist; diese Zwecke enthalten aber immer ein Anderes, oder ein solches, welches für mich ein Anderes ist, wie Triebe, Neigungen usw. Nur im Denken ist alle Fremdheit durchsichtig, verschwunden; der Geist ist hier auf absolute Weise frei. Damit ist das Interesse der Idee, der Philosophie zugleich ausgesprochen.]

70. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* I, *Werke* 8, para. 24, *Zusatz 2.* [In der Logik werden die Gedanken so gefaßt, daß sie keinen anderen Inhalt haben als einen dem Denken selbst angehörigen und durch daß elbe hervorgebrachten. So sind die Gedanken *reine* Gedanken. So ist der Geist rein bei sich selbst und hiermit frei, denn die Freiheit ist eben dies, in seinem Anderen bei sich selbst zu sein, von sich abzuhängen, das Bestimmende seiner selbst zu sein.]

71. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 134.

72. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 30; Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* III, *Werke* 10, para. 436; Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics* I, *Werke* 19, p. 93; Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 7.

73. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 258, *Zusatz.* [Bei der Freiheit muß man nicht von der Einzelheit, vom einzelnen Selbstbewußtsein ausgehen, sondern nur vom Wesen des Selbstbewußtseins, denn der Mensch mag es wissen oder nicht, dies Wesen realisiert sich als selbständige Gewalt, in der die einzelnen Individuen nur Momente sind: es ist der Gang Gottes in der Welt, daß der Staat ist, sein Grund ist die Gewalt der sich als Wille verwirklichenden Vernunft.]

74. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* III, *Werke* 10, para. 436, *Zusatz.* [Der dem Knecht gegenüberstehende Herr war noch nicht wahrhaft frei, denn er schaute im anderen noch nicht durchaus sich selber an. Erst durch das Freiwerden des Knechtes wird folglich auch der Herr vollkommen frei. In dem Zustande dieser allgemeinen Freiheit bin ich, indem ich in mich reflektiert bin, unmittelbar in den anderen reflektiert, und

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umgekehrt beziehe ich mich, indem ich mich auf den anderen beziehe, unmittelbar auf mich selber. Wir haben daher hier die gewaltige Diremtion des Geistes in verschiedene Selbste, die an und für sich und füreinander vollkommen frei, selbständig, absolut spröde, widerstandleistend—und doch zugleich miteinander identisch, somit nicht selbständig, nicht undurchdringlich, sondern gleichsam zusammengeflossen sind.]

75. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences,* III, *Werke* 10, para. 436, *Zusatz.* [Dies Verhältnis ist durchaus spekulativer Art; und wenn man meint, das Spekulative sei etwas Fernes und Unfaßbares, so braucht man nur den Inhalt jenes Verhältnisses zu betrachten, um sich von der Grundlosigkeit jener Meinung zu überzeugen. Das Spekulative oder Vernünftige und Wahre besteht in der Einheit des Begriffs oder des Subjektiven und der Objektivität. Diese Einheit ist auf dem fraglichen Standpunkt offenbar vorhanden. Sie bildet die Substanz der Sittlichkeit, namentlich der Familie, der geschlechtlichen Liebe (da hat jene Einheit die Form der Besonderheit), der Vaterlandsliebe, dieses Wollens der allgemeinen Zwecke und Interessen des Staats, der Liebe zu Gott, auch der Tapferkeit, wenn diese ein Daransetzen des Lebens an eine allgemeine Sache ist, und endlich auch der Ehre, falls dieselbe nicht die gleichgültige Einzelheit des Individuums, sondern etwas Substantielles, wahrhaft Allgemeines zu ihrem Inhalte hat.]

76. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 145, *Zusatz.* [Weil die sittlichen Bestimmungen den Begriff der Freiheit ausmachen, sind sie die Substantialität oder das allgemeine Wesen der Individuen, welche sich dazu nur als ein Accidentelles verhalten. Ob das Individuum sei, gilt der objektiven Sittlichkeit gleich, welche allein das Bleibende und die Macht ist, durch welche das Leben der Individuen regiert wird.]

77. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit, Werke* 3, Reason: B. The Actualization of Self-Consciousness, paras. 351–52, pp. 265–66. [Wie der Einzelne in seiner einzelnen Arbeit schon eine allgemeine Arbeit bewusstlos vollbringt, so vollbringt er auch wieder die allgemeine als seinen bewußten Gegenstand; das Ganze wird als Ganzes sein Werk, für das er sich aufopfert, und ebendadurch sich selbst von ihm zurückerhält.—Es ist hier nichts, das nicht gegenseitig wäre, nichts, woran nicht die Selbstständigkeit des Individuums in der Auflösung ihres Für-sich-seins, in der Negation ihrer selbst ihre positive Bedeutung, für sich zu sein, sich gäbe. Diese Einheit des Seins für Anderes oder des Sich-zum-Dingemachens und des Für-sich-seins, diese allgemeine Substanz redet ihre allgemeine Sprache in den Sitten und Gesetzen seines Volks.]

78. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit, Werke* 3, Reason: B. The Actualization of Self-Consciousness, para. 352, p. 266. [. . . aber dies seiende unwandelbare Wesen ist nichts anders als der Ausdruck der ihr entgegengesetzt scheinenden einzelnen Individualität selbst; die Gesetze sprechen das aus, was jeder Einzelne ist und tut; das Individuum erkennt sie nicht nur als seine allgemeine gegenständliche Dingheit, sondern ebensosehr sich in ihr, oder als vereinzelt in seiner eignen Individualität und in jedem seiner Mitbürger. In dem allgemeinen Geiste hat daher jeder nur die Gewißheit seiner selbst, nichts anders in der seienden Wirklichkeit zu finden als sich selbst; er ist der andern so gewiß als seiner.—Ich schaue es in allen an, daß sie für sich selbst nur diese selbstständigen Wesen sind, als Ich es bin; Ich schaue die freie Einheit mit den andern in ihnen so an, daß sie wie durch Mich, so durch die andern selbst ist. Sie als Mich, Mich als Sie. In einem freien Volke ist darum in Wahrheit die Vernunft verwirklicht; sie ist gegenwärtiger lebendiger Geist, worin das Individuum seine Bestimmung, das heißt sein allgemeines und einzelnes Wesen, nicht nur ausgesprochen und als Dingheit vorhanden findet, sondern selbst dieses Wesen ist, und seine Bestimmung auch erreicht hat. Die weisesten Männer des Altertums haben

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darum den Ausspruch getan: daß die Weisheit und die Tugend darin bestehen, den Sitten seines Volks gemäß zu leben.]

79. "I should do my duty for its own sake and it is in the true sense my own objectivity that I realize in duty. In doing it I am by myself and free. It is the merit and the high standpoint of the Kantian practical philosophy to have brought out this meaning of duty." Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 133, *Zusatz.* [Die Pflicht soll ich um ihrer selbst willen tun, und es ist meine eigene Objektivität im wahrhaften Sinne, die ich in der Pflicht vollbringe: indem ich sie tue, bin ich bei mir selbst und frei. Es ist das Verdienst und der hohe Standpunkt der Kantischen Philosophie im Praktischen gewesen, diese Bedeutung der Pflicht hervorgehoben zu haben.]

80. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 317, *Zusatz.* [Das Prinzip der modernen Welt fordert, daß, was jeder anerkennen soll, sich ihm als ein Berechtigtes zeige.]

81. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, Preface, p. 27.

82. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 270, *Zusatz.* [Sagt man nun, der Staat müsse auf Religion sich gründen, so kann dies heißen, derselbe solle auf Vernünftigkeit beruhen und aus ihr hervorgehen. Aber dieser Satz kann auch so mißverstanden werden, daß die Menschen, deren Geist durch eine unfreie Religion gebunden ist, dadurch zum Gehorsam am geschicktesten seien. . . . Meint man, daß die Menschen Achtung vor dem Staat, vor diesem Ganzen, dessen Zweige sie sind, haben sollen, so geschieht dies freilich am besten durch die philosophische Einsicht in das Wesen desselben; aber es kann in Ermangelung dieser auch die religiöse Gesinnung dahin führen.]

83. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 65. [Die erste Produktion eines Staates ist herrisch und instinktartig. Aber auch Gehorsam und Gewalt, Furcht gegen einen Herrscher ist schon ein Zusammenhang des Willens. Schon in rohen Staaten findet dies statt, daß der besondere Wille der Individuen nicht gilt, daß auf die Partikularität Verzicht getan wird, daß der allgemeine Wille das Wesentliche ist.]

Chapter 8. Philosophy in History

Epigraph: R. M. Hare, *Essays on Religion and Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 33.

1. Kant, *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 4:404. [. . . und daß es also keiner Wissenschaft und Philosophie bedürfe, um zu wissen, was man zu tun habe, um ehrlich und gut, ja sogar um weise und tugendhaft zu sein.]

2. Schelling, *On the Essence of Human Freedom,* p. 77. [Frei ist, was nur den Gesetzen seines eigenen Wesens gemäß handelt, und von nichts anderem weder in noch außer ihm bestimmt ist.]

3. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 42. [Die Weltgeschichte ist nicht der Boden des Glücks. Die Perioden des Glücks sind leere Blätter in ihr.]

4. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, Preface.

5. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy I, Werke* 18, p. 73. [Sie ist die höchste Blüte,—sie, der Begriff er ganzen Gestalt des Geistes, das Bewusstsein und das geistige Wesen des ganzen Zustandes, der Geist der Zeit, als sich denkender Geist vorhanden.]

6. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (*Die deutsche Ideologie*), in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 3 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), pp. 26–27. [Die Moral, Reli-

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gion, Metaphysik und sonstige Ideologie und die ihnen entsprechenden Bewußtseinsformen . . . haben keine Geschichte, sie haben keine Entwicklung.]

7. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Werke,* Vol. 3 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 46. [Die Gedanken der herrschenden Klasse sind in jeder Epoche die herrschenden Gedanken, d.h. die Klasse, welche die herrschende *materielle* Macht der Gesellschaft ist, ist zugleich ihre herrschende *geistige* Macht.]

8. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy, III, Werke* 20, pp. 331–32. [Das Wahrhafte der Kantischen Philosophie ist, daß das Denken als konkret in sich, sich selbst bestimmend aufgefaßt ist; so ist die Freiheit anerkannt. Rousseau hat so in der Freiheit schon das Absolute aufgestellt; Kant hat dasselbe Prinzip aufgestellt, nur mehr nach theoretischer Seite; Frankreich faßt dies nach der Seite des Willens auf. Die Franzosen sagen: *Il a la tête près du bonnet;* sie haben den Sinn der Wirklichkeit, des Handelns, Fertigwerdens,—die Vorstellung geht unmittelbarer in Handlung über. So haben sich die Menschen praktisch an die Wirklichkeit gewendet. Sosehr die Freiheit in sich konkret ist, so wurde sie doch als unentwickelt in ihrer Abstraktion an die Wirklichkeit gewendet; und Abstraktionen in der Wirklichkeit geltend machen, heißt Wirklichkeit zerstören. Der Fanatismus der Freiheit, dem Volke in die Hand gegeben, wurde fürchterlich. In Deutschland hat dasselbe Prinzip das Interesse des Bewußtseins für sich genommen; aber es ist theoretischerweise ausgebildet worden. *Wir* haben allerhand Rumor im Kopfe und auf dem Kopfe; dabei läßt der deutsche Kopf eher seine Schlafmütze ganz ruhig sitzen und operiert innerhalb seiner.]

9. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Werke,* Vol. 3, pp. 177–78. [Der Zustand Deutschlands am Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts spiegelt sich vollständig ab in Kants "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft". Während die französische Bourgeoisie sich durch die kolossalste Revolution, die die Geschichte kennt, zur Herrschaft aufschwang und den europäischen Kontinent eroberte, während die bereits politisch emanzipierte englische Bourgeoisie die Industrie revolutionierte und sich Indien politisch und die ganze andere Welt kommerziell unterwarf, brachten es die ohnmächtigen deutschen Burger nur zum "guten Willen". Kant beruhigte sich bei dem bloßen "guten Willen", selbst wenn er ohne alles Resultat bleibt, und setzte die Verwirklichung dieses guten Willens, die Harmonie zwischen ihm und den Bedürfnissen und Trieben der Individuen, ins Jenseits. Dieser gute Wille Kants entspricht vollständig der Ohnmacht, Gedrücktheit. und Misere der deutschen Burger, deren kleinliche Interessen nie fähig waren, sich zu gemeinschaftlichen, nationalen Interessen einer Klasse zu entwickeln, und die deshalb fortwährend von den Bourgeois aller andern Nationen exploitiert wurden. Diesen kleinlichen Lokalinteressen entsprach einerseits die wirkliche lokale und provinzielle Borniertheit, andrerseits die kosmopolitische Aufgeblähtheit der deutschen Bürger. . . . Die charakteristische Form, die der auf wirklichen Klasseninteressen beruhende französische Liberalismus in Deutschland annahm, finden wir wieder bei Kant. Er sowohl wie die deutschen Burger, deren beschönigender Wortführer er war, merkten nicht, daß diesen theoretischen Gedanken der Bourgeois materielle Interessen und ein durch die materiellen Produktionsverhältnisse bedingter und bestimmter Wille zugrunde lag; er trennte daher diesen theoretischen Ausdruck von den Interessen, die er ausdruckt, machte die materiell motivierten Bestimmungen des Willens der französischen Bourgeois zu reinen Selbstbestimmungen des "freien Willens", des Willens an und für sich, des menschlichen Willens, und verwandelte ihn so in rein ideologische Begriffsbestimmungen und moralische Postulate. Die

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deutschen Kleinbürger schauderten daher auch vor der Praxis dieses energischen Bourgeoisliberalismus zuruck, sobald diese sowohl in der Schreckensherrschaft als in dem unverschämten Bourgeoiserwerb hervortrat.]

10. If the reader suspects that what we are dealing with is in fact a joke, rather than a sociologically serious attempt to bring philosophy and politics together, that may be confirmed by the fact that Heine (who was, surely, Marx's source) used Hegel's remark as the analogical basis for an elaborate squib:

> Strangely, the practical strivings of our neighbours across the Rhine had an elective affinity with our philosophical dreaming in peaceful Germany. To compare the history of the French Revolution with the history of German philosophy would make one think that the French, who had so much real business to deal with for which they had to stay awake, had asked us Germans to sleep and dream for them so that our German philosophy was nothing other than the dream of the French Revolution.
>
> We made a break with the existing order and tradition in the realm of thought, just as the French did in the sphere of society. Our philosophical Jacobins rallied around the *Critique of Pure Reason* and said nothing was valid that did not stand up to its critique. Kant was our Robespierre. After him came Fichte with his "I": the Napoleon of philosophy—supreme love and supreme egoism; the autocracy of thought; the sovereign will hastily improvising a universal empire that vanished just as swiftly; despotic, horrible, lonely idealism. The secret flowers that had been spared by the Kantian guillotine or had blossomed unnoticed in the meantime expired under the thoroughgoing march of his feet. The repressed Spirits of the Earth were then aroused, the ground trembled and the Counter-revolution broke out. Under Schelling, the past with its traditional interests was re-established and paid compensation. In the new Restoration, in the Philosophy of Nature, the grey emigrants who always intrigue against the rule of Reason and the Idea were once again in power: mysticism, pietism, Jesuitism, Legitimism, Romanticism, Teutonicism, cosiness. Until Hegel—the Orleans of philosophy—founded a new regime (or, rather, gave it an order)—an eclectic regime in which he himself who is set at its head means rather little, but which gives a constitutional place to the old Kantian Jacobins, the Fichtean Bonapartists and the Schellingian Peers of France, as well as to his own creations.

H. Heine, Introduction to *"Kahldorf über den Adel, in Briefen an den Grafen M. von Moltke"* (Nuremberg: Hoffman & Campe, 1831).

11. See Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); and Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and Interpretation", Vol. 1, p. 102.

12. See D. Garber, "What's Philosophical about the History of Philosophy?", in G. Rogers and T. Sorell (eds.), *Analytic Philosophy and History of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

13. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy,* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 186 (AT IXB:14).

14. See Plato, *Theaetetus,* 174a.

15. See Plato, *Republic,* VI 510b-c.

16. See Plato, *Gorgias,* 458a, 462a.

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17. See Plato, *Republic,* 394d.
18. See Plato, *Meno,* 81e.
19. See Plato, *Republic,* V 476d–480a.
20. See Plato, *Republic,* V 472 b-d.
21. See Plato, *Apology,* 30e.
22. See Plato, *Republic,* VII 518 c-d.
23. See Plato, *Crito,* 49 a-e.
24. F. Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (London: Cassell, 1893), 1:3.
25. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* Axx. [Denn es ist nichts als das Inventarium aller unserer Besitze durch reine Vernunft, systematisch geordnet. Es kann uns hier nichts entgehen, weil, was Vernunft gänzlich aus sich selbst hervorbringt, sich nicht verstecken kann, sondern selbst durch Vernunft ans Licht gebracht wird, sobald man nur das gemeinschaftliche Prinzip desselben entdeckt hat. Die vollkommene Einheit dieser Art Erkenntnisse, und zwar aus lauter reinen Begriffen, ohne daß irgend etwas von Erfahrung, oder auch nur besondere Anschauung, die zur bestimmten Erfahrung leiten sollte, auf sie einigen Einfluß haben kann, sie zu erweitern und zu vermehren, machen diese unbedingte Vollständigkeit nicht allein tunlich, sondern auch notwendig.]
26. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit, Werke* 3, para. 31, p. 35.
27. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology, Werke,* Vol. 3, p. 27. [Da, wo die Spekulation aufhört, beim wirklichen Leben, beginnt also die wirkliche, positive Wissenschaft.]
28. "Consequent zu sein, ist die größte Obliegenheit eines Philosophen und wird doch am seltensten angetroffen." *Critique of Practical Reason,* Ak. 5, 24.
29. Putnam, "Realism without Absolutes", p. 180.
30. This is, I take it, the underlying theme of Thomas Nagel's long philosophical career. See particularly, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
31. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* sect. 347.
32. Nietzsche, "The Intellectual Conscience", in *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 2.
33. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 227.
34. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals,* Essay III, 26.
35. David Hume, "A Dialogue", in *Enquiries concerning Human Understanding and concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 324.
36. See S. Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).
37. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 57. [sie fällt in eine Welt, wo noch ein Unrecht Recht ist.]
38. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Werke* 7, para. 351. "For the same reason, it happens that civilized nations regard and treat as barbarians those who lag behind them in institutions which are the essential moments of the state (a pastoral people in relation to hunters, agricultural nations in relation to both, etc.). They are conscious of the latter's unequal right and treat their autonomy as only a formality." [Aus derselben Bestimmung geschieht, daß zivilisierte Nationen andere, welche ihnen in den substantiellen Momenten des Staates zurückstehen (Viehzuchttreibende die Jägervölker, die Ackerbauenden beide u. s. f.), als Barbaren mit dem Bewußtsein eines ungleichen Rechts, und deren Selbständigkeit als etwas Formelles betrachten und behandeln.]

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39. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, Werke* 12, p. 65. [Schon in rohen Staaten findet dies statt, daß der besondere Wille der Individuen nicht gilt, daß auf die Partikularität Verzicht getan wird, daß der allgemeine Wille das Wesentliche ist.]

40. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit,* Reason: B. The Actualization of Self-Consciousness, *Werke* 3, p. 266. [In einem freien Volke ist darum in Wahrheit die Vernunft verwirklicht; sie ist gegenwärtiger lebendiger Geist, worin das Individuum seine *Bestimmung,* das heißt sein allgemeines und einzelnes Wesen, nicht nur ausgesprochen und als Dingheit vorhanden findet, sondern selbst dieses Wesen ist, und seine Bestimmung auch erreicht hat. Die weisesten Männer des Altertums haben darum den Ausspruch getan: *daß die Weisheit und die Tugend darin bestehen, den Sitten seines Volks gemäß zu leben*.] See Chapter 7 above.

41. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 90.

42. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23, p. 91. [Trotz der Verschiedenheit seiner produktiven Funktionen weiß er, daß sie nur verschiedene Betätigungsformen desselben Robinson, also nur verschiedene Weisen menschlicher Arbeit sind. Die Not selbst zwingt ihn, seine Zeit genau zwischen seinen verschiedenen Funktionen zu verteilen. Ob die eine mehr, die andre weniger Raum in seiner Gesamttätigkeit einnimmt, hängt ab von der größeren oder geringeren Schwierigkeit, die zur Erzielung des bezweckten Nutzeffekts zu überwinden ist. Die Erfahrung lehrt ihn das, und unser Robinson, der Uhr, Hauptbuch, Tinte und Feder aus dem Schiffbruch gerettet, beginnt als guter Engländer bald Buch über sich selbst zu führen. Sein Inventarium enthält ein Verzeichnis der Gebrauchsgegenstände, die er besitzt, der verschiednen Vorrichtungen, die zu ihrer Produktion erheischt sind, endlich der Arbeitszeit, die ihm bestimmte Quanta dieser verschiednen Produkte im Durchschnitt kosten. Alle Beziehungen zwischen Robinson und den Dingen, die seinen selbstgeschaffnen Reichtum bilden, sind hier so einfach und durchsichtig, daß selbst Herr M.Wirth sie ohne besondre Geistesanstrengung verstehn dürfte.]

43. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23, p. 91.

44. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23, p. 92. [Stellen wir uns endlich, zur Abwechslung, einen Verein freier Menschen vor, die mit gemeinschaftlichen Produktionsmitteln arbeiten und ihre vielen individuellen Arbeitskräfte selbstbewußt als eine gesellschaftliche Arbeitskraft verausgaben.]

45. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23, pp. 92–93. [Alle Bestimmungen von Robinsons Arbeit wiederholen sich hier, nur gesellschaftlich statt individuell. . . . Die gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen der Menschen zu ihren Arbeiten und ihren Arbeitsprodukten bleiben hier durchsichtig einfach in der Produktion sowohl als in der Distribution.]

46. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History,* p. 343.

47. See "Complete Bullshit" in G. A. Cohen, *Finding Oneself in the Other* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

48. See especially Kant's essay *Perpetual Peace.*

Chapter 9. After Immortality

Epigraph: "God is dead. Marx is dead. And I'm not feeling too good myself."

1. Diderot to Falconet, 4 December 1765, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* p. 49.
2. Falconet to Diderot, 25 December 1765, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* pp. 52–53.
3. Diderot to Falconet, 10 January 1766, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* p. 57.

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4. Falconet to Diderot, 10 February 1766, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* p. 69.
5. Diderot to Falconet, 15 February 1766, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* p. 78.
6. Diderot to Falconet, 10 January 1766, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* p. 57.
7. Diderot to Falconet, 15 February 1766, in *Le Pour et le Contre,* p. 78. [Ô postérité sainte et sacrée! soutien du malheureux qu'on opprime, toi qui es juste, toi qu'on ne corrompt point, qui venges l'homme de bien, qui démasques l'hypocrite, qui traînes le tyran; idée sûre, idée consolante, ne m'abandonne jamais. La postérité pour le philosophe, c'est l'autre monde de l'homme religieux.]
8. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers.*
9. Peter Gay, *The Party of Humanity* (New York: Norton, 1971).
10. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers,* p. 149.
11. Quoted in Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers,* p. 151.
12. Quoted in Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers,* pp. 142–43.
13. Louis Antoine de Saint-Just, "Fragments sur les institutions républicaines", in Vellay (ed.), *Oeuvres Complètes de Saint-Just,* Vol. 2 (Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1908), 494.
14. Sergey Nechayev, "Revolutionary Catechism", http://www.marxists.org/subject/anarchism/nechayev/catechism.htm. Retrieved 23.vii.2020.
15. G. A. Cohen, *If You're an Egalitarian How Come You're So Rich?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 103.
16. Leon Trotsky, *I Stake My Life!* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1950), p. 24.
17. Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2004), pp. 181–82.
18. For an account of the emergence and structure of this idea and its relationship with the idea of "unintended consequences" in history and society, see my *On Voluntary Servitude,* especially Ch. 4.
19. E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), pp. 169–71.
20. See Chapter 2 above.
21. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), p. 115.
22. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 114.
23. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 105.
24. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 106.
25. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 106.
26. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 107.
27. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 107.
28. J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* pp. 108–109.
29. G. Eliot, *O May I Join the Choir Invisible!* (New York: D. Lothrop, 1884).
30. Walt Whitman, "Oh Me! Oh Life!", in *Leaves of Grass* (The Floating Press, 2009).
31. F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 314.
32. Referred to in H. Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 53. Blumenberg gives the quotation as "*Ihr Hunde, wollt Ihr denn ewig Leben?*" but it is also widely reported as "*Ihr verfluchten Racker*". See also H. B. Nisbet, "Lucretius in Eighteenth-Century Germany", *Modern Language Review* 100 (2005), 115–33.
33. Frederick the Great, Épitre XVIII, *Au Maréchal Keith: Sur les vaines terreurs de la mort et les frayeurs d'une autre vie,* in *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand: 10* (Berlin: Decker, 1856),

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p. 226. Marshal Keith was a Jacobite exile who was killed in Frederick's service. Apparently, one of the Marshal's last contributions was to warn his commander-in-chief that to make camp in the village of Hochkirch was to invite the Austrian forces to attack. Frederick did so regardless, with, for Keith, fatal consequences—but at least he wrote a poem in his honour.

34. "Ne voyons dans la mort qu'un tranquille sommeil / À l'abri des malheurs, sans songe, sans reveil." Frederick the Great, *Au Maréchal Keith,* p. 274.

35. "Finissons sans trouble, et mourons sans regrets, / En laissant l'Univers comblé de nos bienfaits. / Ainsi l'astre du jour au-bout de sa carrière, / Répand sur l'horizon une douce lumière; / Et les derniers rayons qu'il darde dans les airs, / Sont les derniers soupirs qu'il donne a l'Univers." Frederick the Great, *Au Maréchal Keith,* p. 286.

36. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons,* p. 281.

37. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons,* p. 281.

38. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere,* p. 25.

39. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), p. 253. [Die Öffentliche Daseinsauslegung sagt: "man stirbt", weil damit jeder andere und man selbst sich einreden kann: je nicht gerade ich; denn dieses Man ist das *Niemand*.]

40. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit,* p. 425. [Die Zeit ist öffentlich etwas, was sich jeder nimmt und nehmen kann. Die nivellierte Jetztfolge bleibt völlig unkenntlich bezüglich ihrer Herkunft aus der Zeitlichkeit des einzelnen Daseins im alltäglichen Miteinander. Wie soll das auch "die Zeit" im mindesten in ihrem Gang berühren, wenn ein "in der Zeit" vorhandener Mensch nicht mehr existiert? Die Zeit geht weiter, wie sie doch auch schon "war", als ein Mensch "ins Leben trat". Man kennt nur die öffentliche Zeit, die, nivelliert, jedermann und das heißt niemandem gehört.]

41. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), sect. 50.

42. That Nagel appreciates the idea's paradoxical character can be seen from his brilliant choice of dustjacket for *The View from Nowhere:* Caspar David Friedrich's eerie *Das grosse Gehege bei Dresden,* with its strangely non-perspectival perspective.

43. Coleridge, *Anima Poetae,* p. 127.

44. A. E. Housman, *Letters,* ed. H. Maas (London: Hart-Davis, 1971), p. 390.

45. R. M. Hare, "Nothing Matters", in *Applications of Moral Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 47.

46. R. M. Hare, "Nothing Matters", p. 39.

47. R. M. Hare, "Nothing Matters", p. 47.

48. Samuel Scheffler has taken up the idea of the extinction of humanity in his widely admired Tanner Lectures, *Death and the Afterlife* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Scheffler summarizes his "main contentions" as follows: "In some very significant respects, we actually care more about the survival of others after our deaths than we do about the existence of a personal afterlife, and the imminent disappearance of the human race would have a more corrosive effect on our ability to lead what I have called 'value-laden lives' than does the actual prospect of our own deaths" (pp. 80–81).

Why the future disappearance of the human race would be a catastrophe depends, of course, on why one thinks that the survival of humanity into the future has value, and to this, as we have seen, there are many different answers. Future humanity may be an audience for our individual fame (the ancient Romans); a quasi-judicial perspective to correct the unjust judgements of the present (Diderot, Mme Roland, Fidel Castro); a project in

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which all can play a small but significant part (Kant, Herder, Fichte, George Eliot); or even, perhaps, a fictive transcendental surrogate for the all-seeing eye of divine omnipresence.

To differentiate and adjudicate between those possibilities is difficult because what may seem forceful to some people at a particular time may not seem so to others, and so it is not helpful, in my view, when such matters are discussed from the unhistorical perspective of the analytical philosopher's impersonal "we". (Is it even true that "we" care more about the survival of others after our death than about a personal afterlife? That may be true for unbelievers like Scheffler, but I wonder whether the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury would say the same thing. Certainly, St Augustine would not have.)

Moreover, posing the question as one about "the survival of others" and the destruction of the human race as "imminent" is also potentially unhelpful. Imagine that I leave money in my will to enable my grandchildren to study at Princeton University. That is a project that will not succeed if, after my death but before my grandchildren can start their education, the human race is wiped out by a comet. So it does indeed give me a reason to care about the survival of others after my own death. But it will fail too if it is only my grandchildren—or Princeton—who suffer that dreadful fate. Thus the issue that seems most significant to me—what it is about the disappearance of the human race *as a whole* that might lead to a loss of value—risks being submerged.

49. H. D. Thoreau, *Walden* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854), p. 10.

50. See, for example, Pinker, *Enlightenment Now,* and its critics.

51. See Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Dorrance Kelly, *All Things Shining* (New York: The Free Press, 2011) and Taylor, *Sources of the Self.*

52. K. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction* (*Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie: Einleitung*), in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 1 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), pp. 378–79. [Das *religiöse* Elend ist in einem der *Ausdruck* des wirklichen Elendes und in einem die *Protestation* gegen das wirkliche Elend. . . . Die Aufhebung der Religion als des *illusorischen* Glücks des Volkes ist die Forderung seines *wirklichen* Glücks.]

53. G. Orwell, "Looking back on the Spanish War", in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell,* Vol. 2 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 304–305.

54. A. Huxley, *Those Barren Leaves* (London: Triad Books, 1978), pp. 181–82.

55. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right,* p. 378. [das Gemüt einer herzlosen Welt]

56. See Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence and Morality", *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1, no. 3 (Spring 1972), 229–43.

57. See Martha Nussbaum, "Judging Other Cultures: The Case of Genital Mutilation", in *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

58. See Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), especially Ch. 1.

59. Scruton, "Memo to Hawking".

60. Taylor, *Sources of the Self,* p. 288.

61. "Pantheismus ist die verborgene Religion Deutschlands." Heinrich Heine, *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1887), p. 64.

62. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (*Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten Unter Ihren Verächtern*) (London: Kegan Paul, 1893), p. 18. [Ich fordere also, daß Ihr von allem, was sonst Religion genannt wird absehend,

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Euer Augenmerk nur auf diese einzelne Andeutungen und Stimmungen richtet, die Ihr in allen Äußerungen und edlen Taten gottbegeisterter Menschen finden werdet.]

63. Schleiermacher, *On Religion,* p. 17. [Genau so ist Begriff und Wort nur das freilich notwendige und von dem Inneren unzertrennliche Hervorbrechen nach aussen, und als solches nur verständlich durch sein Inneres und mit ihm zugleich.]

64. Schleiermacher, *On Religion,* p. 20. [. . . ein schwaches, versuchtes Gemüt sich Hilfe suchen soll in dem Gedanken an eine künftige Welt? Wer aber einen Unterschied macht zwischen dieser und jener Welt, betört sich selbst; alle wenigstens, welche Religion haben, kennen nur Eine.]

65. K. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 2002), p. 411.

66. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo,* in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), Ch. 15, 3.

67. Ratzinger, Papal Address at the University of Regensburg.

68. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:490. [sondern vielmehr umgekehrt aus der Notwendigkeit der Bestrafung auf ein künftiges Leben die Folgerung gezogen wird]

69. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement,* p. 178.

70. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement,* p. 338.

71. https://weihnachten.tagesspiegel.de/knecht-ruprecht-von-theodor-storm/.

72. John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* Book I, quoted in Humphrey Jennings, *Pandaemonium: The Coming of the Machine as Seen by Contemporary Observers, 1660–1886* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), p. 3.

73. See Chapter 7 above.

74. Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man* (London: Cassell, 1891), Epistle 1, X.

75. See, for instance, Rosen, *On Voluntary Servitude,* Ch. 4. Also Rosen, "Die Geschichte", in H. Sandkühler et al., *Handbuch Deutscher Idealismus* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2005) 218–39; and Rosen, "Fortschritt", in H. J. Sandkühler (ed.), *Enzyklopädie Philosophie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2010).

76. Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics", *Harper's Magazine* (November 1964).

77. Jürgen Habermas, "Introduction", *Ratio Juris* 12, no. 4 (December 1999), 332.

78. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 23 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 562. [Auf dieser Erscheinungsform, die das wirkliche Verhältnis unsichtbar macht und grade sein Gegenteil zeigt, beruhn alle Rechtsvorstellungen des Arbeiters wie des Kapitalisten, alle Mystifikationen der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise, alle ihre Freiheitsillusionen, alle apologetischen Flausen der Vulgärökonomie.]

79. *Capital,* 1, in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke* 23, p. 87. [Den letzteren erscheinen daher die gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen ihrer Privatarbeiten als das, was sie sind, d.h. nicht als unmittelbar gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Personen in ihren Arbeiten selbst, sondern vielmehr als sachliche Verhältnisse der Personen und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Sachen.]

80. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie,* in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 42 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 166. [In sich selbst betrachtet, ist sie die Vermittlung vorausgesetzter Extreme. Aber sie setzt diese Extreme nicht. Muß also doch nicht nur in jedem ihrer Momente, sondern als Ganzes der Vermittlung, als totaler Prozeß selbst vermittelt sein. Ihr unmittelbares Sein ist daher reiner Schein. Sie ist das Phänomen eines hinter ihr vorgehenden *Prozesses*.]

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81. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* I, *Werke* 18, p. 41.

82. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family,* in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 2 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 37. [weil der Mensch in ihm sich selbst verloren, aber zugleich nicht nur das theoretische Bewußtsein dieses Verlustes gewonnen hat, sondern auch unmittelbar durch die nicht mehr abzuweisende, nicht mehr zu beschönigende, absolut gebieterische *Not*—den praktischen Ausdruck der *Notwendigkeit*—zur Empörung gegen diese Unmenschlichkeit gezwungen ist, darum kann und muß das Proletariat sich selbst befreien.]

83. Marx, *The Class Struggles in France,* in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 7 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 79. Part III, "Consequences of June 13, 1849" [Das jetzige Geschlecht gleicht den Juden, die Moses durch die Wüste führt. Es hat nicht nur eine neue Welt zu erobern, es muß untergehen, um den Menschen Platz zu machen, die einer neuen Welt gewachsen sind.]

84. Engels, *Anti-Dühring,* in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 20 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 265. [Ihre geschichtlichen Bedingungen und damit ihre Natur selbst zu ergründen, und so der zur Aktion berufenen, heute unterdrückten Klasse die Bedingungen und die Natur ihrer eignen Aktion zum Bewußtsein zu bringen, ist die Aufgabe des theoretischen Ausdrucks der proletarischen Bewegung, des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus.]

85. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", in Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels, *Werke,* Vol. 3 (Berlin, GDR: Dietz, 1976), p. 5. [Die materialistische Lehre von der Veränderung der Umstände und der Erziehung vergißt, daß die Umstände von den menschen verändert und der Erzieher selbst erzogen werden muß. Sie muß daher die Gesellschaft in zwei Teile—von denen der eine über ihr erhaben ist—sondieren.]

86. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik,* p. 354.

87. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik,* p. 354.

88. See J. Schmidt, "Cabbage Heads and Gulps of Water: Hegel on the Terror", *Political Theory* 26, no. 1 (1998), 1–32.

89. Nietzsche, "The Greek State" ("*Der griechische Staat*"), in *Werke in 3 Bänden* (Munich: Hanser, 1954), pp. 281–83, italic in original, underlining is my emphasis. [Angesichts der politischen Welt der Hellenen will ich nicht verbergen, in welchen Erscheinungen der Gegenwart ich gefährliche, für Kunst und Gesellschaft gleich bedenkliche Verkümmerungen der politischen Sphäre zu erkennen glaube. Wenn es Menschen geben sollte, die durch Geburt gleichsam außerhalb der Volks- und Staateninstinkte gestellt sind, die somit den Staat nur soweit gelten zu lassen haben, als sie ihn in ihrem eigenen Interesse begreifen: so werden derartige Menschen notwendig als das letzte staatliche Ziel sich das möglichst ungestörte Nebeneinanderleben großer politischer Gemeinsamkeiten vorstellen, in denen den eigenen Absichten nachzugehen *ihnen* vor allen ohne Beschränkung erlaubt sein dürfte. Mit dieser Vorstellung im Kopfe werden sie *die* Politik fördern, die diesen Absichten die größte Sicherheit bietet, während es undenkbar ist, daß sie gegen ihre Absichten, etwa durch einen unbewußten Instinkt geleitet, der Staatstendenz sich zum Opfer bringen sollten, undenkbar, weil sie eben jenes Instinktes ermangeln. Alle anderen Bürger des Staates sind über das, was die Natur mit ihrem Staatsinstinkte bei ihnen beabsichtigt, im Dunkeln und folgen blindlings; nur jene außerhalb dieses Instinktes Stehenden wissen, was *sie* vom Staate wollen und was ihnen der Staat gewähren soll. Deshalb ist es geradezu unvermeidlich, daß solche Menschen einen großen Einfluß auf den Staat gewinnen, weil sie ihn als *Mittel* betrachten dürfen, während alle anderen unter der Macht

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jener unbewußten Absichten des Staates selbst nur Mittel des Staatszwecks sind. Um nun, durch das Mittel des Staates, höchste Förderung ihrer eigennützigen[282] Ziele zu erreichen, ist vor allem nötig, daß der Staat von jenen schrecklich unberechenbaren Kriegszuckungen gänzlich befreit werde, damit er rationell benutzt werden könne; und damit streben sie, so bewußt als möglich, einen Zustand an, in dem der Krieg eine Unmöglichkeit ist. Hierzu gilt es nun zuerst die politischen Sondertriebe möglichst zu beschneiden und abzuschwächen und durch Herstellung großer *gleichwiegender* Staatenkörper und gegenseitiger Sicherstellung derselben den günstigen Erfolg eines Angriffskriegs und damit den Krieg überhaupt zur größten Unwahrscheinlichkeit zu machen: wie sie andererseits die Frage über Krieg und Frieden der Entscheidung einzelner Machthaber zu entreißen suchen, um vielmehr an den Egoismus der Masse oder deren Vertreter appellieren zu können: wozu sie wiederum nötig haben, die monarchischen Instinkte der Völker langsam aufzulösen. Diesem Zwecke entsprechen sie durch die allgemeinste Verbreitung der liberal-optimistischen Weltbetrachtung, welche ihre Wurzeln in den Lehren der französischen Aufklärung und Revolution, das heißt in einer gänzlich ungermanischen, echt romanisch flachen und unmetaphysischen Philosophie hat. Ich kann nicht umhin, in der gegenwärtig herrschenden Nationalitätenbewegung und der gleichzeitigen Verbreitung des allgemeinen Stimmrechts vor allem die Wirkungen der *Kriegsfurcht* zu sehen, ja im Hintergrund dieser Bewegungen, als die eigentlich Fürchtenden, jene wahrhaft internationalen heimatlosen Geldeinsiedler zu erblicken, die, bei ihrem natürlichen Mangel des staatlichen Instinktes, es gelernt haben, die Politik zum Mittel der Börse, und Staat und Gesellschaft als Bereicherungsapparate ihrer selbst zu mißbrauchen. Gegen die von dieser Seite zu befürchtende Ablenkung der Staatstendenz zur Geldtendenz ist das einzige Gegenmittel der Krieg und wiederum der Krieg: in dessen Erregungen wenigstens doch so viel klar wird, daß der Staat nicht auf der Furcht vor dem Kriegsdämon, als Schutzanstalt egoistischer Einzelner, gegründet ist, sondern in Vaterlands- und Fürstenliebe einen ethischen Schwung aus sich erzeugt, der auf eine viel höhere Bestimmung hinweist. Wenn ich also als gefährliches Charakteristikum der politischen Gegenwart die Verwendung der Revolutionsgedanken im Dienste einer eigensüchtigen staatlosen Geldaristokratie bezeichne, wenn ich die ungeheure Verbreitung des liberalen Optimismus zugleich als Resultat der in sonderbare Hände geratenen modernen Geldwirtschaft begreife und alle Übel der sozialen Zustände, samt dem notwendigen Verfall der Künste, entweder aus jener Wurzel entkeimt oder mit ihr verwachsen sehe: so wird man mir einen gelegentlich anzustimmenden Päan auf den Krieg zugute halten müssen.]

90. Jeremy Waldron, *One Another's Equals: The Basis of Human Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 255.

91. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion,* p. 107.

92. George Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell,* Vol. 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 414.

Afterword

Epigraph: Noel Annan, "A Man I Loved", in Hugh Lloyd-Jones (ed.), *Maurice Bowra: A Celebration* (London: Duckworth, 1974), 53.

1. See I. Berlin, "The Counter-Enlightenment", in P. Wiener (ed.), *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1973).

2. M. Puder, *Kant: Stringenz und Ausdruck* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1974), p. 7.

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3. A. Ryan, "Isaiah Berlin: A Biographical Memoir", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 130 (2005), 14.

4. Ryan, "Isaiah Berlin: A Biographical Memoir", p. 14.

5. Thus Ryan writes: "Berlin thought there was a plurality of genuine goods." Ryan, "Isaiah Berlin: A Biographical Memoir", p. 17.

6. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals,* Ak. 6:224.

7. ". . . we need an account of what obligations are when they are rightly seen as merely one kind of ethical consideration among others. This account will help to lead us away from morality's special notion of moral obligation, and eventually out of the morality system altogether." B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy,* p. 182.

8. B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy,* pp. 182–91.

9. "Once we have ceased to believe in Kant's own foundation or anything like it, we cannot read this experience [of 'reverence for the law'] in this way at all. It is the conclusion of practical necessity, no more and no less, and it seems to come 'from outside' in the way that conclusions of practical necessity always seem to come from outside—from deeply inside." B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy,* p. 191.

10. T. W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), p. 42.

11. Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?", in A. Ryan (ed.), *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

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1. "Freedom in History", in G. Hindrichs and A. Honneth (eds.), *Freiheit: Stuttgarter Hegel-Kongress 2011* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2013), pp. 535–51; "*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht*", in F. Rush (ed.), *10. Internationales Jahrbuch des deutschen Idealismus* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 256–72; "Beyond Naturalism: On Ronald Dworkin" (review of Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God*), *The Nation,* 4 March 2014; "Whatever Happened to the Ontic Logos?", in D. M. Weinstock, J. T. Levy and J. Maclure (eds.), *Interpreting Modernity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).

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