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Radical Enlightenment: Existential Kantian Cosmopolitan Anarchism, With a Concluding Quasi-Federalist Postscript

Our age is the genuine age of **criticism**, to which everything must submit. **Religion** through its holiness, and **legislation** through its **majesty** commonly seek to exempt themselves from it. But in this way they excite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination. (*CPR* A xi n.)

Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from his own self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. This immaturity is self-incurred when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! Have the courage to use your own understanding! is thus the motto of Enlightenment. (WE 8: 35)

That kings should philosophize or philosophers become kings is not to be expected, but is also not to be wished for, since possession of power unavoidably corrupts the free judgment of reason. (*PP* 8: 369)

“Is there a special group of people with the right to use threats of violence to force everyone else to obey their commands, even when their commands are wrong?” The modern state claims a kind of authority that obliges all other agents to obey the state's commands and entitles the state to deploy violence and threats of violence to enforce those commands, independently of whether the commands are just, reasonable, or beneficial. [T]hat sort of authority, “political authority,” is an illusion. No state is legitimate, and no individual has political obligations. This leads to the conclusion that at a minimum, the vast majority of government activities are unjust. Government agents should refuse to enforce unjust laws, and individuals should feel free to break such laws whenever they can safely do so. (M. Huemer¹)

For convenience, I refer to Kant's works infratextually in parentheses. The citations include both an abbreviation of the English title and the corresponding volume and page numbers in the standard “Akademie” edition of Kant's works: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich Preussischen (now Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: G. Reimer [now de Gruyter], 1902–s). I generally follow the standard English translations, but have occasionally modified them where appropriate. For references to the first *Critique*, I follow the common practice of giving page numbers from the A (1781) and B (1787) German editions only. See the bibliography at the end of the article for the relevant abbreviations and English translations.

1 Huemer (2013, 332–334).

1 Introduction

By *political authority* I mean:

the existence of a special group of people (a.k.a. *government*), with the power to coerce, and the right to command other people and to coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, no matter what the content of these commands might be, and in particular, even if these commands and/or the coercion are morally impermissible.

By *coercion* I mean:

either (i) using violence (e.g. injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people according to certain purposes of the coercer (primary coercion), or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (e.g. imprisonment, termination of employment, large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, even if these are not in themselves violent, in order to manipulate people according to certain purposes of the coercer (secondary coercion).

But whether primary or secondary, coercion should be carefully distinguished from what I will call *minimally effective defensive or preventive moral force*:

using either the smallest sufficiently effective level of violence or threat of violence, or inflicting or deploying the smallest sufficiently effective threat of appreciable, salient harm, in order to defend against, or prevent, someone's being immorally primarily or secondarily coerced.

In any case, as I am understanding it, *the problem of political authority* is this:

Is there an adequate rational justification for the existence of any special group of people (a.k.a. *government*) with the power to coerce, and the right to command other people and to coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, no matter what the content of these commands might be, and in particular, even if these commands and/or the coercion are morally impermissible?

Now by *the State* I mean:

any social organization that not only claims political authority, but also actually possesses the power to coerce, in order to secure and sustain this authority.

Therefore, by *the problem of political authority* I also mean:

Is there an adequate rational justification for the existence of the State or any other State-like institution?

What then, if anything, adequately rationally justifies political authority, the State, or any other State-like institution? Is it the divine right of kings? Is it the actual social contract, as per Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and the enlightened despots of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries? Is it the hypothetical social contract, as per Rawls? Is it actual democracy, or the democratic process? Is it rule consequentialism? In sharp contrast to the justificatory strategies of divine right, the actual or hypothetical social contract, actual or process-based democracy, or consequentialism, the thesis of *philosophical anarchism* says that there is no adequate rational justification for political authority, the State, or any other State-like institution; and, correspondingly, the thesis of political anarchism says that we should construct a world in which there are no States or other State-like institutions.

Ironically, although perhaps altogether understandably, in view of the very real risks of political and religious dissent and unorthodoxy in eighteenth century Europe, Kant's political theory, as formulated in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, part 1, the *Rechtslehre*, in my opinion, is sharply out of step with the central ideas of his own moral philosophy, as formulated in *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and the *Lectures on Ethics*, his own philosophy of religion, as formulated in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* and "What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?," and his most famous political-anthropological essays, "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim," "Toward Perpetual Peace," and "What is Enlightenment?" The *Rechtslehre*, in my opinion, presents a fairly run-of-the-mill and explicitly anti-revolutionary, hence politically mainstream and safe, version of classical individualist liberalism, plus constitutional monarchy and/or parliamentarianism, plus—when we add to it "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim" and "Toward Perpetual Peace"—a peace-securing internationalism, in the social-contract tradition of Hobbes, Locke, Grotius, and Rousseau.

But emphatically on the contrary, I think that a highly original, politically radical, and if not revolutionary, then at least robustly State-resistant, State-subversive, and even outright civilly-disobedient *cosmopolitan, existentialist* version of *anarchism* that I call *existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism*, very naturally flows from Kant's moral philosophy,² his philosophy of religion, and his political anthropology. Roughly, the idea is that if we take Kant's famous injunction to

² For an earlier argument for philosophical and political anarchism from Kantian ethical premises, see Wolff (⁶1998, 3–19 [1970]).

have the courage to use your own understanding, and apply this morally courageous act not merely to “the public use of reason” (that is, to intellectual activity, writing, and speech or self-expression in the broad sense of “free speech”), but also to our individual choices, our individual agency, our shared social life, and especially to what Kant quite misleadingly calls “the private use of reason” (that is, to our social lives as functional role-players, or functionaries, within the State, including, e.g., citizenship or public office), then the result is existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism. Then and only then, in my opinion, can we understand the last sentence of “What is Enlightenment?” as it truly ought to be understood, namely as formulating a vision of *radical* enlightenment.³

When nature has unwrapped, from under this hard shell [of the “crooked timber of humanity” (*IUH* 8: 23)], the seed for which she cares most tenderly, namely the propensity and calling to *think* freely, the latter gradually works back upon the mentality of the people (which thereby gradually becomes capable of *freedom* in acting) and eventually even upon the principles of *government*, which finds it profitable to itself to treat the human being, *who is now more than a machine*, in keeping with his dignity. (*WE* 8: 41–42)

To be sure, neither the term ‘existentialism’ nor the term ‘anarchism’ existed until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But insofar as existentialism was substantially anticipated by certain lines of thought in Pascal’s seventeenth century writings,⁴ and insofar as the very idea of cosmopolitanism was already a well-established notion in political philosophy by the time Kant came to write about it,⁵ and insofar as philosophical anarchism was substantially anticipated by certain lines of thought in William Godwin’s eighteenth century writings,⁶ it seems clear that Kant belongs to an emergent existential cosmopolitan anarchist tradition in seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy. In any case, insofar as it is at once existentialist, Kantian, cosmopolitanist, and anarchist, this essay constitutes the beginnings of a project in radical *Kantian* enlightenment.⁷

3 In his excellent but also highly controversial *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (2001), and its two sequel volumes, Jonathan Israel traces the origins of the very idea of a radical enlightenment project back to Spinoza, pantheism, and metaphysical monism. I certainly agree with Israel that Spinozism is at least *one* important source of the radical enlightenment tradition. Kant’s own contribution to the controversy about Spinozism is presented in “What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?” (1998)

4 See, e.g., Clarke (2012, esp. section 6).

5 See, e.g., Kleingeld and Brown (2013, section 1).

6 See, e.g., Philip (2013, esp. section 3).

7 My radical Kantian enlightenment project is thus a new-&-improved version of what Samuel Fleischacker aptly calls “the maximalist strand of Kantian enlightenment”; see his *What is En-*

2 Existential Kantian Cosmopolitan Anarchism Defined

What, more precisely, do I mean by “existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism”?

1. By *existential*,⁸ I mean the primitive motivational, or “internalist,” normative ground of the philosophical and political doctrine I want to defend. This is the fundamental, innate need we have for a wholehearted, freely-willed life that is not essentially based on egoistic, hedonistic, or consequentialist (e. g., utilitarian) interests, that is, a life in which *self-transcendence* is possible. At the same time, however, we must also fully assume the natural presence—the facticity—of all such instrumental interests in our “human, all too human” lives. In a word, the existential ideal of a rational human wholehearted autonomous life is the ideal of non-instrumental *authenticity*, in a world of instrumental aims and needs.

2. By *Kantian*, I mean the primitive objective, or “externalist,” normative ground of the philosophical and political doctrine I want to defend, which is the recognition that the fundamental, innate need we have for a wholehearted, freely-willed, non-egoistic, non-hedonistic, non-consequentialist life—which I call *the desire for self-transcendence*⁹ – can be sufficiently rationally justified only in so far as it is also a life of what I call *principled authenticity*. By “principled authenticity” I mean reasons-based wholehearted autonomy, or having a good will in Kant’s sense, inherently guided by respect for the dignity of all real persons,¹⁰ under the Categorical Imperative.

3. By *cosmopolitan*,¹¹ I mean that this philosophical and political doctrine recognizes States (e. g., nation-States) as actual brute past and contemporary facts; but it also requires our choosing and acting in such a way that we reject in thought, and perhaps also reject and resist in words and/or actions, any im-

lightenment? (2013, 7). By contrast, Fleischacker himself defends a version of “minimalist [Kantian] enlightenment,” (Fleischacker 2013, 169–193).

⁸ See also, e. g., Crowell (2012). In order to address the classical “formalism,” “rigorism,” and “universalism” worries about Kant’s ethics, I work out a broadly existential approach to Kantian ethics in Hanna (2015b).

⁹ See Hanna and Maiese (2009, ch. 3); and Hanna (2015a, ch. 3).

¹⁰ By “real person,” I mean *an essentially embodied person*, or a rational minded animal, as opposed to either disembodied persons (e. g., souls) or collective persons (e. g., business corporations). On essential embodiment, see Hanna and Maiese (2009, esp. chs. 1–2). I work out a general theory of real personhood in *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, chs. 6–8.

¹¹ See also, e. g., Klingeld and Brown (2013, esp. section 2).

moral commands, limitations, restrictions, and prejudices present in any contemporary States—especially including the one (or ones, in my case, Canada and the USA) we happen to be actual citizens or members of—and regard ourselves instead as citizens or members of a single moral world-community of real persons, The Real Realm of Ends.

It is particularly to be noted that the conjunction of 1., 2., and 3. is only accidentally consistent with, and very frequently sharply at odds with, both the general theory and also the specific practices of contemporary large-scale capitalism, especially in its globalizing manifestations.

4. Finally, by *anarchism*,¹² I mean that this philosophical and political doctrine fully recognizes that there is no adequate rational justification for political authority, and correspondingly also no adequate rational justification for the existence of States or any other State-like institutions, and that the sole adequate rational justification for the continued existence of any aspects or proper parts of actual contemporary States or other State-like institutions, is that they fully satisfy the moral requirements under 1., 2., and 3. Otherwise, resistance, subversion, or even outright civil disobedience—strictly constrained, however, by using at most minimally effective defensive or preventive moral force—is at the very least permissible, and possibly also required.

It is also particularly to be noted that the conjunction of 1. through 4. rules out the possibility that “the single moral world-community of real persons, The Real Realm of Ends,” mentioned under 3., could ever permissibly take the form of either a league of States or a world-State, assuming that these also claim political authority and actually possess the power to coerce.

On the other hand, however, my idea is not the non-revolutionary Marxist idea that States and other State-like institutions will somehow wither away in the face of the gradual actualization or realization of The Real Realm of Ends, nor is it the revolutionary Marxist idea that States and State-like institutions must be destroyed in a single all-encompassing campaign of violent social change. On the contrary, my idea is instead the very different thought that existing or real-world States and other State-like institutions will be gradually detoxified and devolved by us into something less and less State-like. Or in other words, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism is *devolutionary* anarchism, not *revolutionary* anarchism. As regards the use or threat of physical force, what is at most permissible for the existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist is minimally effective defensive or preventive moral force, *never* coercion, and *never* terrorism.

12 See also, e.g., Kropotkin (1910), and Bookchin (1995).

In effectively detoxifying and devolving States and other State-like institutions, we will gradually deconstruct, purge, and neutralize all their immoral political and social toxins, including, in my opinion: protected State-borders and State-boundaries; State-centralized or more locally institutionalized identity-politics and xenophobia; State-centralized or more locally institutionalized patriotism; wars of aggression or pre-emption; the military development and/or use of doomsday weaponry; police-statism and totalitarianism, including State-centralized or more locally institutionalized mechanisms of thought-control, censorship, and witch-hunting; State-driven terrorism; State-driven espionage; Constitutional idolatry, permitting such moral abominations as the private possession of firearms and other lethal weapons, capital punishment, the denial of universal healthcare, and the destruction or degradation of the environment; and above all, State-centralized or more locally institutionalized racial, religious, sexual, or age-based forms of discrimination, persecution, or—the nadir of all State-driven evil—genocide.

What would remain after such a gradual detoxification and devolution of all existing or real-world States and other State-like institutions is a living, organismic, fundamentally healthy, garden-like, world-encompassing, complex dynamic pattern of post-States. Such a global nexus of post-States would at once instantiate multiple overlapping non-coercive, non-compulsive¹³ social institutions or structures for bottom-up mutual aid, care, empowerment, and support (e.g., intimate partnerships and families), and also incorporate multiple overlapping non-coercive, non-compulsive social institutions or structures for top-down communal aid, care, empowerment, and support (e.g., hospitals and universal health-care systems). Hence it would be neither a league-of-nations, nor a world-State, nor any sort of global capitalist system, whether Statist or anti-Statist. Just to give it a name, I will call this vital, world-encompassing, complex dynamic pattern of post-States *The Kosmopolis*, with a capital 'K' to distinguish it sharply from league-of-nations-oriented and/or world-State-oriented conceptions of cosmopolitanism, and also from global capitalist conceptions of cosmo-

¹³ By *non-compulsive* I mean “that which avoids, or constitutes the opposite of, the malign psychological effects of living within and under the control of States and other State-like institutions.” The Existentialist analysis of *inauthenticity*, and the Marxist analysis of *alienation*, can then be brought under the general critical analysis of the *compulsiveness* of States and State-like institutions. The fact of the compulsiveness of States and other State-like institutions also verifies, in the special case of those who directly belong to governments, or are officers of governments, or are administrators or officers of other State-like institutions, the truth of Kant’s observation that “possession of power unavoidably corrupts the free judgment of reason” (PP 8: 369).

politanism—and, equally importantly, to remind us of the ancient Greek term *Kosmos* and “Kantian” alike.

3 Existential Kantian Cosmopolitan Anarchism Further Explicated

Let me now spell out the basic ideas of existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism again somewhat more fully.

According to existential Kantian ethics,¹⁴ the highest or supreme good is a *good will* in Kant’s sense (*GMM* 4:393) (*CPrR* 5: 110). And a good will in Kant’s sense is the self-consciously experienced realization, at least partially and to some degree, of our innate capacity for autonomy, i.e., our innate capacity for free moral self-legislation, insofar as it is also inherently combined with an innate capacity for wholeheartedness, in this fully natural and thoroughly nonideal actual world. Otherwise put, self-consciously-experienced-autonomy-with-wholeheartedness-in-this-fully-natural-and-thoroughly-nonideal-actual-world is nothing more and nothing less than a rational human minded animal or real human person who is choosing and acting freely, on principle, hence according to reasons, and with a passionate and yet Stoic commitment, for the sake of the Categorical Imperative, “the moral law.” The self-conscious experience of our own at-least-partially-realized capacity for autonomy carries with it a deep happiness, or “self-fulfillment” (*Selbstzufriedenheit*) (*CPrR* 5: 117), aptly characterized by Kant—who clearly has the Stoic notion of *ataraxia* in mind—as a “negative satisfaction in one’s own existence.” This, in turn, strongly anticipates what the Existentialists later called *authenticity*. It consists, in the ideal case, of the self-conscious experience of the perfect coherence and self-sufficiency of all one’s own desires, beliefs, cognitions, inferences, intentions, motivating reasons, and choices in the act of autonomous willing. To choose and act in this way to any extent is, to that extent, to have thereby achieved principled authenticity—i.e., principled wholehearted autonomy, or a “good will” in Kant’s sense—at least partially and to some degree. Or otherwise put, to choose and act in this way is to have reached or exceeded the highest possible bar, standard, or ideal of rational normativity for rational human minded animals, and indeed for any other actual or possible creatures essentially like us, whether or not they are human.

¹⁴ See Hanna (2015b).

This fundamental axiological thesis about the good will can be directly compared and contrasted with that of *ethical egoism*, which says that the highest good is individual self-interest (whether this self-interest is specifically narcissistic/self-loving, selfish/self-inflating, or hedonistic/pleasure-seeking, or not), and also with that of *act consequentialism*, which says that the highest good is choosing and acting with good results. Now ethical egoism (including but not restricted to hedonism) and act consequentialism can both be consistently combined with classical *eudaimonism*, which says that the highest good is human happiness—whether fundamentally self-interested and therefore individual shallow happiness for the ethical egoist, or, for the act consequentialist, good results that increase overall shallow happiness for as many people or other shallow-happiness-capable creatures as possible. Deep happiness, however, is not only irrelevant to ethical egoism (including hedonism) and act consequentialism, but even inimical to them, since the achievement or pursuit of deep happiness generally runs contrary to the achievement or pursuit of shallow happiness. Or in other words, and more plainly put, if you are trying with all your heart to be a principled authentic person, you frequently miss the boat on what would generally be regarded as “common sense” and “prudence.” So existential Kantian ethics is sharply distinct from ethical egoism, hedonism, act consequentialism, and classical eudaimonism alike.

Now real persons exist in the fully natural and thoroughly nonideal actual world, alongside non-living material things, forces, and processes, other living organisms, and non-rational minded animals; and various sorts of structured intersubjective and social relationships between real persons also exist in this world. But it is what Gilbert Ryle aptly called a *category mistake* to infer from the existence of real persons and structured, intersubjective, mutual and communal social relationships between them, to the thesis that The State-in-itself, i.e., the supposed Really Real ground of human social existence and political authority, either exists or does not exist, or has a knowable essence or nature of some sort.

More precisely, The State-in-itself, the supposed Really Real ground and source of human social existence and political authority, with the power and the right to command and to coerce people to obey its commands as a duty, even if these commands and/or the coercion are impermissible according to basic existential Kantian moral principles, is nothing but a noumenal or transcendental abstraction in the Kantian sense, a mere “thought-entity” or *Verstandeswesen*. So too the God of Divine Command Ethics, the supposed Really Real ground of worldly, creaturely existence and morality, namely a super-human entity with the power and the right to command and to coerce people to obey its commands as a duty, even if these commands and/or the coercion are impermis-

sible according to basic existential Kantian moral principles, is a mere *Verstandeswesen*. If Kant's radical agnosticism about things-in-themselves or noumena is correct, then it follows that the existence or non-existence of The State-in-itself, just like God the Divine Commander, is knowably unknowable, and its nature, were it to exist, is also knowably unknowable.

Now the non-existence of the mythical State-in-itself is the mythical Hobbesian "state of nature," and it is just as philosophically fallacious to think that if God were to fail to exist (the dark night of atheism), then everything would be permitted in a moral sense (the chaos of nihilism), as it is to think that if the State-in-itself were to fail to exist (the dark night of the Hobbesian state of nature), then everything would be permitted in a political sense (the chaos of "the war of all against all"). Correspondingly, it is just as philosophically fallacious to use the mythical bogeyman of "the war of all against all" as a sufficient reason for believing in the necessity of a State-in-itself, as it is to use the mythical bogeyman of nihilism as a sufficient reason for believing in the necessity of God's existence. Theism is to Statism, as atheism is to the belief in a Hobbesian state of nature lurking behind the paper-thin façade of civil society. All are equally rationally unsupported and illusory.

Therefore, since there is no knowable Really Real ground or source of human social existence and political authority, or of States, then there is no such thing as a sufficient rational justification of either political authority or States. Or as Michael Huemer crisply puts it, "that sort of authority, 'political authority', is an illusion."—Not merely a psychological illusion, however, but more fundamentally a philosophical illusion, and even more specifically, a noumenal or transcendental illusion.

That is one Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism. Later, in section 4, I will present another Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism, this time specifically from Kantian ethics, that I call *the core Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism*.

In any case, according to existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism, The Realm of Ends is the total ideal moral community of rational minded animals or real persons, each of whom respects one another and themselves as creatures with dignity (absolute objective intrinsic non-denumerable moral value), and also considers all the others and themselves equally in relation to the Categorical Imperative/moral law, and, finally, each possesses a good will. The good will, as I have said, is the highest or supreme good. The sole and complete good, i.e., the best life for any rational human minded animal or real human person, is a life of deep individual happiness, and also deep communal or social happiness, that is intrinsically controlled and structured by a good will in the Kantian sense. Now The Realm of Ends and the sole and complete good are only regulative ideals,

never real-world facts. What I call, by sharp contrast, The *Real* Realm of Ends is what is really possible for us in this fully natural and thoroughly nonideal actual world. Otherwise put, The Real Realm of Ends is the “human, all too human” actualization or realization of The Realm of Ends, to whatever degree or extent this is really possible, by means of our wholehearted autonomous constructive activity.

So every time an agent truly chooses or acts for the sake of the Categorical Imperative/moral law, she thereby actualizes or realizes moral worth, and she thereby experiences autonomous self-fulfillment, at least partially or to some degree. But if she also thereby achieves some individual deep happiness and also some communal or social deep happiness, then she also realizes a proper part of the sole and complete good, and partially actualizes or realizes The Realm of Ends in this “human, all too human” world, at least partially or to some degree. Given “the crooked timber of humanity” in this thoroughly nonideal world—which is a timber that “can never be made straight” (*IUH* 8: 23) and which is a world in which, it seems, as they say, no good deed ever goes unpunished—then the sole and complete good is not humanly possible to any degree or any extent unless

(i) we satisfy the moral constraints of what I call *existential Kantian moral theology*,¹⁵ and unless

(ii) we recognize that proofs of The State-in-itself’s existence or non-existence (the Hobbesian state-of-nature), and knowledge of The State-in-itself’s nature as a supposed Really Real ground of human social existence and source of political authority, and therefore any rational justification of its political authority, are all knowably unknowable (Kant’s radical agnosticism), and unless

(iii) we prove ourselves to be morally worthy of happiness, by collectively constructing/realizing The Real Realm of Ends on this earth and in this fully natural and thoroughly nonideal world, in the form of a world-wide vital dynamic pattern of post-states, The Kosmopolis, as if we were already liberated from the morally impermissible and rationally unjustifiable commands, limitations, prejudices, and restrictions of actual States and other State-like institutions (existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism), hence

¹⁵ See Hanna (2014, 26–69).

(iv) it is at the very least always permissible, and, other things being equal, sometimes also obligatory, that we refuse to accept, and are also prepared to resist, subvert, or even overtly civilly disobey—using, however, at most minimally effective defensive or preventive moral force—any actual State or State-like institution, precisely insofar as it is not morally consistent and coherent with collectively constructing The Real Realm of Ends on this earth and in this fully natural and thoroughly nonideal actual world, as The Kosmopolis (“the arts of resistance”¹⁶).

Now as I see it, the four classical problems with anarchism are

- (i) its lack of well-worked-out ethical foundations,
- (ii) its tendency to collapse into destructive ludic mayhem,¹⁷ revolutionism, and terrorism,
- (iii) how it handles the all-important issue of the use of physical force and threats of physical force within an anarchist social framework, and
- (iv) its lack of a workable theory of how, once anarchism has been widely accepted, “to make the trains run on time”: that is, the lack of any workable theory of how to sustain all the morally good things in our actual-world political and social existence, while also expunging all the morally reprehensible things in actual-world States and other State-like institutions.

But, at least prospectively, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism clearly responds adequately and effectively to problems (i) to (iv).

First, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism is committed to the basic principles of Kantian ethics and to moral realism about those principles: according to the existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist, such principles really do objectively exist, and they are humanly knowable by means of rational intuition.¹⁸

¹⁶ See, e.g., Scott (1990) and Scott (2009).

¹⁷ But I also think there’s nothing wrong with a certain measured amount of *constructive, morally-constrained, non-violent* ludic mayhem, if it’s properly aimed at exposing, resisting, or subverting the moral evils of actual-world nation-states or other coercive and compulsive social institutions. See, e.g., Vigo’s 1933 film, *Zéro de Conduite*; Simonsson’s and Nilsson’s 2010 film, *Sound of Noise*; and Scott (2012) *Two Cheers for Anarchism*.

¹⁸ See Hanna (2015b, esp. chs. 1–2). Huemer’s *Problem of Political Authority* (2013), by contrast, appeals only to common-sense moral intuitions, and remains officially neutral about moral realism and ethical intuitionism. But in fact, Huemer is elsewhere committed to moral re-

Second, according to existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism, destructive ludic mayhem, revolutionism, and terrorism are all strictly inconsistent with respecting the dignity of real persons, and with choosing and acting for the sake of the Categorical Imperative. Thus destructive ludic mayhem, revolutionism, and terrorism are all strictly morally impermissible.

Third, according to existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism, the use of physical force or the threat of physical force within an anarchist social framework is morally permissible *only* for the purposes of

- (i) minimally effective defense against or prevention of, primary coercion directed against oneself, especially life-threatening primary coercion,
- (ii) minimally effectively protecting others, especially innocent and weak others, from primary coercion, especially life-threatening primary coercion, and
- (iii) minimally effective defense against or prevention of direct violations of rational human dignity.

In other words, as I mentioned in section 2, where the use or threat of physical force is concerned, only minimally effective defensive or preventive moral force is permissible for existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchists, never coercion, and never terrorism.¹⁹

Fourth, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism's "detoxification" and "devolution" model of the deconstruction of actual-world nation-states and other state-like institutions—whereby all and only the morally good-making, environmentally-sound, non-coercive, non-compulsive bottom-up and top-down social institutions or structures are all left in place, and all and only the morally, physically, and psychologically toxic features of actual States and State-like institutions are purged and/or phased-out—also clearly and effectively responds to problem (iv).

Within the scope of "morally good-making, environmentally-sound, non-coercive, non-compulsive bottom-up and top-down social institutions or structures" I mean to include, e.g., flourishing families and intimate adult partnerships of all kinds²⁰; hospitals and universal healthcare; schools and colleges; humanistic and scientific communities of free inquiry, which I call *post-universi-*

alism and ethical intuitionism; see Huemer (2008). For my alternative view about the nature of intuitions, *Kantian Intuitionism*, see Hanna (2015, chs. 6–8).

¹⁹ See also Hanna (2015b, chs. 3–5), for the moral foundations of this constraint.

²⁰ I mean: heterosexual or non-heterosexual—including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or whatever; and monogamous or polyamorous.

ties; fine arts and everyday arts, and crafts; private and public entertainment; sports and games; small-scale, eco-sensitive agriculture, public forestry, and public park-cultivation; small-scale capitalism with universal social security; and trains that run on time. As such, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism is neither anarcho-*capitalist*, insofar as unconstrained large-scale capitalism is immoral, nor anarcho-*socialist*, insofar as authoritarian and/or totalitarian socialism is also immoral. At the same time, however, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism is perfectly compatible with any and all morally permissible forms of petit bourgeois capitalism and social welfare.

In any case, it should therefore be obvious by now that the version of political anarchism that I am proposing is thoroughly devolutionary and constructive (moral-community-growing) and not revolutionary, terrorist, or destructive (bomb-throwing). That the version of political anarchism that I am proposing is deep, and not shallow or lifestyle (radical chic). And that the version of political anarchism that I proposing is realistic, and not excessively idealistic or utopian (cloud cuckoo-land). Indeed, political anarchism as I am understanding it is the permanent necessary social condition of achieving principled authenticity and constructing the real-world moral community of The Real Realm of Ends on earth, via our detoxifying and devolutionary construction of the Kosmopolis. And thereby, in effect, we prune back and weed out real-world States and other State-like institutions, until finally they are nothing but mulch for the world-wide growth of morally good-making, environmentally-sound, non-coercive, non-compulsive bottom-up and top-down social institutions or structures. In this way, we endlessly create and cultivate the post-state, fundamentally healthy, world-wide garden of our deepest individual and collective rational human aspirations. This is not the pre-lapsarian, mythical, paradisaal, Adam-and-Eve-private-ly-owned garden of Eden, however: instead, it is nothing more and nothing less than the post-lapsarian, real-world, mixed-use, communal garden of home-planet earth.

Bounded in a nutshell, then, here are the five simplified imperatives of this devolutionary, constructive, deep, realistic, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism:

1. *Think for yourself.*
2. *Criticize political and institutional authority.*
3. *Recognize and reject political and institutional bullshit.*²¹

²¹ Of course, I mean “bullshit” in the strictly philosophical sense of that term. See, e.g., Frankfurt (1988).

4. *Treat everyone else with at least minimal moral respect, but never allow yourself to be tyrannized by the majority.*

5. *Take responsibility for constructing The Real Realm of Ends on earth.*

4 The Core Kantian Argument for Philosophical Anarchism, and Beyond

As I mentioned in section 1, by *political authority* I mean:

the existence of a special group of people (a.k.a. *government*), with the power to coerce, and the right to command other people and to coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, no matter what the content of these commands might be, and in particular, even if these commands and/or the coercion are morally impermissible.

And again, by *coercion* I mean:

either (i) using violence (e.g. injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people according to certain purposes of the coercer (primary coercion), or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (e.g. imprisonment, termination of employment, large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, even if these are not in themselves violent, in order to manipulate people according to certain purposes of the coercer (secondary coercion).

Therefore, again, as I am understanding it, *the problem of political authority* is this:

Is there an adequate rational justification for the existence of any special group of people (a.k.a. *government*) with the power to coerce, and the right to command other people and to coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, no matter what the content of these commands might be, and in particular, even if these commands and/or the coercion are morally impermissible?

And again, by *the State* I mean:

any social organization that not only claims political authority, but also actually possesses the power to coerce, in order to secure and sustain this authority.

Therefore, as before, by *the problem of political authority* I also mean:

Is there an adequate rational justification for the existence of the State or any other State-like institution?

This problem applies directly to *all* kinds of political authority, States, and State-like institutions, from pharaohs, kings, and popes, to constitutional monarchies, communist States, capitalist liberal democracies, provincial or city governments, military organizations, business corporations, and universities—basically, any institution with its own army or police-force. But of course the problem is not just philosophical, it is all too horribly real. Since the nineteenth century, States, especially nation-States, and other State-like institutions have explicitly claimed to possess political authority, and then have proceeded to use the power to coerce, especially the power of primary coercion, frequently of the most awful, cruel, and monstrous kinds, thereby repressing, detaining, imprisoning, enslaving, torturing, starving, maiming, or killing literally hundreds of millions of people, in order to secure their acceptance of these authoritarian claims. Even allowing for all the other moral and natural evils that afflict humankind, it seems very likely that there has never been a single greater cause of evil, misery, suffering, and death in the history of the world than the coercive force of States and other State-like institutions.

As I also noted in section 1, the thesis of philosophical anarchism says that there is no adequate rational justification for political authority, States, or any other State-like institutions, and the thesis of political anarchism says that we should construct a world in which there are no States or other State-like institutions. On the one hand, it is rationally coherent and permissible to defend philosophical anarchism without also defending political anarchism. But on the other hand, it is hard to see how one could rationally justify political anarchism except by way of philosophical anarchism. So philosophical anarchism is the rational key to anarchism more generally, although of course political anarchism is ultimately where all the real-world action is.

Although I want to defend both philosophical anarchism and also political anarchism, from an existential Kantian cosmopolitan point of view, this is not the place to take on the strenuous task of fully justifying political anarchism. Instead, here is what I take to be a self-evidently sound five-step argument for philosophical anarchism, the core Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism:

- (1) We adopt, as basic moral principles, by means of which we can judge the permissibility or impermissibility of any human choice, action, practical policy, or other practical principle, the set of basic Kantian moral principles.

(2) Precisely insofar as it is morally impermissible for ordinary individual real persons or groups of real persons to command other people and coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, then by the same token, it must also be morally impermissible for special groups of people inside States or other State-like institutions, i.e., *governments*, to command other people and coerce them to obey those commands as a duty.

(3) Therefore, precisely insofar as it is morally impermissible for ordinary individual real persons or groups of ordinary real persons to command other people and coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, even if governments have the power to command other people and coerce them to obey those commands, nevertheless governments do not have the right to command other people and coerce them to obey those commands as a duty.

(4) But all governments claim political authority in precisely this sense.

(5) Therefore, there is no adequate rational justification for political authority, States, or other State-like institutions, and philosophical anarchism is true.

Or in other and fewer words, because there is no adequate rational justification, according to the set of basic Kantian moral principles, for an ordinary individual real person's, or any group of ordinary real persons', immorally commanding other people and coercing them to obey those commands as a duty, yet the very idea of political authority entails that special groups of people within States or State-like institutions, namely governments, have not only the power to coerce, but also the right to command other people and to coerce them to obey those commands as a duty, even when the commands and/or coercion are immoral, then it follows that there is no adequate rational justification for political authority, States, or any other State-like institutions—therefore, philosophical anarchism is true. Or in still other and even fewer words: human governments have no moral right to do to other people what ordinary real human persons have no moral right to do to other people, according to the set of basic Kantian moral principles; yet all human governments falsely claim this supposed moral right; hence philosophical anarchism is true. **QED**

A very striking feature of the core Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism is that it has exactly the same form as what I will call *the core Kantian argument against Divine Command Ethics*, with appropriate substitutions made in boldface:

Because there is no adequate rational justification, according to the set of basic Kantian moral principles, for an ordinary individual real person's, or any group of ordinary real persons', immorally commanding other people and coercing them to obey those commands as a duty, yet the very idea of **Divine Command Ethics** entails that **an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good being, namely God, has not only the supreme power to cause people to do things**, but also the right to command other people and to **cause** them to obey those commands as a duty, even when the commands and/or **causing** are immoral **by rational human standards**, then it follows that there is no adequate rational justification for **Divine Command Ethics**—therefore, **the denial of Divine Command Ethics** is true. Or in still other and even fewer words, **divine beings** have no moral right to do to people what ordinary real human persons have no moral right to do to other people, according to the set of basic Kantian moral principles; yet all versions of **Divine Command Ethics** falsely claim this supposed moral right; hence **the denial of Divine Command Ethics** is true. **QED**

By the immediately preceding argument, the falsity of Divine Command Ethics is rationally obvious. Reduced to its essentials, Divine Command Ethics fallaciously says that God's commands are good and right, just because God says that they are good and right, and also has the power to impose these commands on people, no matter what the moral content of these commands might be. Now Statism fallaciously says that a government's commands are good and right, just because governments say that they are good and right, and also have the power to impose these commands on people, no matter what the moral content of these commands might be. Hence *God* plays exactly the same functional and logical role in Divine Command Ethics as *governments* do in Statism. Therefore the truth of philosophical anarchism is as rationally obvious as the falsity of Divine Command Ethics.

If only it were so simple! Another fundamental task for the existential Kantian cosmopolitan philosophical anarchist is to explain how, paradoxically, there is almost universal belief in the political authority of governments, States, and other State-like institutions, even in the face of (what I take to be) the rationally self-evident soundness of the core Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism.

One possible explanation for the almost universal failure to recognize the truth of philosophical anarchism is that most people, including most political philosophers, are subject to a complex and powerful psychological illusion—the illusion of political authority—that interferes with and undermines the prop-

er employment of their rational capacities, and thus makes it extremely difficult for them to recognize what is otherwise rationally self-evident. And I do think that this is indeed the case. One everyday example of this complex and powerful psychological illusion is the more or less spine-chilling spectatorial horror we feel when we watch post-apocalyptic movies, directed to the mythic Hobbesian “war of all against all” (often reminiscent of Hollywood depictions of the Wild West, only even more chaotic and gory) that is depicted as following from the breakdown of State-order, yet often (except when this is specifically a part of the movie’s content) feel no disgust or horror whatsoever about the horrendous State-system that must have led to the fictional apocalypse.

But I also think that there is a deeper Kantian explanation, namely, that most people, especially including most political philosophers, are subject to a complex and powerful philosophical illusion—the noumenal or transcendental illusion of The State-in-itself and its equally illusory dialectical contrary, the Hobbesian state-of-nature—that makes it extremely difficult for them to see the self-evident truth of philosophical anarchism.

Here, then, is where Kant’s radical agnosticism can be smoothly extended and added to the five-step core Kantian argument for philosophical anarchism, as follows:

(6) Nevertheless, there is almost universal belief in the political authority of governments, States, and other State-like institutions.

(7) Part of the explanation for the almost universal failure to recognize that there is no adequate rational justification for political authority is that most people, including most political philosophers, are subject to a complex and powerful psychological illusion—the illusion of political authority—that makes it extremely difficult for them to recognize the self-evident truth of philosophical anarchism.

(8) The psychological illusion of political authority can, to a significant extent, be dismantled by a careful critical diagnosis of its basic elements,²² together with a bracing regimen of what Scott very aptly calls “anarchist calisthenics,”²³ i.e., frequent rehearsals, under non-dangerous physical and social conditions, of the art of avoiding and undermining mindless, pointless obedience to the commands of States or other State-like institutions.

²² See, e.g., Huemer (2013, ch. 6).

²³ Scott (2012).

(9) But the deeper Kantian explanation is that most people, including most political philosophers, are subject to the philosophical, and more specifically noumenal and transcendental illusion that it is possible to know the existence or non-existence and nature of The State-in-itself, the supposed ultimate ground or source of the right to command people and to coerce them to accept its commands as a duty, even if these commands and/or the coercion are impermissible according to basic Kantian moral principles.

(10) Kant's radical agnosticism undermines this philosophical illusion, and makes it possible to see the rationally self-evident truth of philosophical anarchism.

This argument-strategy, in turn, has a special advantage over other existing arguments for philosophical anarchism that proceed by, **first**, enumerating, criticizing, and rejecting a finite number of candidates (say, divine right of kings, social contract theory, democracy, and rule consequentialism) for providing sufficient rational justification for political authority, then, **second**, critically attacking the psychological illusion of political authority, and then, **third**, concluding that philosophical anarchism is true.²⁴ Such an argument-by-cases cannot, in principle, rule out the possibility that there is some *other* candidate, as yet unexamined, that will provide sufficient rational justification for political authority. So, apparently, there is always room for a reasonable doubt that political authority *cannot* be sufficiently rationally justified, and correspondingly room for a reasonable hope that political authority *can* be justified: hence the argument for philosophical anarchism falls short of decisive proof.

This critical reply to the argument-by-cases for philosophical anarchism is importantly analogous to *theodicy*-based replies to arguments for atheism from the existence of natural and moral evil. Suppose that one has enumerated, criticized, and then rejected a finite number of candidates for providing sufficient rational justification for the compatibility of evil and theism, and then concludes that atheism is true. Nevertheless, says the theodicy-based reply, this argument-by-cases cannot, in principle, rule out the possibility that there is some *other* candidate, as yet unexamined, that will provide sufficient rational justification for the existence of natural and moral evil in a world created and governed by an all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscient), and all-good (omnibenevolent) God. So, apparently, there is always room for a reasonable doubt that the compatibility of evil and a "3-O" God *cannot* be sufficiently rationally

²⁴ This is the argument-strategy of, e.g., Huemer (2013).

justified, and correspondingly room for a reasonable hope that the compatibility of evil and a 3-O God *can* be justified: hence the argument for atheism falls short of decisive proof.

In view of this important analogy, let us call this objection to the argument-by-cases for philosophical anarchism, *the Statist-theodicy objection*.

But if, as Kant's radical agnosticism shows, just as it is impossible to know the existence or non-existence and nature of a 3-O God, so too it is impossible to know the existence or non-existence and nature of The State-in-itself, the supposed ultimate ground or source of the right of a government to command and to coerce people to accept its commands as a duty, even if these commands and/or the coercion are impermissible according to basic Kantian moral principles. Then unless the philosophical defender of political authority can actually specify *another* minimally plausible candidate for providing a rational justification for it, there is no reason whatsoever to believe in the possibility of there being such a thing. So the Statist-theodicy objection fails, and there is decisive proof for philosophical anarchism.

It is perhaps needless to say that the radical Kantian enlightenment project which emerges from the philosophical, moral, and political convergence of Kant, Kierkegaard,²⁵ and Kropotkin²⁶ that I have spelled out so far in this essay might come as somewhat of a surprise to you. But it gets even worse. Not only do I believe-*that* existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism is true, I also believe-*in* it.²⁷ And now generalizing my cognitive and emotional situation to any other actual or possible defender of existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism, this leads to another problem for the ethical anarchist.

5 The Plight of the Ethical Anarchist in a World of States

In *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant distinguishes between

- (i) an “ethical-civil community,” under non-coercive laws of virtue, guaranteeing the possibility of autonomy (i.e., moral laws), and

²⁵ See, e.g., Kierkegaard (2000).

²⁶ See, e.g., Kropotkin (1972).

²⁷ For more on the distinction between believing-that and believing-in, see Hanna (2014).

(ii) a “juridico-civil community,” under coercive political laws, guaranteeing at most the possibility of external freedom, i.e., mere freedom of action (as opposed to deep freedom of the will), i.e., a kind of freedom that is consistent with our also being nothing but psychological turnspits or wind-up toys. (*Rel* 6: 94–95)

The ethical-civil community is of course the same as The Realm of Ends, in real time and space, hence it is the same as The Real Realm of Ends, and the juridico-civil community is of course the same as the State or any other State-like institution.

According to Kant, the ethical-civil community has a “form and constitution essentially distinct from those of the [juridico-civil community]” (*Rel* 6: 94).

Nevertheless, supposedly, “without the foundation of a political community, [the ethical-civil community] could never be brought into existence by human beings” (*Rel* 6: 94).

Moreover, even though the members of an ethical-civil community must “freely commit themselves to enter into this state, [and] not allow the political power to command over them how to order (or not order) such a constitution internally,” still “nothing [can] be included which contradicts the duty of its members as *citizens of the state*—even though, if the ethical bond is of the genuine sort, this condition need not cause anxiety” (*Rel* 6: 96).

“Need not cause anxiety”! What Kant is saying here, on the face of it, is utterly incoherent. If the ethical-civil community has an essentially different form and constitution from that of the juridico-civil community, then no coercive laws or commands of the political state can be allowed to control personal and social life in the ethical-civil community. Hence the existence of a juridico-civil community, precisely to the extent that its coercive laws and commands are in force, is in direct opposition to the existence of an ethical-civil community, and cannot possibly be required as a necessary condition of the founding of an ethical-civil community.

Indeed, given the continued existence of a juridico-civil or political community (i.e., the State), the existence of an ethical-civil community (i.e., The Real Realm of Ends) becomes morally impossible. This is because the political community requires its citizens to obey its coercive laws and commands, even when these are rationally unjustified and immoral. Hence to the extent that this obedience occurs, the citizens of the political state must think and act like robots or wind-up toys, and impose upon themselves a self-stultifying rational immaturity and inauthenticity, contrary to their own project of enlightenment and autonomous freedom. At least in the Hobbesian state of nature, the individual thinks and acts for himself, even if egoistically and wickedly. So at least

he is still alive-and-kicking, thinking, and transcendently free. But in the political community, he turns off his ability to think or act for himself, and becomes a drone or puppet of the State, thereby making his enlightenment and achievement of moral autonomy morally impossible.

Therefore, a necessary condition of the real possibility of the creation of an ethical community is that its members must *reject* the juridico-civil community, and *exit* such a community just as, according to Kant, in order to enter the juridico-civil community, the person must reject the Hobbesian state of nature, and exit the Hobbesian state of nature. Kant himself even describes the existence of the juridico-civil community as an “ethical state of nature,” which must be rejected and exited in order to enter the ethical-civil community, because the “the ethical state of nature [is] a public feuding between the principles of virtue and a state of inner immorality which the natural human being ought to endeavor to leave behind as soon as possible” (*Rel* 6: 97). Or as he puts it most explicitly, in capital letters, in the title of part III, division one, section II of the *Religion*:

THE HUMAN BEING OUGHT TO LEAVE THE ETHICAL STATE OF NATURE
IN ORDER TO BECOME A MEMBER OF AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY. (*Rel* 6:
96)

In other words, what Kant’s view clearly implicitly entails is *ethical anarchism*, e.g., existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism, although at the same time he officially and explicitly endorses Statism.

Now either Kant is simply being philosophically insincere or even philosophically mendacious, or else he really is deeply psychologically conflicted and confused on this fundamental point.

The charitable interpretation is the latter, and I am prepared to hold that it is really possible that Kant’s commitment to the Hobbesian myth of the state of nature as the war of all against all, and correspondingly his commitment to the belief that this war of all against all is the necessary result of any human community that fails to enter into a juridico-civil condition, and become a State, is so psychologically powerful that he cannot self-consciously accept the valid consequence of his own argument, i.e., ethical anarchism. And then he simply flips back into Statism in order to avoid facing up to the cognitive and emotional dissonance between his fear-driven explicit commitment to Statism on the one hand, and his rational implicit commitment to ethical anarchism on the other.

In any case, the true upshot of Kant’s theory of the ethical-civil community (i.e., of The Real Realm of Ends) in relation to the juridico-civil community (i.e., to the State), when taken together with his theories of enlightenment and autonomous freedom, is ethical anarchism, e.g., existential Kantian cosmopolitan an-

archism, whether or not he was psychologically capable of facing up to this, and whether or not he was personally brave enough to face up to it explicitly in print.

And of course, to be fair, had Kant actually published this ethical anarchist result, or had refused to knuckle under to censorship, he would have been publicly excoriated, summarily dismissed from his professorship, and jailed, or worse. After all, as it was, in 1794 he had already been required not to teach or publish anything else pertaining to religion, under pain of scandal, dismissal, jail, or worse.²⁸ This fact, in turn, should be placed alongside the further fact that Kant's radical agnosticism about religion is only (and perhaps even less than) half of the complete story about his philosophical radicalism.

So perhaps the less charitable interpretation is not so very implausible or unfriendly to Kant. After all, how many of us are courageous enough to *say or write* explicitly what we really think about States and other State-like institutions, and face scandal, dismissal from our jobs, jail, or worse, far less *acting upon* what we really think, say, or write? Moreover, it is absolutely true that in the *Religion*, at least, Kant comes *that* close to defending ethical anarchism explicitly; and it is equally absolutely true that ethical anarchism certainly is there, philosophically living and operating just under the surface of many of his published texts, for anyone who is willing to follow Kant's argument right through to the end and to liberate herself intellectually and emotionally from its Statist surface rhetoric.

Quite apart from the self-conflicted state of Kant's own writings on this fundamental point, however, the deeper problem is this:

If the Hobbesian conception of the state of nature is a myth, then there is no necessity either to enter into, or to remain within, the juridico-civil community. Indeed, since life in the juridico-civil community is inherently inimical to the existence of the ethical-civil community, then it is morally necessary for us both to reject the juridico-civil community and also to exit it in order to pursue the enlightenment project and to live for the sake of autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons and the moral law. But how can the ethical anarchist ever actually survive either (i) inside the State, while still actively rejecting it, or (ii) outside the State, having actively rejected it and exited it?

Let us call this problem *the plight of the ethical anarchist in a world of States*.

²⁸ See, e.g., Wood (1998), and di Giovanni, (1998, pp. xi–xxiv and 41–54 respectively, esp. pp. xv–xxii and 41–50).

I do not pretend to have an adequate solution to this problem, but rather only a few follow-up thoughts about possible partial solutions.

One possible route under option (i) is that the ethical anarchist publicly stands up for what he believes, and then accepts the consequences: scandal, dismissal from his job, jail, or worse. But this practically guarantees that he will not survive. The most he could hope for is posthumous vindication.

Another possible route under option (i) is to engage in covert resistance, combined with superficial compliance, utilizing the “weapons of the weak.” But this means living a double life, and constantly experiencing the fear of being “outed.”

What about option (ii)? In one sense, since virtually every part of the Earth is controlled by some State or another, then moving to a place beyond States is practically impossible. One cannot go anywhere, or remain anywhere, without a passport, proof of citizenship, or a visa, and a social security number, etc.

One can leave the State in which he is currently living, move to another one, or to a series of other States, and live there in exile, having opted out of various coercive laws of that first State. But of course, even if the particular State to which one has moved is a better and less coercively immoral one in certain respects or even overall, nevertheless one is still inside a State. And what about family and loved ones, who live in the first State?

In effect, I have reached the conclusion that the plight of the ethical anarchist in a world of States is hopeless. But perhaps there is still *some* ground for hope, which I will briefly explore in the next and last section.

6 Concluding Quasi-Federalist Postscript

Finally, then, here is another closely related line of thought, by way of a concluding postscript, that could provide some ground for hope for the ethical anarchist. In the Kantian sense, rational hope is believing-in something whose existence or non-existence it is humanly impossible to know, in a way that is also existentially bootstrapping, non-scientifically demonstrative, and morality-affirming.²⁹ So here is where radically agnostic moral theology and radically enlightened anarchist politics ultimately merge into a single life-project.

In his “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim,” Kant develops an explicitly teleological reading of the history of humanity—i.e., rational humanity—that postulates the modern State as a necessary developmental

²⁹ See also see Chignell (2013, 197–218; 2014).

stage on the way to individual and social enlightenment for rational humankind as a not-merely-biologically-defined species.

Although the very idea of teleology is of course controversial, I do think that Kant is deeply right about the possibility of a teleological history of rational humanity, but also deeply wrong about the teleological necessity of the State. At the same time, however, thinking about Kant's essay prompted me to think about the role of Federalism in such a teleological moral history of rational humanity, which in turn led me to what I will call *an idea for a universal history with an existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist aim*. It goes like this.

- (1) The "original sin of political authority" is that the natural rational human need for mutual aid, and also for the protection of the innocent and weak, in a pre-State condition, plus *fear*, whether justified fear or irrational fear, pushes us into the very idea of the State and its supposed political authority.
- (2) But although we do indeed all need mutual aid, and also we do indeed all need to protect the innocent and weak, because of our justified or irrational fear we go too far, and this is a fundamental, tragic error that we have been paying for ever since.
- (3) In effect, we traded away our basic moral principles, our autonomous freedom, and our respect for rational human dignity, for the social-contractual promise that governments, States, and State-like institutions will (i) provide effective protection against mortal threats, and (ii) guarantee our mutual freedom of action (as opposed to freedom of the will, or autonomy in the Kantian sense), especially our freedom of economic action.
- (4) In other words, tragically, because of our justified or irrational fear, we have traded away our own rational humanity for the Mephistophelian (and so often, as a matter of actual political-historical fact, *false*) promise of living like well-served State-compatible machinery.
- (5) Nevertheless, insofar as there have actually always been various active attempts to challenge, constrain, deconstruct, and detoxify the political authority of the State, or other State-like institutions, by appealing to moral principles with a broadly Kantian justification—e.g., universal human rights, based on the notion of rational human dignity, constitutionally-entrenched "bills of rights," etc.—then there has actually always been a morally healthy devolutionary trend towards Kantian ethical anarchism.
- (6) Now, as well-described by Andreas Føllesdal, here is the basic idea behind Federalism:

Federalism is the theory or advocacy of [basic Kantian moral] principles for dividing powers between member units and common institutions. Unlike in a unitary state, sovereignty in federal political orders is non-centralized, often constitutionally, between at least two levels so that units at each level have final authority and can be self-governing in some issue area. Citizens thus have political obligations to, or have their rights secured by, two authorities. The division of power between the member unit and center may vary, typically the center has powers regarding defense and foreign policy, but member units may also have international roles. The decision-making bodies of member units may also participate in central decision-making bodies. Much recent philosophical attention is spurred by renewed political interest in federalism, coupled with empirical findings concerning the requisite and legitimate basis for stability and trust among citizens in federal political orders. Philosophical contributions have addressed the dilemmas and opportunities facing Canada, Australia, Europe, Russia, Iraq, Nepal and Nigeria, to mention just a few areas where federal arrangements are seen as interesting solutions to accommodate differences among populations divided by ethnic or cultural cleavages yet seeking a common, often democratic, political order.³⁰

(7) In this quotation, taken from the Introduction to Føllesdal's excellent *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on "Federalism," I have made only one editorial change, which is to insert 'basic Kantian moral' for 'federal' in the original text. Of course, this controversial emendation might not be what Føllesdal actually had in mind.³¹ But it does set up the final step in my Kantian anarchist teleological history of rational humanity.

(8) Looked at teleologically, the real-world fact of Federalism seems to me to be, precisely insofar as it is "the theory or advocacy of [basic Kantian moral] principles for dividing powers between member units and common institutions," a practically necessary and morally healthy devolutionary step in actual human political history between, on the one hand, our fundamental tragic error of believing the myth of political authority and our corresponding creation of States and other State-like institutions, by means of which we voluntarily turn ourselves into more or less well-served State-compatible machines, and on the other hand, the guiding moral ideal of an existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist post-State world.

³⁰ Føllesdal (2014).

³¹ In conversation, Føllesdal has said to me that "we're probably on the same team." Of course, I wouldn't want to saddle him with a commitment to existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism. I think he meant only that, at the end of the day, we have similar views about the moral and rational justification of Federalism.

(9) In this way, then, it seems to me that Kantian ethical anarchists could also be *quasi*-Federalists. That is, the Kantian ethical anarchist could work in a covert, gradualist, and non-revolutionary way towards The Real Realm of Ends by using Federalist means, step-by-step, to devolve and dismantle all States and other State-like institutions, and to replace them with ethically acceptable, non-coercive social structures, institutions, and social relations. And in this way the ethical anarchist could still survive in a world of States, until the post-State world finally emerged. Or at least that is the hope.

(10) And now, with one other editorial addition, we can also re-quote Kant's vision of radical enlightenment:

When [after a long devolutionary Federalist process] nature has unwrapped, from under this hard shell [of the "crooked timber of humanity" (*IUH* 8: 23)], the seed for which she cares most tenderly, namely the propensity and calling to *think* freely, the latter gradually works back upon the mentality of the people (which thereby gradually becomes capable of *freedom* in acting) and eventually even upon the principles of *government*, which finds it profitable to itself to treat the human being, *who is now more than a machine*, in keeping with his dignity. (*WE* 8: 41–42)³²

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³² I am very grateful, first, to the members of my Contemporary Kantian Philosophy working group in political philosophy and the philosophy of religion, at the University of Luxembourg, during 2013–2014 (especially Mathias Birrer, Elisabeth Lefort, Oliver Motz, Nora Schleich, Lukas Sosoe, Katja Stoppenbrink, and Katalin Turai), and second, to the participants in the workshop “Philosophical Foundations of Federalism,” at the University of Luxembourg, LU, in May 2014, especially Andreas Føllesdal, for their extremely helpful critical comments on earlier versions of this essay, and equally helpful conversations on or around its central topics.

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