

# How to Philosophize with a Hammer and a Blue Guitar: Quietism, Activism, and the Mind-Body Politic

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[Nietzsche's] books [published in 1888] are sometimes dismissed as mere products of insanity, and they certainly manifest a breakdown of the author's inhibitions. In some passages of *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche's fury breaks all dams; and the madness of his conceit in *Ecce Homo* is harnessed only by his matchless irony, though much of this is lost on readers who do not know Nietzsche's earlier works. Compared to such fireworks, *Twilight of the Idols* is relatively calm and sane, except for its title.<sup>1</sup>

The man bent over his guitar,  
A shearsman of sorts. The day was green.

They said, "You have a blue guitar,  
You do not play things as they are."

The man replied, "Things as they are  
Are changed upon the guitar."

And they said then, "But play, you must,  
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves.

A tune upon the blue guitar  
Of things exactly as they are."<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Introduction

One of the exceptionally attractive qualities of Nietzsche's brilliantly original style of philosophical writing, for better or worse, is that *it's the Rorschach blot of philosophy*: everyone who takes it seriously finds their own philosophical obsessions written there.

And this is true, with a bang!, of the subtitle of *Twilight of the Idols*: "How To Philosophize With A Hammer."

Nevertheless, bracketting the obsessional component for a moment, I do think that by using that subtitle, Nietzsche intended to convey not only the radical destruction of the classical philosophical distinction between *theory* and *practice*, as well as the radical destruction of the classical metaphilosophical distinction between *philosophy* and *the arts*, especially *poetry*—e.g., Wallace Stevens's truly amazing modernist philosophico-poetic masterpiece, "The Man with the Blue Guitar"—but also radically to blur any sharp metaphilosophical distinction between *philosophy* and *politics*.

Yet whatever Nietzsche actually intended, *the Nazis* certainly found their philosophical obsessions written in Nietzsche's work; and notoriously, Heidegger was not only

deeply interested in Nietzsche but also, for a time, in the 1930s, threw all the weight of his heavy philosophical reputation behind the Nazis.<sup>3</sup>

For the purposes of this essay, I'm deeply interested in the larger question that's raised by Nietzsche's subtitle and also by what Hans Sluga not inaccurately calls "Heidegger's crisis,"<sup>4</sup> i.e., Heidegger's philosophical collaborationism with the Nazis:

what *should be* the relationship between philosophy and politics?

And I'm also equally deeply interested in what *the philosophy of the future* will look like, if we radically break down the dichotomous distinctions between theory and practice, philosophy and the arts, and philosophy and politics.

I'll call that *philosophizing with a hammer and a blue guitar*.

## 2. What I Mean By "Philosophy," "Politics," and "Rational"

In order to be as clear and distinct as possible in what follows, in this section I'll provide working definitions of some important terminology I'll be using, and also briefly spell out some relevant background notions I'll be presupposing.

By "philosophy" I mean

either (i) the human social institution of *professional academic philosophy*,

or (ii) the human social institution of *authentic, serious, synoptic, systematic reflection on the individual and collective human condition, and on the natural and social world in which human and other conscious animals live, move, and have their being*—especially as it's found in the Western European cultural tradition going back to the pre-Socratics, Socrates, and Plato, but also in various non-Western, non-European traditions.

Obviously, since philosophy in sense (ii) has existed for 3000+ years, but philosophy in sense (i) has existed only since the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and since truly important philosophers like Hume, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Marx, Nietzsche, Peirce, and three of the Nobel Prize winners who've been philosophers (Bergson is the fourth)—Camus, Russell, and Sartre—all worked outside the professional academy (or at least Russell did *after* 1918 and for the rest of his life), then philosophy in sense (i) and philosophy in sense (ii) are quite different things.

More than that, however, not only is philosophy in sense (i) quite different from philosophy in sense (ii), but it's also arguable that philosophy in sense (i) is inherently *inimical to* philosophy in sense (ii).<sup>5</sup>

In any case, by "politics" I mean

either (i) what specifically concerns *States*,

or (ii) what specifically concerns *human social institutions*, which include States but are by no means restricted to States, since human social institutions existed at least 4000 years prior to the existence of States.<sup>6</sup>

And by "rational" I mean that which specifically concerns *the human capacity for rationality*, aka *reason*, which consists in a power for self-conscious thinking, choosing, and acting according to normative principles, especially logical principles or moral principles.

### 3. Philosophical Quietism and Philosophical Activism

Here are two sharply opposed, and indeed contradictory (in the strict sense that they can't both be true and they can't both be false, hence they bivalently exhaust the range of relevant alternatives), answers to the question of the relationship between philosophy and politics:

(i) **Philosophical Quietism (PQ)**: philosophy should be *disengaged from* (i.e., *not engaged with*) politics.

(ii) **Philosophical Activism (PA)**: philosophy should be *engaged with* politics.

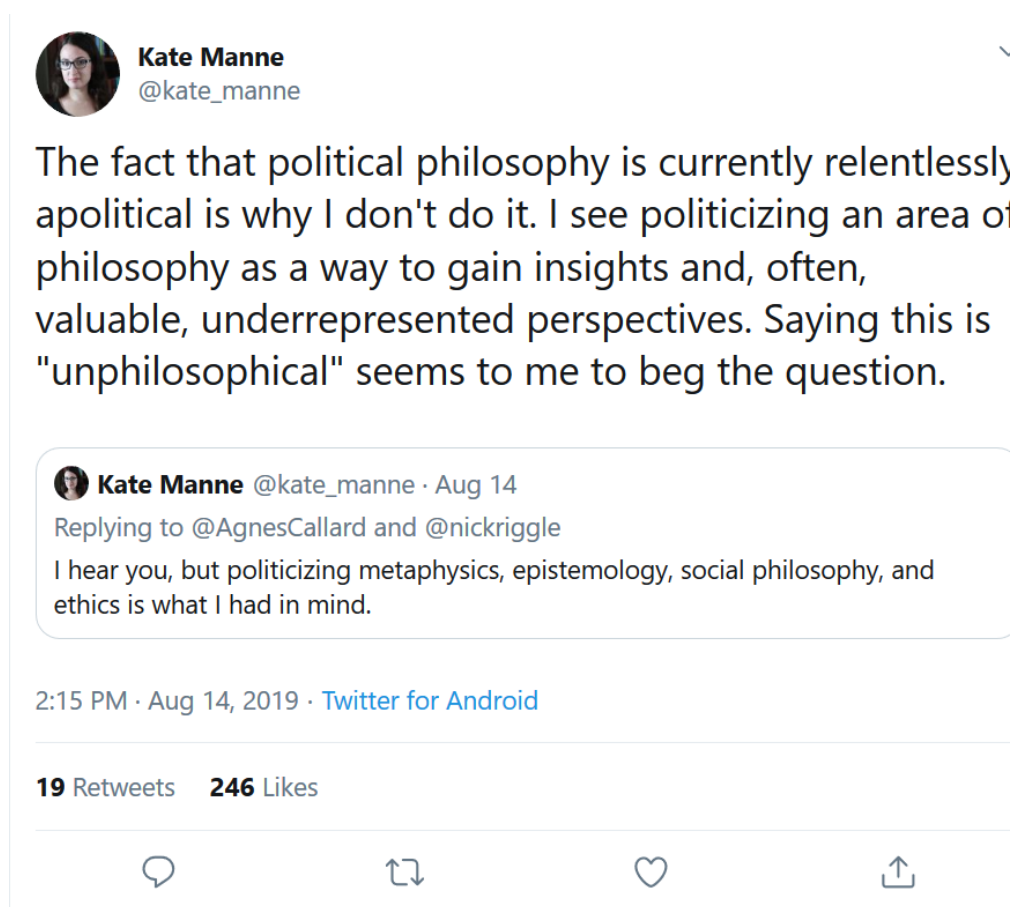
It's very important to note, however, that philosophically engaging with politics is *not* the same as writing about political philosophy.

Indeed, most contemporary political philosophers are professional academic specialists who live, move, and have their being entirely enclosed within the well-patrolled intellectual, affective/emotional, and moral borders of the post-World War II, early 21<sup>st</sup> century *neoliberal university*, and uncritically presuppose the truth of some or another version of *liberalism*.

But they are otherwise quietistically disengaged from contemporary politics.

—Even to the point of repressively silencing any would-be dissenting *non*-liberal political voices inside the academy itself, as the contemporary British feminist political philosopher Lorna Finlayson has rightly pointed out.<sup>7</sup>

So I think that when the contemporary American feminist philosopher Kate Manne tweets that “political philosophy is currently relentlessly apolitical,” as per the screen shot I’ve displayed directly below, then she’s absolutely right about this, *provided that* we also understand “relentlessly apolitical” to imply, as per Finlayson, a version of philosophical quietism that *also* uncritically presupposes a hegemonically ideological commitment to some or another version of *liberal* politics inside the contemporary neoliberal professional academy.



Granting that, then the question of the relationship between philosophy and politics arises when we ask whether Manne is *right* (philosophical activism) or *wrong* (philosophical quietism) that “politicizing an area of philosophy [is] a way to gain insights, and, often, valuable, underrepresented perspectives.”

But as it turns out, there are several different kinds of philosophical quietism and philosophical activism; hence it might well be that even if *some or another version* of philosophical activism is correct, nevertheless Manne's *own preferred version* of philosophical activism could still be incorrect.

Correspondingly, in what follows I'm going to distinguish and describe, very briefly, *seven* different kinds of philosophical quietism and *nine* different kinds of philosophical activism; then just as briefly, I'll criticize and reject all seven kinds of quietism (PQ1-PQ7) and also eight of the nine kinds of activism (PA1-PA8); and then finally, I'll describe and defend the ninth kind of philosophical activism, based on what Michelle Maiese and I have called *the mind-body politic*.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. Seven Varieties of Philosophical Quietism

*PQ1: The Consolation of Philosophy*

According to The Consolation of Philosophy conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics, because *it's in the nature of philosophy to undertake a speculative and Stoic withdrawal from the world*.

A prime example of The Consolation of Philosophy conception is Boethius's eponymous *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

More precisely, as per a dominant strand in classical philosophy, flowing from Aristotle and through the Hellenic and Hellenistic periods, especially including Stoic philosophy, philosophy should be not only abstractly theoretical, and especially focused on speculative metaphysics, the science of first principles and first causes and/or being *quâ* being, but also *resignedly and stoically withdraw* from the tyranny, arbitrary violence, and more generally wholly contingent, lucky or unlucky vicissitudes of politics.

Correspondingly, here's how Wikipedia concisely describes *The Consolation*:

The Consolation of Philosophy was written in AD 523 during a one-year imprisonment Boethius served while awaiting trial—and eventual execution—for the alleged crime of treason under the Ostrogothic King Theodoric the Great. Boethius was at the very heights of power in Rome, holding the prestigious office of magister officiorum, and was brought down by treachery. This experience inspired the text, which reflects on how evil can exist in a world governed by God (the problem of theodicy), and how happiness is still attainable amidst fickle fortune, while also considering the nature of happiness and

God. It has been described as “by far the most interesting example of prison literature the world has ever seen.”

Boethius writes the book as a conversation between himself and Lady Philosophy. Lady Philosophy consoles Boethius by discussing the transitory nature of fame and wealth (“no man can ever truly be secure until he has been forsaken by Fortune”), and the ultimate superiority of things of the mind, which she calls the “one true good.” She contends that happiness comes from within, and that virtue is all that one truly has, because it is not imperilled by the vicissitudes of fortune.<sup>9</sup>

### *PQ2: Enlightenment Lite*

According to the Enlightenment Lite conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics, because *although it's in the nature of philosophy to argue as much as it likes about whatever it likes, nevertheless it must also obey the government and stay clear of politics.*

A prime example of the Enlightenment Lite conception is Kant's famous essay, “What is Enlightenment?,” when considered alongside his almost equally famous political treatise *The Doctrine of Right*.

But this must also be critically compared and contrasted with Kant's far less well-known late essay, “The Conflict of the Faculties,” and equally far less well-known complementary political treatise disguised as moral theology, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

All things considered then, Kant presents two mutually inconsistent conceptions of enlightenment,<sup>10</sup> whose general motto is *Sapere aude!*, i.e., the rational obligation to *dare to know!*, or to *dare to think for oneself!*

According to the **first** Kantian conception of enlightenment, which expresses a version of neo-Hobbesian mainstream liberal republicanism and/or constitutional monarchy, and which I've called *enlightenment lite*, we have an obligation to dare to know, or to dare to think for ourselves,

- (i) that's nevertheless *not* an obligation to feel, choose, or act for ourselves, and
- (ii) that even as far as *free-thinking* and *freedom of speech* are concerned, it's sharply limited insofar as anyone is *a functionary of the State* (which Kant very misleadingly calls “the private use of reason”)—e.g., a pastor or other religious official within the State-controlled Church, a public official of the government,

or a university professor, not to mention the State-controlled public functional role played by every citizen *as* a citizen of a given State—and more generally, even insofar as it involves the so-called “the public use of reason” (roughly, free-thinking and free speech within the boundaries of mere professional academic freedom alone) it’s sharply limited by the Frederick the Great’s crisp, edgy, and (presumably) unintentionally highly ironic formulation of the coercive authoritarianism of the “enlightened despot”: *Argue as much as you like about whatever you like, but obey!*

But according to the **second** Kantian conception of enlightenment, to some extent inspired by Spinoza and the philosophical fall-out from the immensely important 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Spinozism Controversy,<sup>11</sup> a Kantian conception that in fact expresses an early version of *cosmopolitan anarcho-socialism*, which I’ve called *heavy-duty enlightenment* or *radical enlightenment*, we have a rational obligation

(i) that requires us not only to *think* for ourselves, but also to *feel*, *choose*, and *act* for ourselves, hence a rational obligation to *free will* and *practical agency*, including *autonomy*,

(ii) that’s *not* limited by the coercive authoritarianism of the State, and indeed even requires us to *exit* the State in order to *create and sustain a world-wide ethical community*, and thereby finally to achieve intellectual, emotional, and moral maturity, as he explicitly formulates it in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

Not surprisingly, given the personal and political risks of explicitly defending heavy-duty or radical enlightenment in the age of despots, Kant carefully self-censors his own writings by using *prima facie* incoherent or even contradictory, or at least highly subtle, formulations, often buried away in the middle of longish, otherwise seemingly non-radical texts, and he thereby intentionally designs his philosophical rhetoric and writing in such a way as to make his defense of the heavy-duty or radical enlightenment doctrine *esoteric* rather than *exoteric*.

Correspondingly, although perhaps not too surprisingly, one of the most absurd and maddening things about contemporary professional academic Kant-scholarship is its almost completely mind-manacled inability to recognize that Kant’s theory of enlightenment and political philosophy has a heavy-duty and radical strand, *in addition to* its intellectually and morally lite and mainstream liberal republican strand.

But in any case, I’ll come back to heavy-duty or radical enlightenment later, in section 8.



*PQ3: The Owl of Minerva*

According to The Owl of Minerva conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics, because *it's in the nature of philosophy to be post-historical and therefore post-political.*

A prime example of The Owl of Minerva conception is expressed in the final paragraph of Hegel's Preface to *The Philosophy of Right*:

One more word about giving instruction as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy ... always comes on the scene too late to give it. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed. The teaching of the concept, which is also history's inescapable lesson, is that only when actuality is mature that the ideal first first appears over against the real and the ideal apprehends this same world in its substance and builds it up for itself into the shape of an intellectual realm. When philosophy paints its grey-on-grey, then has a shape of the world grown old. By philosophy's grey-on-grey it cannot be rejuvenated but only understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.<sup>12</sup>

And here's how Thomas Pogge glosses that famous text:

"Minerva" is the Roman name of the Greek Athena, goddess of wisdom and philosophy, and associated with the owl (as preserved in the saying "bringing owls to Athens" which means bringing something to a place that already has more than enough thereof).

The meaning of Hegel's saying is that philosophy/wisdom takes flight only at the end of the day, after the day's main events have taken place. For Hegel, this was not tragic. His particular point is that it is only at the end of human history (which he associated with his own time, the early 19th century) that human beings can come to understand history's developmental logic. In fact, our coming to understand history is part of this developmental logic; and once we fully understand we are reconciled to history and thus would not have wanted history to have gone differently in any important respect.<sup>13</sup>

So in other words, Hegel is saying philosophy by its nature is the rationally self-conscious reflection, realized in thought, of any historical period, and also that philosophy, like the Owl of Minerva, spreads its wings only as the light of day wanes, i.e., at dusk, which is to say that philosophy by its nature comes onto the scene only *after* all the shooting in particular, and all the real-world political engagement more generally, has already happened.

PQ4: *Leaving The World Alone*

According to the Leaving The World Alone conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy not to interfere with human practical activity.*

A prime example of the Leaving The World Alone conception is the later Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein says that philosophy's role in intellectual and moral life is entirely descriptive, critical, diagnostic, and therapeutic:

It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific (*wissenschaftliche*) ones. It was not of any possible interest to us to find out empirically "that, contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible think such-and-such" – whatever that may mean... And we may not advance any kind of [scientific] theory.... We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in spite of* an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. (PI §109)<sup>14</sup>

Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it.

For it cannot give it any foundation either.

It leaves everything as it is. (PI, §124)<sup>15</sup>

It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of words in unheard-of ways. For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But that simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear. The real discovery is one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to. – The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* into question.... There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies. (PI §133)<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, philosophy cannot engage with politics, lest it become some *other* kind of enterprise altogether, namely some sort of *practical* enterprise.

*PQ5: The Icy Slopes of Logic*

According to The Icy Slopes of Logic conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to focus exclusively on stipulative truths of the formal sciences, especially logic and formal semantics, and on natural-scientific "facts," and correspondingly to avoid all pronouncements about "values."*

A prime example of The Icy Slopes of Logic conception is Carnap's logico-philosophical writings after 1945, e.g., *Meaning and Necessity*.

In the 1920s and 1930s, prior to World War II, on the one hand, Carnap was a *socialist*, (like the other leading member of the Vienna Circle, Otto Neurath); and yet also on the other hand, Carnap *essentially identified philosophy with logic* (like Russell in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, chapter 2, "Logic as the Essence of Philosophy") and also explicitly claimed that as a philosopher, he preferred the "icy slopes of logic."<sup>17</sup>

But during these decades between the two World Wars, the apparent incoherence between a "hot" (i.e., engaged) commitment to socialism and a "cold" (i.e., disengaged) commitment to logic was resolved, or at least temporarily mitigated, by Carnap's strong interest in Esperanto as a universal language of rational human communication.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless after World War II, when he was living in the USA, and during the McCarthy anti-communist era, especially when he was teaching at UCLA, Carnap gradually evolved towards political disengagement and a full-time residency on the icy slopes.

More generally, once most of the members of the Vienna Circle, in fleeing the Nazis, had been exiled mostly to the USA, and as Analytic philosophers in the Logical Empiricist mode were achieving social-institutional dominance and ideological hegemony over Anglo-American philosophy during the anti-communist McCarthy period in the 1950s,<sup>19</sup> then in order to play it safe and keep their jobs, they uniformly disengaged themselves from politics and focused exclusively on logic, language, the foundations of the formal and natural sciences, and a basic commitment to scientism.<sup>20</sup>

And even though Logical Empiricism has been dead since the appearance and dissemination of Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and even though since then mainstream Analytic philosophy has rumbled on-and-on through what remained of "the linguistic turn,"<sup>21</sup> then philosophy of language-&-mind, then philosophy of mind, and (most recently) Analytic metaphysics, experimental philosophy (aka X-Phi), and formal epistemology, blah, blah, blah—

although always retaining a vestigial methodological attachment to the icy slopes of logic and scientism—nevertheless this sharp disjunction between mainstream Analytic philosophy and political engagement has remained in place in Anglo-American professional philosophy right until this morning at 6am.

*PQ6: Present as Many Political Alternatives as You Like, and Don't Surrender Too Readily To Totalitarian Political Regimes Like the Nazis; But Whatever You Do, Never Lay Down Authoritative Standards of Political Action, Lest You Fall into Describing Useless Utopias or Giving Dangerous Instructions*

According to this longwindedly-titled conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to avoid indulging in either postulating political cloud-cuckoo-lands or issuing morally bad political imperatives.*

And a prime example of this conception is Hans Sluga in *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany*.

*Heidegger's Crisis*, as its subtitle clearly indicates, is an extended critical reflection on the question of how philosophy should be related to politics, based on a detailed historical study of German philosophy during the Nazi period.

Sluga writes:

Philosophers in my view are not qualified to lay down authoritative standards of political action. Whenever they have tried their hand at this, they have either described useless utopias or given dangerous instructions. It might be more attractive to think of them as playing a critical role. But political critique is productive only if it is tempered by common sense and practical experience. Philosophical critics of politics, on the other hand, proceed all too often from supposedly absolute truths, and what they say then proves generally unhelpful and sometimes even destructive. Insofar as philosophy has any task to perform in politics, it is to map out new possibilities. By confronting actual political conditions with alternatives, it can help to undermine the belief that these conditions are inevitable. If the German philosophers of the 1930s had engaged in such reflection, they would not have surrendered so readily to the false certainties of Nazism.<sup>22</sup>

*PQ7: Disciplined Minds*

According to the Disciplined Minds conception, philosophy should be disengaged from politics because *it's in the nature of professional academic philosophy for professional philosophers to do whatever it takes in order to have a safe and solid professional career,*

*especially including officially distancing themselves from politics other than the obedient liberalism of the professional academy, lest they get in serious trouble by indulging in unorthodox political commitment and action.*

A prime example of the Disciplined Minds conception is Justin Weinberg's contemporary professional philosophy blog, *Daily Nous*.

And I noted above in section 2 above that (with the exception of a very few political philosophers influenced by Frankfurt School neo-Marxism, like Finlayson—and also, not altogether coincidentally, her Cambridge PhD supervisor, Raymond Geuss) virtually all contemporary *political* philosophers are (in Manne's nice phrase) "relentlessly apolitical" professional academic specialists who live, move, and have their being entirely enclosed within the well-patrolled orthodox *liberal* borders of the post-World War II, 20<sup>th</sup> century and 21<sup>st</sup> century *neoliberal* university: but the same is true of virtually all contemporary professional academic philosophers, no matter what their self-proclaimed, fateful, career-determining "area of specialization," aka AOS.

More precisely, as Jeff Schmidt has shown in his cogent and incisive critical analysis of salaried professionalism, especially including the professional academy,<sup>23</sup> late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century professional academics are, generally speaking, ideologically controlled, obedient, rule-following, self-censoring, playpen-creative thinkers who consistently avoid any political engagement, lest it attract the ire of their university administrator bosses, or the ire of the people outside universities who fund private or public universities, or the ire of coercive moralistic colleagues—and thereby face complaints, reprimands, punishment, or even dismissal, thereby irreparably harming or even outright destroying their careers and professional reputations.

## **5. How and Why All Seven Varieties of Philosophical Quietism are Rationally Unjustified and Morally Unacceptable**

In order to show how and why all seven varieties of philosophical quietism are rationally unjustified and morally unacceptable, I'll need to provide more working definitions and relevant background notions.

The State is correctly characterized, as Max Weber pointed out, by its being a *social institution that possesses a territorial monopoly on the (putatively) legitimate means and use of coercion*<sup>24</sup>—but that's only a somewhat superficial gloss that doesn't really get at the essence of the State.

The essence of the State is that it's a form of social organization, with territorial boundaries, that's both *authoritarian* and also *coercive* with respect to its *government*, i.e., its ruling class.

By *coercion* I mean:

either (i) using violence (for example, injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people against their will according to certain predefined purposes of the coercer (*primary coercion*),

or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (for example, imprisonment, termination of employment, or large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, even if these are not in themselves violent, in order to manipulate people against their will according to certain predefined purposes of the coercer (*secondary coercion*).

So all coercion is a form of *manipulation*, and proceeds by following a variety of strategies, that share the same core characteristic: treating people as mere means or mere things.

Correspondingly by *authoritarianism*, I mean the doctrine that telling people to obey commands and do things is legitimated merely by virtue of the fact that some people (the purported authorities) have *told* them to obey those commands or do those things—“it's right just because we say it's right!”—and are also in a position to enforce this by means of coercion, not on any rationally justified or objectively morally defensible grounds.

The State is *coercive* insofar as it claims the right to compel the people living within its boundaries to heed and obey the commands and laws of the government, in order to realize the instrumental ends of the State, *whether or not* those commands and laws are rationally justified or morally right on independently ethical grounds.

In turn, the State is *authoritarian* insofar as it claims that the commands and laws issued by its government are right *just because* the government says that they're right and possesses the power to coerce, *not* because those commands or laws are rationally justified and morally right on independent ethical grounds.

Here we can easily see the the fundamental parallel between what I've called “Statist Command Ethics” and what's classically called “Divine Command Ethics,”<sup>25</sup> which says that the commands and laws issues by God are right *just because* God says that they're

right and possesses the power to create and destroy the world, punish with eternal damnation, and more generally cause people to do whatever God wants them to do, *not* because those commands or laws are rationally justified and morally right on independent ethical grounds.

Therefore, the basic objection to Statist Command Ethics is essentially the same as the basic objection to Divine Command Ethics, which is that the State's (or God's) commands and laws are *inherently arbitrary*, and fully open to the possibility they're rationally unjustified, morally wrong, and even profoundly evil.<sup>26</sup>

In the Western European philosophical tradition beginning with the pre-Socratics, *whatever else* philosophy might be, necessarily it involves the critical use of one's own capacity for rationality, aka reason.

But if a totalitarian coercive authoritarian political State—like Hitler's Nazi Germany or Stalin's communist Russia—systematically censors, imprisons, punishes, suppresses, tortures, or murders philosophers just for critically using their own capacity for rationality, then philosophical quietism is *self-evidently self-undermining*, since philosophical quietism would not permit political engagement *even in order to resist or defend itself or innocent others against totalitarian coercive authoritarians' systematic repression and destruction of the human capacity for rationality*, which is an essential feature of philosophizing (according to the nature of philosophy in sense (ii), spelled out above in section 2) itself.

In other words, no matter *which* reasons are offered for disengaging from politics, nevertheless philosophical quietism can't offer *any* politically engaged resistance to or defense (whether self-defense or defense of innocent others) against coercive authoritarians who've decided that they find what philosophers are saying writing or teaching is *dangerous*, no matter *how* anodyne those philosophical views might actually be, so they bully and/or annihilate the disengaged philosophers.

For example,

[o]n March 7, 1277, the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, prohibited the teaching of 219 philosophical and theological theses that were being discussed and disputed in the faculty of arts under his jurisdiction,<sup>27</sup>

such that no philosopher was even allowed to *think* any one of these 219 "dangerous" theses—most of them highly abstract propositions about the nature of form, matter, potentiality, actuality, etc. in Aristotelian metaphysics, that were in fact wholly

anodyne—much less write down, utter, or teach them, lest they be bullied and/or annihilated by the Church.

Indeed, philosophical quietism is self-evidently self-undermining, even for a *contextualized* version of philosophical quietism that recommends philosophical activism in *some* contexts but philosophical quietism in *other* contexts.<sup>28</sup>

And that's because, for every actual or possible context in which quietism is allowed, there will be an actual world example or a really possible thought-experiment in which the Gestapo (or the Cheka, or the Spanish Inquisition, or whatever) are banging at the door ready to bully and/or annihilate disengaged philosophers who refuse to resist or defend themselves or innocent others, no matter how actually dangerous or "dangerous" (actually anodyne) their views might be.<sup>29</sup>

## 6. Eight Varieties of Philosophical Activism

*PA1: The Gadfly*

According to The Gadfly conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to philosophize in the marketplace, by means of dialogue, and critically analyze the political status quo, but ultimately obey the commands of the State.*

A prime example of The Gadfly conception is Socrates, as presented by Plato in *The Apology* and other Socratic dialogues.

Correspondingly, here's the concise Wikipedia summary of the relevant parts of *The Apology*:

The jurors of the trial voted the guilt of Socrates by a narrow margin (36a). In the *Apology* ... , Plato cites no numbers of votes condemning or acquitting the philosopher of the accusations of moral corruption and impiety; ... although Socrates did say he would have been acquitted if thirty more jurors had voted in his favour.... In such cases— where the penalty of death might arise as legal sanction for the accusations presented— Athenian law required that the prosecutor and the defendant each propose an administrative penalty to punish the actions reported in the accusations.

Socrates antagonises the court by proposing, rather than a penalty, a reward— perpetual maintenance at public expense. He notes that the vote of judgement against him was close; thirty votes more in his favour would have acquitted him. In that vein, Socrates then engages in dark humour, suggesting that Meletus narrowly escaped a great fine for



not meeting the statutory requirement of receiving one-fifth of the votes of the assembled judges in favour of his accusations against Socrates. In that way, Socrates published the financial consequence for Meletus to consider as plaintiff in a lawsuit—because the Athenian legal system discouraged frivolous lawsuits by imposing a financially onerous fine upon the plaintiff, if the vote of the judges was less than one-fifth of the number of judges required by the type of lawsuit.

As punishment for the two accusations formally presented against him at trial, Socrates proposed to the court that he be treated as a benefactor to the city of Athens; that he should be given free meals, in perpetuity, at the Prytaneum, the public dining hall of Athens. Receiving such public largesse is an honour reserved for Olympic athletes, for prominent citizens, and for benefactors of Athens, as a city and as a state.

Finally, after the court's dismissal of the proposed reward—free meals at the Prytaneum—Socrates considers imprisonment and banishment, before settling upon a punishment fine of 100 drachmae. Despite his poverty, this was a minor punishment compared to the death penalty proposed by the prosecutors, and encouraged by the judges of the trial. In defence of Socrates, his supporters increased the amount of money to pay as a fine, from 100 to 3,000 drachmae; nonetheless, to the judges of the trial of Socrates, a pecuniary fine was insufficient punishment for the philosopher Socrates, the social gadfly of Classical Athens.

In the Trial of Socrates, the judgement of the court was death for Socrates; most of the jurors voted for the death penalty (38c), yet Plato provides no jury-vote numbers in the text of the *Apology of Socrates*; but Diogenes Laërtius reports that 280 jurors voted for the death penalty and 220 jurors voted for a pecuniary fine for Socrates (2.42).... Moreover, the politically provocative language and irreverent tone of Socrates's self-defence speech angered the jurors and invited their punishment of him....

Socrates responds to the death-penalty verdict by first addressing the jurors who voted for his death. He says that instead of waiting a short time for him to die from old age, they will now have to accept the harsh criticisms from his supporters. He prophesied that his death will cause the youngsters to come forward and replace him as a social gadfly, who will spur ethical conduct from the citizens of Athens, in a manner more vexing than him (39d).

To the jurors who voted to acquit him, Socrates gives encouragement: his supernatural daimonion did not interfere with his conduct of the legal defence, which he viewed as a sign that such a defence was the correct action. In that way, the daimonion communicated to Socrates that death might be a good thing; either death is annihilation (release from earthly worry) and not to be feared, or death is migration (higher plane of existence) in which reside the souls of personages and heroes, such as Hesiod and Homer and Odysseus.

Socrates concludes his self-defence by saying to the court that he bears no ill-will, neither towards his accusers—Lycon, Anytus, and Meletus—nor the jurors. He then asks the Athenians to correct his three sons if they value material wealth more than living virtuously, or if they become too prideful. And in doing these, justice will finally be served.<sup>30</sup>

### *PA2: The Philosopher-King*

According to The Philosopher-King conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to know about the ideal structure of political life, and therefore philosophers, as Kings, should control the State.*

A prime example of The Philosopher-King conception is Plato in *The Republic*.

And here's the concise Wikipedia summary of the Philosopher-King conception in The Republic:

According to Plato, a philosopher king is a ruler who possesses both a love of wisdom, as well as intelligence, reliability, and a willingness to live a simple life. Such are the rulers of his utopian city Kallipolis. For such a community to ever come into being, “philosophers [must] become kings...or those now called kings [must]...genuinely and adequately philosophize” (...*Republic*, 5.473d).

Plato defined a philosopher firstly as its eponymous occupation: “wisdom-lover.” He then distinguishes between one who loves true knowledge (as opposed to mere experience or education) by saying that the philosopher is the only person who has access to ideas—the archetypal entities that exist behind all representations of the form (such as Beauty itself as opposed to any one particular instance of beauty). It is next and in support of the idea that philosophers are the best rulers that Plato fashions the Ship of State metaphor, one of his most often cited ideas (along with his allegory of the cave): a “true pilot must of necessity pay attention to the seasons, the heavens, the stars, the winds, and everything proper to the craft if he is really to rule a ship” (... *Republic*, 6.488d).<sup>31</sup>

### *PA3: The Philosophical Absolute on Horseback*

According to The Philosophical Absolute on Horseback conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to grasp and express the world-spirit of any historical age, and therefore philosophers, in times of national crisis, should control the State, just as if they were Napoleon.*

A prime example of The Philosophical Absolute on Horseback conception is Fichte in his *Addresses to the German Nation*, e.g.:

True philosophy ... is in a special sense German only — that is, primordial. Vice versa, a true German could philosophize in no other way but this.<sup>32</sup>

More generally, as Sluga puts it,

Fichte's *Addresses*, in sum, rested squarely on the belief that a point of crisis had been reached in German history — a crisis that was at once political and philosophical, a crisis that concerned in particular the German people and the understanding they had of themselves, a crisis of leadership calling for the reestablishment of a true order. This crisis demanded above all the reeducation of the German people and, hence, the involvement of those educators par excellence, the philosophers. To these assumptions Fichte added his belief in the primordial character of the Germans and their language, in the contrast between what was German and what was un-German, in the unique calling of Germans to the business of philosophy and their affinity with the Greeks. He added his call for the discovery of the true philosophical order, the resolution of the crisis through a new system of education, the total education of the students through service in science, practical labor, and the military.<sup>33</sup>

#### *PA4: Changing the World*

According to Changing the World conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to change the world, not (merely) interpret it, and to revolutionize and re-create the State by radically changing its socio-economic structure.*

A prime example of the Changing the World conception is early Marx, in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, "Theses on Feuerbach," and other writings of the mid-1840s, in which he wrote sentences such as these —

Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in different ways; the point is to *change* it.

Natural science will one day incorporate the science of human beings, just as the science of human beings will incorporate natural science; there will be a single science.

Political emancipation is, at the same time, a dissolution of the old society, upon which the sovereign power, the alienated political life of the people rests. Political revolution is a revolution of civil society.... Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself.... Human emancipation will only be complete when the real, individual man has absorbed in himself the abstract citizen, when as an individual man, in his everyday life, in his work, and in his relationships, he

has become a *social being*, and when he has recognized and organized his own powers ... as *social powers*, and consequently no longer separates this social power from himself as *political power*.<sup>34</sup>

*PA5: The Fascist Philosopher Engagé*

According to The Fascist Philosopher Engagé conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to grasp the nature of Being, and to show the State how to defend itself against the essentially inauthentic technological West and the essentially inauthentic collectivist East alike, by means of fascist politics.*

A prime example of The Fascist Philosopher Engagé conception is Heidegger's notorious 1933 Rectoral address at the University of Freiburg, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," delivered just four month after Hitler and the Nazis came to power, which contains sentences such as these —

[T]he will to the essence of the German university is the will to science, which in turn is the will to the historical mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its [S]tate.

[A]ll science is philosophy, whether it knows it and wills it, or not.

The primordial and full essence of science, whose realization is our task, provided we submit to the distant command of the beginning of our spiritual-historical existence, is only created by knowledge about the people that actively participates and by knowledge about the [S]tate's destiny that always keeps itself prepared, both at one with knowledge about the spiritual mission.<sup>35</sup>

and other writings during the early to mid-1930s.<sup>36</sup>

*PA6: The "Western Marxist" Philosopher Engagé*

According to The "Western Marxist" Philosopher Engagé conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to take radically free responsibility for revolutionizing and re-creating the State as a new intersubjectively authentic social collective, by means of a revised and "westernized" Marxist politics.*

Prime examples of The "Western Marxist" Philosopher Engagé conception are the writings and political activities of the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukács in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Sartre's writings after World War II, and especially in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and his political activities in the same period.

Here's the concise *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* description of Lukács's philosophico-political activities from the 1910s to the mid-50s:

Georg (György) Lukács (1885–1971) was a literary theorist and philosopher who is widely viewed as one of the founders of “Western Marxism”. Lukács is best known for his pre-World War II writings in literary theory, aesthetic theory and Marxist philosophy. Today, his most widely read works are the *Theory of the Novel* of 1916 and *History and Class Consciousness* of 1923. In *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács laid out a wide-ranging critique of the phenomenon of “reification” in capitalism and formulated a vision of Marxism as a self-conscious transformation of society. This text became an important reference point both for critical social theory and for many currents of countercultural thought. Even though his later work could not capture the imagination of the intellectual public as much as his earlier writings, Lukács remained a prolific writer and an influential theorist in his later career and published hundreds of articles on literary theory and aesthetics, not to mention numerous books, including two massive works on aesthetics and ontology. He was also active as a politician in Hungary in both the revolution of 1919 and during the events of 1956.<sup>37</sup>

And here is the concise Wikipedia description of Sartre's philosophico-political activity after 1945:

[Sartre's] 1948 play *Les mains sales* (Dirty Hands) in particular explored the problem of being a politically “engaged” intellectual. He embraced Marxism but did not join the Communist Party. For a time in the late 1940s, Sartre described French nationalism as “provincial” and in a 1949 essay called for a “United States of Europe”.... In an essay published in the June 1949 edition of the journal *Politique étrangère*, Sartre wrote:

If we want French civilization to survive, it must be fitted into the framework of a great European civilization. Why? I have said that civilization is the reflection on a shared situation. In Italy, in France, in Benelux, in Sweden, in Norway, in Germany, in Greece, in Austria, everywhere we find the same problems and the same dangers ... But this cultural polity has prospects only as elements of a policy which defends Europe's cultural autonomy vis-à-vis America and the Soviet Union, but also its political and economic autonomy, with the aim of making Europe a single force between the blocs, not a third bloc, but an autonomous force which will refuse to allow itself to be torn into shreds between American optimism and Russian scientificism....

About the Korean War, Sartre wrote: “I have no doubt that the South Korean feudalists and the American imperialists have promoted this war. But I do not doubt either that it was begun by the North Koreans”.... In July 1950, Sartre wrote in *Les Temps Modernes* about his and de Beauvoir's attitude to the Soviet Union:

As we were neither members of the [Communist] party nor its avowed sympathizers, it was not our duty to write about Soviet labor camps; we were free to remain aloof from the quarrel over the nature of this system, provided that no events of sociological significance had occurred....

Sartre held that the Soviet Union was a "revolutionary" state working for the betterment of humanity and could be criticized only for failing to live up to its own ideals, but that critics had to take in mind that the Soviet state needed to defend itself against a hostile world; by contrast Sartre held that the failures of "bourgeois" states were due to their innate shortcomings... The Swiss journalist François Bondy wrote that, based on a reading of Sartre's numerous essays, speeches and interviews "a simple basic pattern never fails to emerge: social change must be comprehensive and revolutionary" and the parties that promote the revolutionary charges "may be criticized, but only by those who completely identify themselves with its purpose, its struggle and its road to power," deeming Sartre's position to be "existentialist."<sup>38</sup>

#### *PA7: The Captive Mind*

According to The Captive Mind conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of philosophy to be pragmatic, prudential, and realistic, and therefore align itself with the commands issued by governments of post-World War II States, whether socialist or neoliberal democratic, and even if those commands are rationally unjustified and morally unacceptable on independent ethical grounds.*

A prime example of The Captive Mind conception is Sidney Hook, aptly described by John McCumber as "the distinguished pragmatist philosopher who later turned avid Red hunter."<sup>39</sup>

More specifically, here's the concise Wikipedia description of of Hook's "Red hunter" activities:

After embracing communism in his youth, Hook was later known for his criticisms of totalitarianism, both fascism and Marxism–Leninism. A pragmatic social democrat, Hook sometimes cooperated with conservatives, particularly in opposing Marxism–Leninism. After World War II, he argued that members of such groups as the Communist Party USA and Leninists like democratic centralists could ethically be barred from holding the offices of public trust because they called for the violent overthrow of democratic governments.

In 1939, Hook formed the Committee for Cultural Freedom, a short-lived organization that set the stage for his postwar politics by opposing "totalitarianism" on the left and right. By the Cold War, Hook had become a prominent anti-Communist, although he

continued to consider himself both a democratic socialist and a secular humanist throughout his life. He was, therefore, an anti-Communist socialist....

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Hook helped found Americans for Intellectual Freedom, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), and the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. These bodies—of which the CCF was most central—were funded in part by the Central Intelligence Agency through a variety of fronts and sought to dissuade American leftists from continuing to advocate cooperation with the Soviet Union as some had previously.... Hook later wrote in his memoirs that he, “like almost everyone else,” had heard that “the CIA was making some contribution to the financing of the Congress.”<sup>40</sup>

### *PA8: Multiculturalism*

According to the Multiculturalism conception, philosophy should be engaged with politics because *it's in the nature of professional academic philosophy, following on from the Black Power, Second-Wave Feminist, Gay Liberation, and "gender trouble"/queer theory movements of the late 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, for professional academic philosophers in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, to be "woke" identitarian social justice warriors inside the professional academy.*<sup>41</sup>

A prime example of the Multiculturalism conception is Kate Manne's *Down Girl*,<sup>42</sup> and also her activities on social media, e.g., on Twitter, as per the tweet from 14 August 2019 pictured in section 3 above, in which Manne explicitly recommends “politicizing metaphysics, epistemology, social philosophy, and ethics.”

## **7. How and Why the First Eight Varieties of Philosophical Activism are Rationally Unjustifiable and Morally Unacceptable**

In order to show how and why the first eight varieties of philosophical activism are rationally unjustifiable and morally unacceptable, again I'll need to provide more working definitions and relevant background notions.

For the purposes of my argument from here on in, I'll assume the truth of the following two theses:

- (i) that a broadly Kantian *dignitarian* ethics and politics is rationally justified and morally acceptable, and

(ii) that the *coercive authoritarianism* of States, especially those organized around *identitarian* ethics and politics, is rationally unjustified and morally wrong.

Concisely defined, *identitarianism* says

(i) that people are defined primarily in terms of their falling under a certain social group-type and/or their social group-allegiance (for example, race, ethnicity, gender-&/or-sex, sexual preference, national origin or citizenship, language, economic class, social roles of all kinds, social institutions of all kinds especially including religions, etc., etc.),

(ii) that special moral virtues and special positive moral value, or goodness, are attributed to all members of that social group and to that social group itself, call it *the We*,

(iii) that special moral vices and special negative moral disvalue, or badness, are attributed to members of certain *other* social groups and to those groups themselves, who are then collectively intensely distrusted, or even excoriated-and-vilified, as *the Other*, and

(iv) The creation of the Other also leads to intense or even obsessive fears that the We will be corrupted, infiltrated, and miscegenated by the Other culture, members of which are then perceived to exist both covertly inside (as carriers of disease, or impurities) and also overtly outside (as invasive threats surrounding the We) Our culture.

Indeed, a characteristic and indeed essential feature of this creation of the Other is that the members of that group be caricatured and even represented as “sub-human” in the morally pregnant sense of being *sub-persons*, and more generally as being thoroughly *inferior* to the We.

By a mutually exclusive contrast, *dignitarianism*, especially the *Kantian* version of it, says

(i) that everyone, everywhere, has absolute, non-denumerable, non-instrumental, innate moral value, aka *dignity*, simply by virtue of their being persons (i.e., conscious, caring, cognizing, self-conscious rational animals with a further capacity for free will), and that dignity is a fundamental, irreducible, and therefore *primitively given* feature of persons that cannot either be reduced or erased by any bad actions or bad habits of character, or increased or sanctified by any good actions or good habits of character, and



(ii) that everyone, everywhere ought to treat themselves and everyone else with sufficient respect for their dignity.

The fundamental problem with the first eight kinds of philosophical activism lies in one fundamental philosophical truth, namely

(i) that coercive authoritarianism *of any kind* is rationally unjustified and morally unacceptable, but especially versions of coercive authoritarianism based on identitarian premises,

and also in two rationally unjustified and morally unacceptable facts, namely

(ii) that all States, by their very nature, are coercive and authoritarian, and

(iii) that each of the first eight kinds of kind of philosophical activism either *accommodates, collaborates with, or itself directly engages in*, coercive authoritarian political activity, and especially coercive authoritarian activity based on identitarian premises.

More specifically:

*The Gadfly* conception, even though it's critical of tyrannical city-States like Socrates's and Plato's Athens, nevertheless entails ultimately accommodating them.

*The Philosopher-King* conception entails that a philosopher-king would directly engage in the coercive authoritarianism of the ideal city-State envisioned in *The Republic*.

*The Philosophical Absolute on Horseback* conception entails direct collaboration with identitarian imperialist nation-States like Napoleonic France.

The *Changing the World* conception entails direct collaboration with coercive authoritarian and violent revolutionary groups like the French Jacobins, led by Robespierre, during and after the French Revolution, and the Russian Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, during and after the Russian Revolution.

*The Fascist Philosopher Engagé* conception entails direct collaboration with identitarian totalitarian fascist nation-States like Hitler's Nazi Germany.

*The "Western Marxist" Philosopher Engagé* conception, while it doesn't entail direct collaboration with identitarian totalitarian communist nation-States like Stalin's Soviet

Union, and even allows for criticism of them, nevertheless entails accommodating them.<sup>43</sup>

*The Captive Mind* conception entails either accommodating or direct collaboration with post-World War II identitarian socialist or neoliberal democratic nation-States of *any* kind.<sup>44</sup>

And finally, the *Multiculturalism* conception entails directly engaging in identitarian coercive *moralism* inside the professional academy.

And moralism is a sub-species of authoritarianism that says you ought to obey some moral command *C* just because the issuer of *C* says so, and also possesses, at the very least, *the power of destroying the social standing of anyone who fails to obey that command* ( as, e.g., in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s searing critique of coercive moralism, *The Scarlet Letter*), or *even the power of destroying the life of anyone denounced as counterorthodox* (as, e.g., in Arthur Miller’s equally searing critique, *The Crucible*), and *not* on any independent ethical grounds.

So the Multiculturalism conception also entails directly engaging in identitarian coercive *authoritarianism* inside the professional academy.

## **8. The Ninth Variety of Philosophical Activism, *the Mind-Body Politic*, and How and Why It is Rationally Justifiable and Morally Acceptable**

In a nutshell, what I’m going to argue in this section is

- (i) that *only* what Maiese and I call “the mind-body politic” provides for a philosophical activism that’s at once *non-coercive*, *non-authoritarian*, and *dignitarian* in the Kantian sense,
- (ii) that insofar as it’s dignitarian, *only* the mind-body politic provides for a philosophical activism that creates and sustains all and only social institutions that are grounded on *the essentially embodied human capacity for rationality*, and therefore
- (iii) that only the mind-body politic provides for a philosophical activism that makes philosophy—that is, *philosophy in sense (ii)*, as spelled out in section 2 above—*itself* possible, especially by virtue of its ability to resist and defend itself

and innocent others against *all* forms of coercive authoritarianism, in a fully *non-coercive* and *non-violent* way.<sup>45</sup>

In *The Mind-Body Politic*,<sup>46</sup> Maiese and I start with the following basic thesis, drawn from our earlier work—

1. Human minds are necessarily and completely embodied (*the essential embodiment thesis*).<sup>47</sup>

Then we proceed from there to argue for three new basic theses:

2. Essentially embodied minds are *neither* merely brains *nor* over-extended “extended minds,” yet all social institutions saliently constrain, frame, and partially determine the social-dynamic patterns of our essentially embodied consciousness, self-consciousness, affect, (including feelings, desires, and emotions), cognition, and agency—that is, they *literally shape* our essentially embodied minds, and thereby fundamentally affect our lives, for worse or better, mostly without our self-conscious awareness (*the mind-shaping thesis*).

3. *Many or even most* social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states literally shape our essentially embodied minds, and thereby our lives, in such a way as to alienate us, mentally enslave us, or even undermine our mental health, to a greater or lesser degree (*the destructive Gemeinschaft/collective sociopathy thesis*).

4. Nevertheless, *some* social institutions, working against the grain of standard, dystopian social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, can make it really possible for us to self-realize, connect with others in a mutually aiding way, liberate ourselves, and be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy (*the constructive Gemeinschaft/collective wisdom thesis*).

It should be noticed that the kind of destructive, deforming mind-shaping described in thesis 3 inherently admits of degrees—greater or lesser—whereas, by sharp contrast, the kind of constructive, enabling mind-shaping described in thesis 4 is categorically different from the kind of literal mind-shaping that occurs in standard, dystopian neoliberal social institutions.

Hence the existence, creation, and development of constructive, enabling social institutions represents an absolute, radical break with the social-institutional *status quo* in contemporary neoliberal societies.

So understood, the conjunction of our four basic theses yields what we call *the enactive-transformative principle*:

Enacting salient or even radical changes in the structure and complex dynamics of a social institution produces corresponding salient or even radical changes in the structure and complex dynamics of the essentially embodied minds of the people belonging to, participating in, or falling under the jurisdiction of, that institution, thereby fundamentally affecting their lives, for worse or better.

In short, we can significantly change our own and other people's essentially embodied minds, and in turn, their lives, whether for worse or better, *by means of* changing the social institutions we and they inhabit.

The enactive-transformative principle, in turn, motivates a philosophico-political *clarion call* whose simple, yet world-transforming message is that we can freely, systematically, and even radically change existing destructive, deforming social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states into new constructive, enabling social institutions; and this, as a consequence, enables us to transform our own and other people's essentially embodied minds and lives significantly or even radically *for the better*.

More generally, *The Mind-Body Politic*<sup>48</sup> is not only a study in the philosophy of mind, but also a study in radical, emancipatory political theory, drawing on Kant's theory of radical enlightenment, Schiller's aesthetic extension of Kant's radical enlightenment theory, Kierkegaard's existentialism, early Marx's existential humanism, Foucault's insights about governmentality, Frankfurt School Critical theory, and my *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*.<sup>49</sup>

For our purposes in that book, here is what Maiese and I understand by those doctrines.

Kant's theory of radical enlightenment says that in order to liberate ourselves from our own self-imposed rational, moral, and political immaturity, we must dare to think and act autonomously, both as individuals and also publicly or relationally, under the guidance of individually and multiply self-legislated universal ethical principles that require sufficient respect for human dignity.

Such respect entails *never* treating anyone, including ourselves, *either* as mere instrumental means to self-interested ends or collective happiness *or* as mere things, hence as non-persons.

Schiller's aesthetic extension of Kant's radical enlightenment theory says that the life-process of liberating ourselves from our own self-imposed rational, moral, and political immaturity, and daring to think and act autonomously, is neither merely an *intellectual* process (which Schiller dubs the "formal drive" or *Formtrieb*), nor merely a *sensory* process (which he dubs the "sensible drive" or *Sinnestrieb*).

Instead, by way of reconciling, harmonizing, and transcending the other two processes, the emergence of human autonomy is fundamentally a *creative, playful process* (which Schiller dubs the "play drive" or *Spieltrieb*) of developing one's capacities for meaningful self-expression, the appreciation of beauty and other aesthetic qualities, artistic production, feeling, and emotion.

Kierkegaard's existentialism says that our recognition of universal ethical principles must be combined with fundamental spiritual values in the radical absence of certainty about God's existence or non-existence, and freely worked out by the individual herself over the course of her entire life.

All the while, the individual must be guided by the ideal of authenticity, according to which "purity of heart is to will one thing."

Early Marx's existential humanism says that the alienating "commodification" (instrumentalization and mechanization) of all aspects of human life under the system of large-scale capitalism can be overcome only by self-liberating, self-realizing activity in which all laborers or workers freely create and control both the means of production and its products.

Foucault's work on "governmentality" says that any government's techniques for coercing and controlling individuals are tied to the ways those individuals monitor and control themselves, aka "subjectivation."

More specifically, self-shaping practices of subjectivation consist of "processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself,"<sup>50</sup> so as to sustain particular behaviors, namely those coercively compelled or "nudged" within specific power structures and social institutions.

By internalizing norms that impede overall human flourishing, a subject "becomes the principle of his own subjection."<sup>51</sup>

Frankfurt School Critical theory says that an essential preliminary to the full recovery of our seriously-diminished capacities for autonomous rational agency in the modern

world, including the liberation of our aesthetic and affective (that is, sensible, desiring, and emotional) selves, is our self-conscious, reflective awareness of the pathological impact of the multifarious systems of ideology and thought-control in advanced capitalist States.

These toxic arrangements include totalitarian fascist state-capitalist systems, totalitarian communist State-capitalist systems, and all neoliberal nation-States, whether democratic or non-democratic.

And finally, in *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*,<sup>52</sup> I use Kant's eighteenth century philosophical ideas, together with nineteenth and twentieth century social anarchist (aka anarcho-socialist) doctrines, especially those developed by Peter Kropotkin, in order to develop a contemporary *Kantian radically agnostic* doctrine in the philosophy of religion, philosophical theology, and real-world spirituality, and also a contemporary *existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist* (aka anarcho-socialist) doctrine in political philosophy and real-world politics.

By *emancipatory political theory*, then, Maiese and I mean any political theory that promotes and sustains—

- (i) *a critical consciousness* about ourselves and our basic relationships to social institutions,
- (ii) *a cognitive and practical resistance* to destructive, deforming institutions, and
- (iii) *a radically enlightened self-education that is at once intellectual, moral, aesthetic, affective, religious/spiritual, and existential*, via our collective creation of, and individual engagement with, constructive, enabling institutions.

More specifically, we believe that *the enactive-transformative principle* should be directly deployed in service of our critical consciousness, cognitive and practical resistance, and radically enlightened self-education.

So *The Mind-Body Politic* is an explicit, detailed attempt to renew and extend radically enlightened, existentially-informed, emancipatory philosophical projects in the tradition of Kant, Schiller, Kierkegaard, early Marx, Kropotkin, Foucault, and the Frankfurt School, in the context of contemporary philosophy of mind.

## 9. Philosophizing with a Blue Guitar

Let's suppose that every version of philosophical quietism has been shown to be rationally unjustified and morally unacceptable, that the first eight versions of philosophical activism are equally rationally unjustified and morally unacceptable, and that only the mind-body politic, that is, a broadly Kantian dignitarian liberationist philosophical activism, aka heavy-duty or radical enlightenment, is rationally justified and morally acceptable.

Still, we're only at *the very beginning of the mind-body politic*, because we'll also need to spell out all the nitty-gritty details of how this kind of philosophical activism actually applies to the real world.

I've tried to do that in *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*,<sup>53</sup> parts 2 (especially sections 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10) and 3; Maiese and I have tried to do that in a slightly different way in *The Mind-Body Politic*,<sup>54</sup> chs. 6-7; and Otto Paans and I have worked out a theory of the permissible use of force in a broadly Kantian dignitarian moral and political setting.<sup>55</sup>

But there's another special feature of the mind-body politic that I want to highlight here, namely, what I'm calling "philosophizing with a blue guitar."

I mean that, according to the mind-body politic, there will be *creative breakthroughs in the ways in which philosophy is expressed, that is, creative breakthroughs in the presentational format of philosophical works*.

One of the reasons I keep using the seemingly long-winded phrase "professional academic philosophy" in order to describe, in part, what philosophical activists who are emancipatory political theorists should be emancipating ourselves/themselves *from*, is that *professionalism* and *academicism* are actually logically independent of one another.

On the one hand, there can be professionals who aren't academics, e.g., medical doctors.

And on the other hand, there can be academics who aren't professionals, e.g., the members of Plato's original Academy, and Scholastic monks like Aquinas.

In any case, academicism in philosophy on its own, inevitably produces stylistic scholasticism, cramped obedient rule-following, and mind-manacles galore.

And in this way we are able to recognize, by sharp contrast, that the truly important philosophy of the past has always been expressed in highly original, break-out—I mean, highly original and break-out *for that time*, although they may have been widely imitated later — presentational formats, e.g.,

- (i) Plato's dialogues,
- (ii) Aristotle's lectures,
- (iii) Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*,
- (iv) Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*,
- (v) Augustine's *Confessions*,
- (vi) Descartes's *Meditations*,
- (vii) Spinoza's *Ethics*,
- (viii) Leibniz's *Monadology*,
- (ix) Kant's first *Critique*,
- (x) Hegel's *Phenomenology*,
- (xi) Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena*,
- (xii) Kierkegaard's pseudonymous romantic sermonizing essay-novellas,
- (xiii) Nietzsche's aphoristic books and *Zarathustra*,
- (xiv) Wittgenstein's modernist prose-poem of philosophical logic, the *Tractatus*,
- (xv) Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and
- (xvi) Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

Correspondingly, when philosophical-activism-as-the-mind-body-politic breaks out of the professional academy and into *the philosophy of the future* — as per another brilliant Nietzschean subtitle, this time for *Beyond Good and Evil*, "Prelude To A Philosophy of



the Future” — then it will express its ideas in highly original, break-out formats, *influenced especially by classical or modern literature of all sorts, but also other art-forms*. And *that’s* above all what I and others have been trying to do at *Philosophy Without Borders*, especially on our blog, *Against Professional Philosophy*, and our journal, *Borderless Philosophy*.

More precisely, we’ve been experimenting extensively with

- (i) the one-sentence = one-paragraph = one-thought essay format,
- (ii) creative use of images in essays,
- (iii) philosophical novels,
- (iv) modernist literary formats, especially modernist philosophical novels,
- (v) autobiographical formats,
- (vi) poetic formats,
- (vii) musical formats, and more generally,
- (viii) new formats for presenting original real philosophical content that are stripped of all excessively technical-formalistic or scholarly-scholastic apparatus.

And *that’s* what I mean by “philosophizing with a blue guitar.”

## 10. Conclusion

In view of what I’ve argued in sections 1-9, then philosophizing with a hammer and a blue guitar, that is, *the mind-body politic*, is activist philosophizing in highly original, break-out presentational formats, in order to create and sustain constructive, enabling institutions, especially amongst which is the social institution of philosophy — in sense (ii), as spelled out in section 2 above — *itself*.

In other words, the activist philosophical “hammer” in emancipatory political theory is *not* a hammer *that’s* a *weapon*

either (i) for threatening and/or smashing people, under the guise of egoistic self-assertion, as per Donner's hammer *Mjollnir*, a Wagnerian symbol of war much beloved by Hitler and other Nazis,<sup>56</sup>

or (ii) for threatening and/or smashing people, under the (more or less cynical, Machiavellian) guise of furthering publicly beneficial ends, as per *the hammer-and-sickle* symbol of Stalin's Soviet Union.

Diametrically on the contrary, the activist philosophical "hammer" in emancipatory political theory is *strictly* a hammer *that's a tool*

both (i) for *starting to build a better world right here-and-now*—a *utopia now*,<sup>57</sup> aka a *real utopia*<sup>58</sup>—that sufficiently respects the dignity of all people, as per the Pete Seeger and Lee Hays 1949 progressive activist folk anthem, "[If I Had a Hammer](#)," and

also (ii) for *building the philosophy of the future*.

And insofar as it's hammering away at those amazing things, it's *also* an activist philosophical hammer whose pounding, drum-like rhythms are perfectly integrated with *cascading rock-&-roll riffs on a philosophical electric blue guitar*, that enable us to play "[a] tune beyond us, yet ourselves[a] tune upon the blue guitar [of] things exactly as they are."<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, I'm *completely* serious about this: for at my suggestion, my *Philosophy Without Borders* comrade, the contemporary Finnish philosopher Hemmo Laiho, together with the other members of his art/alternative/ psychedelic/progressive rock band, [Johannes Faustus](#), have created "The *Aufklärung* Song," which is currently rocking the world, and can be streamed at Bandcamp [HERE](#), at Spotify [HERE](#), at Apple Music [HERE](#), and at YouTube Music [HERE](#).



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> W. Kaufmann, "Editor's Preface," in F. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. W. Kaufmann (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1983), p. 463, underlining added.

<sup>2</sup> W. Stevens, "The Man with the Blue Guitar," *Poetry* 50 (May 1937), verse I.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., H. Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> See note 3 above.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., A. Schopenhauer, "On University Philosophy," in A. Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, trans. S. Roehr and C. Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), pp. 125-176; and also the contemporary independent philosophy blog, edited by Z, aka R. Hanna, *Against Professional Philosophy*, available online at URL = [<https://againstprofphil.org/>](https://againstprofphil.org/).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., J.C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> See L. Finlayson, *The Political is Political: Conformity and the Illusion of Dissent in Contemporary Political Philosophy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> M. Maiese and R. Hanna, *The Mind-Body Politic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), also available online in preview, [HERE](#).

<sup>9</sup> Wikipedia, "The Consolation of Philosophy" (2019), available online at URL = [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Consolation\\_of\\_Philosophy>](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Consolation_of_Philosophy).

<sup>10</sup> For an elaborated and extended version of the argument that follows immediately in the text, see R. Hanna, "Exiting the State and Debunking the State of Nature," *Con-Textos Kantianos* 5 (2017), available online at URL = [<https://www.con-textoskantianos.net/index.php/revista/article/view/228>](https://www.con-textoskantianos.net/index.php/revista/article/view/228); and R. Hanna, "The New Conflict of the Faculties: Kant, Radical Enlightenment, and the Deep(er) State," (April 2019 version), available online, [HERE](#).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., F. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987), chs. 2-3.

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<sup>12</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), pp. 12-13, translation slightly modified.

<sup>13</sup> T. Pogge, "Ask Philosophers," (16 March 2007), available online at URL = <http://www.askphilosophers.org/question/1579>.

<sup>14</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953), p. 47<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 49<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 51<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., M. Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 200); and G. Reich, *How the Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science: To the Icy Slopes of Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> See Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways*, p. 153 and n. 210.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., J. Katzav and K. Vaesen, "On the Emergence of American Analytic Philosophy," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (2017): 772-798.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., J. McCumber, *The Philosophy Scare: The Politics of Reason in the Early Cold War* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., R. Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967).

<sup>22</sup> Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis*, pp. ix-x.

<sup>23</sup> See J. Schmidt, *Disciplined Minds: A Critical Look at Salaried Professionals and the Soul-Battering System That Shapes Their Lives* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> M. Weber, "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," in P. Lassman and R. Spiers (eds.), *Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 309-369 at p. 310.

<sup>25</sup> See R. Hanna, *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism: A Theological-Political Treatise* (THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, Vol. 4) (New York: Nova Science, 2018), available online in preview, [HERE](#), part 2, esp. section 2.5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., H. Thijssen, "Condemnation of 1277," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E.N. Zalta (Winter 2018 Edition), available online at URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/condemnation/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/condemnation/).

<sup>28</sup> This interesting possible "third alternative" between the seemingly contradictory positions of straight-out or universal philosophical activism (as politically engaged) on the one hand, and straight-out or universal philosophical quietism (as *not* politically engaged) on the other, was suggested to me by Otto Paans in e-mail correspondence.

<sup>29</sup> It's worth noting that although *all* versions of philosophical quietism are self-undermining, nevertheless *some* of the *reasons* that have been offered by philosophers for quietism—e.g., by Boethius, Hegel, Wittgenstein, and even by Carnap—are better than *other* reasons. And in fact, aspects or elements of pure theory, Stoicism, post-historical reflection, philosophical description-diagnosis-&-therapy, and pure logic can be consistently combined with the version of philosophical activism I'll spell out and defend in section 8. It's just that none of the reasons offered for quietism, whether taken individually, or as a conjunction of any or all of them, is sufficient to justify quietism.

<sup>30</sup> Wikipedia, "Apology (Plato)," (2019), available online at URL = [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apology\\_\(Plato\)>](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apology_(Plato)).

<sup>31</sup> Wikipedia, "Philosopher King," (2019), available online at URL = [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher\\_king#In\\_Book\\_VI\\_of\\_The\\_Republic>](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher_king#In_Book_VI_of_The_Republic).

<sup>32</sup> As quoted in Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis*, p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>34</sup> K. Marx, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology & Social Philosophy*, trans. T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 69, 70, and 233-236.

<sup>35</sup> As quoted in Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>36</sup> Corresponding to *The Fascist Philosopher Engagé* conception, covering all the philosophers who like Heidegger have directly collaborated with, or would directly collaborate with, identitarian totalitarian fascist regimes like the Nazis, one could also formulate *The Communist Philosopher Engagé* conception, covering all the philosophers who have directly collaborated with, or would directly collaborate with, identitarian totalitarian communist regimes like Stalin's Soviet Union. But the next conception I'll consider, *The "Western Marxist" Philosopher Engagé*, exemplified by Lukács and Sartre, is

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subtly and interestingly different from that, because it's not directly *collaborationist* but instead only *accommodationist*.

<sup>37</sup> T. Stahl, "Georg [György] Lukács," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018 Edition), E.N. Zalta (ed.), available online at URL = [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/lukacs/>](https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/lukacs/).

<sup>38</sup> Wikipedia, "Jean-Paul Sartre," (2019), available online at URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul\\_Sartre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul_Sartre).

<sup>39</sup> McCumber, *The Philosophy Scare*, p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Wikipedia, "Sidney Hook," (2019), available online at URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Hook](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Hook).

<sup>41</sup> See also, e.g., R. Rorty, "The Unpatriotic Academy," *The New York Times* (13 February 1994), available online at URL = <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/13/opinion/the-unpatriotic-academy.html>.

<sup>42</sup> K. Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2018).

<sup>43</sup> See also, e.g., T. Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> See also C. Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, trans. J. Zielonko (New York: Vintage Books, 1955).

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., R. Hanna and O. Paans, "On the Permissible Use of Force in a Kantian Dignitarian Moral and Political Setting, Or, *Seven Kantian Samurai*," forthcoming in *Journal of Philosophical Investigations* 13 (2019), also available online in preview, [HERE](#).

<sup>46</sup> See note 8 above.

<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., R. Hanna and M. Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), also available online in preview, [HERE](#).

<sup>48</sup> See note 8 above.

<sup>49</sup> See note 25 above.

<sup>50</sup> M. Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth," *Political Theory* 21 (1993): 198–227, at pp. 203-204.

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<sup>51</sup> T. Hamann, "Neoliberalism, Governmentality, and Ethics," *Foucault Studies* 6 (2009): 37–59, at p. 51.

<sup>52</sup> See note 25 above.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> See note 8 above.

<sup>55</sup> See note 45 above.

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., J.K. McShan, "Symbols in Richard Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung," available online at URL = [http://umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/Teutonic\\_Mythology/ringsym.html](http://umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/Teutonic_Mythology/ringsym.html).

<sup>57</sup> See Hanna, *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, part 3.

<sup>58</sup> See E.O. Wright, "Real Utopias," *Contexts* 10 (2011): 36-42.

<sup>59</sup> I'm grateful to Otto Paans and Robert Whyte for extremely helpful correspondence about the topics of this essay.