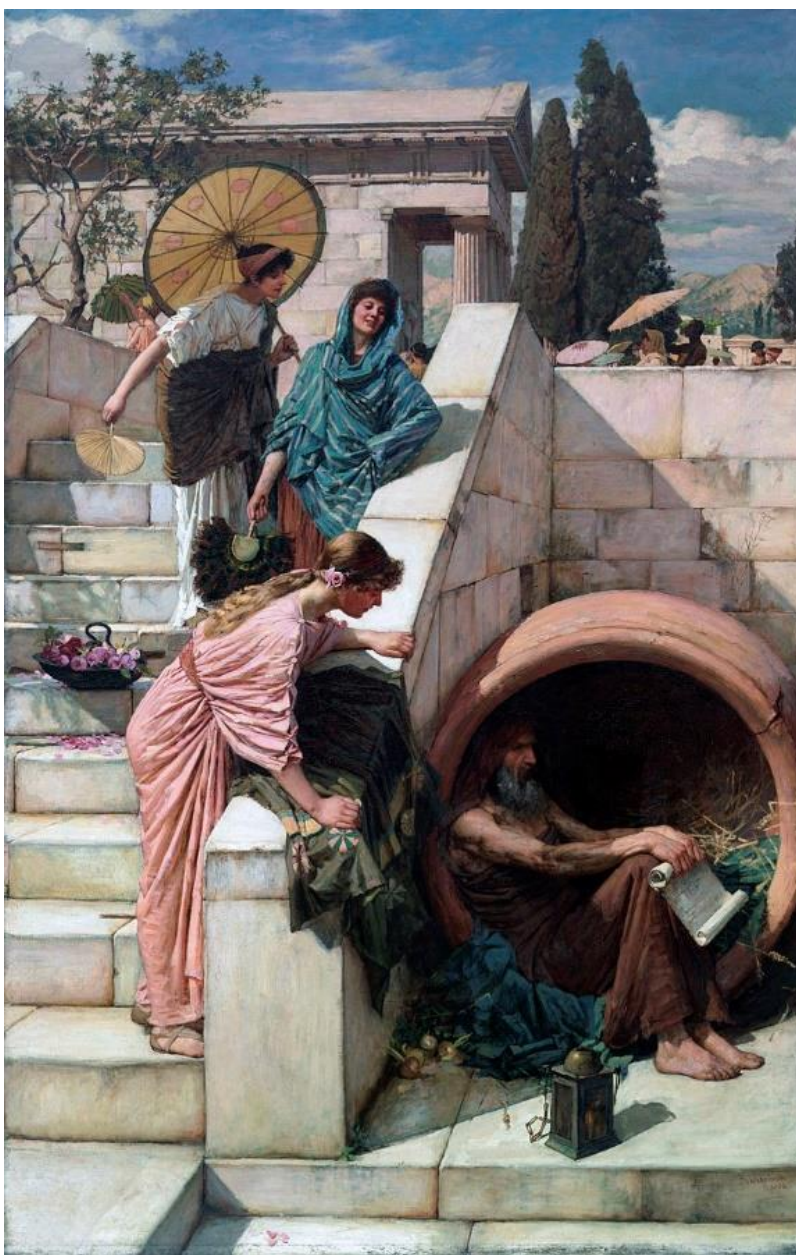


**THINKING FOR A LIVING:  
A PHILOSOPHER'S NOTEBOOK**  
May 2018 – January 2019  
Omnibus Edition

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"Diogenes Sheltering in His Barrel," by John William Waterhouse

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**§1. Introductory.** In April 2018 I finally finished, and in November 2018 I rather more expeditiously published, the first four volumes of a five-book series, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION*, aka RHC, that I'd been working on more-or-less steadily since 2005 or 2006—so, for 12 or 13 years.

The fifth volume had already been published in 2015, so that completed the series.

RHC is all about the nature of human rationality in a thoroughly nonideal natural and social world.

Otherwise and more fancifully put, imagine that Kant, Kierkegaard, Kropotkin, and Diogenes of Sinope, aka Diogenes the Cynic,<sup>1</sup> met up together in a contemporary context, say, at a nice quiet neighborhood pub, weekly, for 12 or 13 years, and did real philosophy together for hours and hours, till finally, incoherent and exhausted, they stumbled home in the dark, their way lit only by Diogenes's lamp, specially repurposed for that nighttime use.

RHC is, as it were, my fly-on-the-wall transcription of the results of that four-way, beer-and-bourbon-blasted, ecstatic, highly unorthodox, highly synergistic philosophical collaboration: a neo-Symposium inside my own head, lasting almost a decade and a half.

In any case, here it is—

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<sup>1</sup> "Diogenes was a controversial figure. His father minted coins for a living, and Diogenes was banished from Sinope when he took to debasement of currency. After being exiled, he moved to Athens and criticized many cultural conventions of the city. He modeled himself on the example of Heracles, and believed that virtue was better revealed in action than in theory. He used his simple life-style and behaviour to criticize the social values and institutions of what he saw as a corrupt, confused society. He had a reputation for sleeping and eating wherever he chose in a highly non-traditional fashion, and took to toughening himself against nature. He declared himself a cosmopolitan and a citizen of the world rather than claiming allegiance to just one place. There are many tales about his dogging Antisthenes' footsteps and becoming his "faithful hound." Diogenes made a virtue of poverty. He begged for a living and often slept in a large ceramic jar in the marketplace. He became notorious for his philosophical stunts, such as carrying a lamp during the day, claiming to be looking for an honest man. He criticized Plato, disputed his interpretation of Socrates, and sabotaged his lectures, sometimes distracting listeners by bringing food and eating during the discussions. Diogenes was also noted for having mocked Alexander the Great, both in public and to his face when he visited Corinth in 336. Diogenes was captured by pirates and sold into slavery, eventually settling in Corinth. There he passed his philosophy of Cynicism to Crates, who taught it to Zeno of Citium, who fashioned it into the school of Stoicism, one of the most enduring schools of Greek philosophy." See Wikipedia, "Diogenes" (2019), available online at URL = <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diogenes>>.

*THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 1—Preface and General Introduction, Supplementary Essays, and General Bibliography* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#).

*THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2—Deep Freedom and Real Persons: A Study in Metaphysics* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#).

*THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 3—Kantian Ethics and Human Existence: A Study in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#).

*THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 4—Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism: A Theological-Political Treatise* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#).

*THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 5—Cognition, Content, and the A Priori: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind and Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), [PREVIEW](#).

Hard-copy and e-book versions of the first four volumes of RHC are also available from Nova Science Publishers, [HERE](#).

§2. For at least the same amount of time, so for nearly 15 years, I've been telling myself and other people, slightly more than half-seriously, that my ultimate career-aim as a philosopher is just this: *for my work to have been unjustly neglected during my own lifetime*.

It's strategically "win-win," you see.

As long as people keep neglecting my work, it fully realizes my aim ("Oh look, they're still unjustly neglecting my work: hurrah!"); but after I'm dead, of course, it won't matter at all to me either way—as old Shakey put it, "the rest is silence."

§3. But now what?

Shall I merely put in time until death and posthumous vindication (or not) happen, or should I pursue some new short-term and/or long-term projects?

The very thought of merely putting in time unto death is absolutely unbearable.

So I'm going for the second disjunct.

§4. Over the last year or so, Michelle Maiese and I wrote *The Mind-Body Politic*, aka MBP, which will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2019.

In MBP, we do two things.

First, we work out a new critique of contemporary social institutions, by deploying the special standpoint of the philosophy of mind, and in particular, the special standpoint of the philosophy of what we call *essentially embodied minds*.

And second, we make a set of concrete, positive proposals for radically changing both these social institutions and our essentially embodied lives for the better.

Thus MBP is a socially-oriented sequel to *Embodied Minds in Action*,<sup>2</sup> and more specifically, a study in what Jan Slaby has called *political philosophy of mind*.

§5. I've also got another book project in political philosophy of mind on-the-go, *The Philosophy of Work and Sleep*, aka PWS.

What's PWS about, you ask?

And I hereby reply, in four easy pieces:

since daily *work* and daily *sleep* in an endlessly repeating, existentially enervating, cycle—in effect, a New Wheel of Ixion—are what *most* adult human beings do *most* of the time until they grow old and die, yet both of these massively life-aborbing occupations are saliently shaped in destructive and deforming ways by the oppressive demands of big capitalism and neoliberal nation-States;

and since, as far as I can tell, no philosopher has ever critically, seriously, and radically thought about *both* work and sleep, either in themselves, or in relation to one other, or in relation to the larger rational human condition, especially including society and politics;

and since, unlike most people, I'm a *polyphasic worker* and also a *polyphasic sleeper*, so there's no sharp difference in my own life between work and leisure/play on the one hand, and sleeping and conscious life/waking on the other, instead only recurring rhythmic episodes of each one dovetailing into each other one;

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<sup>2</sup> Co-authored with Michelle Maiese, (Oxford: OUP, 2009), [PREVIEW](#).

*then* all those add up to a sufficient reason to write a book about work and sleep.

§6. And that's not all.

In 2012 or thereabouts, I started *The Limits of Sense and Reason*,<sup>3</sup> aka LSR, a reconstructive critical commentary on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*—a lovely infinite task—that I'd very much like to keep hammering away at, as long as I'm fairly healthy and fairly sane.

But, as lovely and infinite as that task is, the scope of LSR is too narrow to be completely satisfying philosophically.

It's only, as it were, something to do in my old age.

§7. So, now that

- (i) RHC is home-and-hosed,
- (ii) PWS is in-the-works, and
- (iii) LSR is something-to-do-in-my-old-age,

in the middletime, what I *also* need and want is a project that allows me to range over *anything* that counts as an issue, problem, or topic for real philosophy, and *not* restrict me as to method, presentational format, or content, that is *also* delivered in a package that can be universally freely shared and intellectually consumed without *too much* digestive distress, by professional or independent philosophers and *also* by other philosophically-minded people, anywhere, anyhow.

Hence this *Philosopher's Notebook*, started in May 2018, a project that happily meets all the just-designated desiderata.

What do I mean by "thinking for a living"?

Of course, it's a *triple entendre*:

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<sup>3</sup> R. Hanna, "The Limits of Sense and Reason: A Line-By-Line Reconstructive Critical Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (May 2018 version)," available online at URL = [https://www.academia.edu/36666576/The\\_Limits\\_of\\_Sense\\_and\\_Reason\\_A\\_Line-By-Line\\_Reconstructive\\_Critical\\_Commentary\\_on\\_Kants\\_Critique\\_of\\_Pure\\_Reason\\_May\\_2018\\_version](https://www.academia.edu/36666576/The_Limits_of_Sense_and_Reason_A_Line-By-Line_Reconstructive_Critical_Commentary_on_Kants_Critique_of_Pure_Reason_May_2018_version) >.



- (i) I *think philosophically* in order to *live the life I want to live*;
- (ii) I *live* only so that I can *think philosophically*;
- (iii) but none of that actually provides me with a so-called “*living*” in the *jobwork* sense;

hence, like a contemporary Diogenes, I’m nothing but a philosophical *hobo* rolling my ceramic barrel around while polyphasically working-and-sleeping, a *failed academic*,<sup>4</sup> and a *cynic*—ha ha, very witty, Wilde.

**§8. The rise and fall of Analytic philosophy.** I’ve argued in my first book<sup>5</sup> and elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> that the origins of the Analytic tradition lie fundamentally in an extended intellectual struggle, driven by the “anxiety of influence,” between

- (i) some mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers—principally Bolzano, Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, and the philosophers associated with the Vienna Circle, especially Carnap, Ayer, and Quine—and
- (ii) the Kantian, Hegelian, neo-Kantian, and neo-Hegelian philosophy that was institutionally dominant and culturally hegemonic in Europe and Anglo-America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In other words, early Analytic philosophy couldn’t have existed without Kantian philosophy; and their passionate grapplings with it were always as *implicitly concessive* to it as they were *overtly critical* of it.

So early Analytic philosophy was, in a broadly Freudian way, *kantalytic* philosophy.

Nevertheless it was an authentic, substantive, and (in its day) revolutionary post-Kantian philosophical project.

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<sup>4</sup> See Z, “On Philosophical Failures,” *Thoughts and Ideas* (3 October 2017), available online at URL = <https://medium.com/indian-thoughts/on-philosophical-failures-68da13e6cddb>.

<sup>5</sup> R. Hanna, *Kant and the Foundations of Analytic Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), available online at URL = [https://www.academia.edu/25545883/Kant\\_and\\_the\\_Foundations\\_of\\_Analytic\\_Philosophy](https://www.academia.edu/25545883/Kant_and_the_Foundations_of_Analytic_Philosophy).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., R. Hanna, “Kant in the Twentieth Century,” in D. Moran (ed.), *Routledge Companion to Twentieth-Century Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 149-203, also available online at URL = [https://www.academia.edu/2915828/Kant\\_in\\_the\\_Twentieth\\_Century](https://www.academia.edu/2915828/Kant_in_the_Twentieth_Century).

Simultaneously, early Analytic philosophy was also in a direct, fruitful dialogue with *pragmatism* and *organicist* philosophy—Peirce, James, Dewey, Bergson, Samuel Alexander, Whitehead—and *phenomenology*—Brentano, Husserl, Meinong, Heidegger—from the end of World War I right up to the outbreak of World War II.

§9. But after World War II, things shifted dramatically.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Analytic philosophy *itself* became the institutionally dominant, culturally hegemonic form of philosophy, at least in Anglo-America, in two special ways:

- (i) via its strong tendency to intellectual normalization, it was closely allied with McCarthyite anti-communist, big-capitalist, Cold War politics of the 1950s, and
- (ii) via its *scientism*, it was (and still is) fully entangled with what Eisenhower famously called the “military-industrial complex” (or, nowadays, the *military-industrial-university-digital complex*) in (neo)liberal democratic States.

This is compellingly documented in two books by John McCumber.<sup>7</sup>

And by the 1970s, the Analytic take-over in Anglo-America was complete: mainstream Analytic philosophers were The Man, The Establishment, The Power Elite.

§10. Yet by the early 1980s, mainstream Analytic philosophers were shocked to discover that an internal push-back and indeed rebellion of sorts was emerging from a group of younger philosophers influenced by the later Wittgenstein’s philosophy, existential phenomenology, Gadamerian hermeneutics, and Deweyan pragmatism.

This revolt was epitomized and widely-publicized by Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) and *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982).<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the mainstream Analytic response to Rorty was swift, critically uncharitable, and personally vituperative.

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<sup>7</sup> J. McCumber, *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2001); and J. McCumber, *The Philosophy Scare: The Politics of Reason in the Early Cold War* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> See my back-then review of *Consequences*, now called “Rorty & Me in 1983,” originally published without a title in *The Review of Metaphysics* 37 (1983): 140-143, also available online at URL = [https://www.academia.edu/19021980/Rorty\\_and\\_Me\\_in\\_1983](https://www.academia.edu/19021980/Rorty_and_Me_in_1983).



For example, I vividly remember all the *ad hominem* garbage about “Rorty’s mid-life crisis” that was circulating in the hallways and departmental lounges, and at post-talk receptions, at Yale in the mid-80s.

— A much-used but rarely acknowledged professional academic philosophical argument-strategy: *refutation-by-trash-talk*.

— Another is: *refutation-by-unjust-neglect*. Hurrah!

And then Rorty was out of professional philosophy, powered by a MacArthur so-called “genius” grant, forever self-exiled to various Humanities departments, by the end of the 1980s.

§11. At roughly the same time, so around 1980, coinciding with the publication of Rorty’s two controversial books, the term “Continental philosophy” came into common use in Anglo-American philosophy<sup>9</sup> as a *conceptual dumpster* into which every kind of *non-Analytic philosophy* could be tossed without differentiation, rejected without argument, scorned, and permitted to live only with the explicit permission of the Analytic mainstream, and only for the purposes of teaching undergraduates and filling the requisite number of lines on their CVs under “Research and Publications” on their annual departmental evaluations.

§12. In Spring 2018, I read three excellent essays that collectively prompted me to start thinking about all this philosophically flammable material again—

Walter Cerf’s “Logical Positivism and Existentialism,”<sup>10</sup>

Joel Katzav’s and Krist Vaesen’s “On the Emergence of American Analytic Philosophy,”<sup>11</sup> and

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<sup>9</sup> See A. Keller, “On the Use of the Term ‘Continental Philosophy,’” available online at URL = <https://againstprofphil.org/on-the-use-of-the-term-continental-philosophy/>.

<sup>10</sup> W. Cerf, “Logical Positivism and Existentialism,” *Philosophy of Science* 18 (1951): 327-338, also available online at URL = <http://www.filosofia.org/aut/003/m49a0890.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> J. Katzav and K. Vaesen, “On the Emergence of American Analytic Philosophy,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25 (2017): 772-798, also available online at URL = [https://www.academia.edu/30967710/On\\_the\\_emergence\\_of\\_American\\_analytic\\_philosophy](https://www.academia.edu/30967710/On_the_emergence_of_American_analytic_philosophy).

Joel Katzav's "Analytic Philosophy 1925-1969: Emergence, Management, and Nature."<sup>12</sup>

So what follows in this set of notes are some follow-up thoughts provoked by that recent re-thinking.

§13. 'Way back in 1951, focusing on two contemporaneous and culturally important sub-types of Analytic philosophy and so-called Continental philosophy—namely, Logical Positivism, aka Logical Empiricism, and Existentialism—Cerf very correctly picked out the core substantive first-order philosophical issue at issue between Analytic philosophy and non-Analytic philosophy: *Scientism* vs. *Humanism*.

This is also what Sellars later called the clash between *The Scientific Image* and *The Manifest Image*, in "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man"<sup>13</sup> in the early 1960s.

And it's also nicely-captured, although somewhat less rigorously, in C.P. Snow's famous lecture on "the two cultures."<sup>14</sup>

But neither Cerf nor Sellars nor Snow has an adequate way of reconciling or unifying these two conflicting world-conceptions.

§14. For better or worse, my own two-part solution to the "Two Images" problem is

(i) to provide an adequate metaphysical, epistemic, and normative grounding for The Manifest Image, thereby thoroughly enhancing and enriching it, via an appropriately updated and refined version of Kant's transcendental idealism, and then

(ii) to embed the scientific *inside* the humane, but in a metaphysically, epistemically and normatively intact way, thereby thoroughly *re-enchanting* the scientific.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [8] J. Katzav, "Analytic Philosophy 1925-1969: Emergence, Management, and Nature," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* (forthcoming), available online at URL = <<https://philarchive.org/archive/KATAP-2>>.

<sup>13</sup> W. Sellars, "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man," in W. Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 1-40, also available online at URL = <<http://selfpace.uconn.edu/class/percep/SellarsPhilSciImage.pdf>>.

<sup>14</sup> C.P. Snow, "The Rede Lecture 1959," available online at URL = <<http://s-f-walker.org.uk/pubsebooks/2cultures/Rede-lecture-2-cultures.pdf>>.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., R. Hanna, *Kant, Science, and Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), also available online at URL = <[https://www.academia.edu/21558510/Kant\\_Science\\_and\\_Human\\_Nature](https://www.academia.edu/21558510/Kant_Science_and_Human_Nature)>; and R.

Or in many fewer words, *to humanize the scientific, without either reduction or relativism.*

§15. But in any case, Analytic philosophy as a substantive philosophical project—by which I mean, roughly, *Logicism + the theory of the analytic proposition + Logical Empiricism/conventionalism*—was already effectively *dead* by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Quine killed it with a devastating 1-2 punch consisting of “Truth By Convention” in the mid-1930s and “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” in the early 50s.

After Quine, only three elements of the Analytic tradition remained, each of which was originally parasitic on the substantive early Analytic project—yet since that time, by a magical metamorphosis of social-institutional life, they’ve become collectively essential to its 70-year survival as a zombie of its former self, the *Night of the Living Philosophical Dead*:

(i) *scientism* as an unargued, dogmatic presupposition and sociocultural *attitude* or *worldview*,

(ii) *logical theory*, especially including conservative extensions of classical logic like modal logic, and, beyond that, “deviant logics,” and the logico-semantic analysis of natural language, as *formal methods*, but without any coherent, defensible metaphysical, epistemic, or normative foundations,<sup>16</sup> and

(iii) *academic institutional domination and hegemony*, under the self-selected label “professional philosophy.”

§16. In spelling out the historical foundations of this intellectual horror-story, I think that neither Cerf nor Katzav/Vaesens pays sufficient attention to the specifically *political* dimensions of The Great Divide between Analytic philosophy and so-called Continental philosophy.

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Hanna, “Kant, Nature, and Humanity,” in R. Hanna, THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 1—*Preface and General Introduction, Supplementary Essays, and General Bibliography* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#), essay 2, pp. 45-132.

<sup>16</sup> For my attempt to provide those foundations, see R. Hanna, *Rationality and Logic* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), also available online at URL = [https://www.academia.edu/21202624/Rationality\\_and\\_Logic](https://www.academia.edu/21202624/Rationality_and_Logic)>. In this connection, I’m also pleased to note that the normativity of logic is now a hot topic for professional academic philosophers of logic, but without, sadly, ever acknowledging my work or citing me. Hurrah!

After World War II, as I've already mentioned, and as McCumber has compellingly documented, the scientism and institutional consolidation of the Analytic tradition closely mirrored the rise, dominance, and hegemony of McCarthy-style anti-communist, big-capitalist politics in the USA.

This politics of course has its recent and contemporary analogues in neoconservatism and neoliberalism.

Anyhow, after World War II and into the mid-1970s, the so-called "Continental" philosophers were professional philosophy's equivalent of intellectuals in Stalin's Russia, and sooner or later coerced into an *inner* exile consisting of an "Area of Specialization," aka an AOS, a "first circle" of academic hell, their very own little Gulag Archipelago.

The emblematic career arc of the American Existentialist philosopher Hazel Barnes epitomizes this process.<sup>17</sup>

§17. Then what happened?

In the 1960s and early 70s people came out of their McCarthy-era deep freeze, discovered civil rights, neo-Marxism aka The New Left, personal liberation, sex, drugs, and rock-&-roll – and partied till dawn.

But after they slept it off, and slowly turned into middle-aged and then late-middle-aged or even old-aged people, between the mid-1970s and the early decades of the 21st century, the emergent massive new political force was *liberal (and now fully neoliberal) identity-politics*, aka *multi-culturalism*, aka *multi-culti*, for example, Clinton(s)-Obama style Democratic politics.

Reagan-Bush-style Republicanism and its "neoconservatism," and the far more virulent Trump-style, ultra-right "populist" or "neo-fascist" version of neoliberalism, were and are increasingly violent reactions to multi-culti.

By the mid-to-late 1990s, and certainly by the turn of the millennium, this larger political dynamic was fully mirrored in the professional academy in general and professional philosophy in particular.

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<sup>17</sup> See H. Barnes, *The Story I Tell Myself* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997).

So for at least the past twenty years, currently, and probably for the next ten years too, professional academic philosophy in Anglo-America has been, is, and will be, essentially, *a struggle-to-the-death* between

on the one hand, (i) classical mainstream Analytic philosophy (*The Man*), with its roots in the anti-communist McCarthy period, under the banner of “Analytic Metaphysics,” and

on the other, (ii) (neo)liberal-identitarian/multi-culturalist coercive moralist philosophy (*The Anti-Man*), with its roots in the Clinton(s)-Obama period, under the banner of “Philosophical Diversity and Inclusion.”

Watching that professional academic apocalypse unfold, but also with their many surveillance devices constantly trained on the professional academy as whole, the Reagan-Bush-style neoconservatives and the Trump-style populist/neo-fascist neoliberals have been, are, and will be lined up around the ivy-covered walls, waving their flags and guns, always ready to break in and take over, whenever the terminal implosion of what Rorty in the mid-1990s somewhat misleadingly called “The Unpatriotic Academy”<sup>18</sup>—a more accurate label would be *The Ivory Bunker*—finally occurs.

§18. In any case, based on 30+ years of personal experience wage-caged inside The Ivory Bunker, from graduate student to full professor to final escape and liberation, my own fairly confident prediction is that (neo)liberal identitarian/multi-culturalist coercive moralist philosophy will triumph *decisively* within the next five to ten years, and therefore that Analytic philosophy, after its 100 year end-to-end run, will finally burn up *completely* and, to borrow Trotsky’s notoriously nasty-witty phrase about the Mensheviks, *go down into the dustbin of history*:

You are pitiful, isolated individuals! You are bankrupts. Your role is played out. Go where you belong from now on – into the dustbin of history!

Should we mourn the fall and dustbinning of Analytic philosophy?

—*Hell no*. On the contrary.

Bracketting early Analytic philosophy, and some notable exceptions in the post-1950 period—for example, undoubtedly original and important work by G.E.M. Anscombe,

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<sup>18</sup> 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>>.

Peter Strawson, Ruth Barcan Marcus, Saul Kripke, Hilary Putnam, Gareth Evans, John Rawls, Robert Nozick, Phillipa Foot, Judith Jarvis Thomson, Harry Frankfurt, Rorty, Bernard Williams, Thomas Nagel, Brian O’Shaughnessy, Richard Wollheim, David Lewis, Derek Parfit, John McDowell, Robert Brandom, Susan Haack, and a few others—*good riddance to bad rubbish*.

And that concludes my funeral oration for the Analytic tradition.<sup>19</sup>

**§19.** Meanwhile, what about the so-called Continental philosophers?

Sadly, for the massively most part, they’re now completely irrelevant, forever inner-exiled in their AOS, their first circle of professional academic hell, their very own little Gulag Archipelago, merely strawmen for mainstream Analytic philosophers to mock, and passive bystanders to the (neo)liberal-identitarian/multi-culti coercive moralist juggernaut.

**§20.** But above all, *what about real philosophy?*

My own view—again, for better or worse—is that real philosophy, and thus *the real philosophy of the future*, is really possible only *outside* the professional academy.<sup>20</sup>

Q: And what would (or: could, or: should) the real philosophy of the future *look like*?

**§21. Cosmopolitanism and the real philosophy of the future.** My view is that *whatever* the philosophy of the future will *precisely* look like, it’s going to be inherently bound up with *cosmopolitanism*.

So before I try to answer that big-Q question directly, I’ll need to say something about the very idea of cosmopolitanism.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See also R. Hanna, “On Irad Kimhi’s *Thinking and Being*, Or, It’s The End Of Analytic Philosophy As We Know It (And I Feel Fine),” *Critique* (2018), available online at URL = <https://virtualcritique.wordpress.com/2018/12/18/on-irad-kimhis-thinking-and-being-or-its-the-end-of-analytic-philosophy-as-we-know-it-and-i-feel-fine/>.

<sup>20</sup> See R. Hanna, “Thinking Inside and Outside the Fly-Bottle: The New Poverty of Philosophy and its Second Copernican Revolution,” in Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 1—Preface and General Introduction, Supplementary Essays, and General Bibliography*, [PREVIEW](#), essay 2.4, pp. 147-168.

<sup>21</sup> See R. Hanna, “*Kant and Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered*,” *Critique* (2018), available online at URL = <https://virtualcritique.wordpress.com/2018/02/25/kant-and-cosmopolitanism-reconsidered/>.



Notoriously, there is no comprehensive, analytic definition of the term “cosmopolitanism” as it is used in either ordinary or specialized (say, legal, political, or scholarly) language, covering all actual and possible cases.

It is variously taken to refer to:

globe-trotting sophistication;

nihilistic, rootless, world-wandering libertinism;

the general idea of “world citizenship”;

a single world-state with global coercive authoritarian power;

a tight federation of all nation-states, again with global coercive authoritarian power;

or a loose, semi-coercive-authoritarian international federation of nation-states and related global institutions concerned with peace-keeping, criminal justice, human rights, social justice, international money flow and investment, or world-trade, like the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the (plan for a) World Court of Human Rights, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organization.

Nevertheless, the “cosmopolitanism” does have an original, core meaning.

As Kwame Anthony Appiah correctly and insightfully points out in his same-named 2006 book:

Cosmopolitanism dates at least to the Cynics of the fourth century BC [and especially to Diogenes of Synope], who first coined the expression cosmopolitan, “citizen of the cosmos.” The formulation was meant to be paradoxical, and reflected the general Cynic skepticism toward custom and tradition. A citizen—a *politēs*—belonged to a particular polis, a city to which he or she owed loyalty. The cosmos referred to the world, not in the sense of the earth, in the sense of the universe. Talk of cosmopolitanism originally signalled, then, a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> K.A. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), p. xiv.

In short, the original, core meaning of *cosmopolitanism* expresses a serious critique of existing political communities and States; a thoroughgoing rejection of fervid, divisive, exclusionary, loyalist commitments to convention, custom, identity, or tradition; and a robustly universalist outlook in morality and politics, encompassing not only the Earth but also other inhabited worlds if any, and also traveling between worlds, and, finally, the entire natural universe.

I believe that there is a conception of real philosophy that corresponds directly to this original, core meaning of “cosmopolitanism” — what I call *borderless philosophy*.

§22. Now, what do I mean by *that* neologistic label?

By *philosophy*, aka *real philosophy*, I mean *authentic* (as opposed to inauthentic, uncommitted), *serious* (as opposed to superficial), *synoptic reflection on and thinking about the human condition in all its manifold variety and ineluctably embedded in its broader and wider natural and social world*.

And by *borderless philosophy* I mean that philosophy in this sense can and should be *truly descriptive, fundamentally explanatory, profoundly insightful, life-transforming, and world-changing*.

More specifically, borderless philosophy is “borderless” in at least three different ways:

- (i) it’s *fully “cosmopolitan” in the original, core meaning of that term*, crossing State and continental borders, connecting philosophers from all over the world, and extending its scope to the entire natural universe,
- (ii) it’s *maximally unrestricted as to presentational format*, and
- (iii) it’s *maximally unrestricted as to philosophical content*.

§23. So borderless philosophy is my version of *the real philosophy of the future*—namely, it’s whatever a way of doing philosophy that is fully emancipated from The Ivory Bunker and the military-industrial-university-digital complex *could and should* be.

—And here’s another label, with both of the Shelleys in mind: *philosophy unbound from Frankenscience*.

There are some significant parallels between borderless philosophy and what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in the wild-&-woolly days of the French post-Structuralists, called *nomadology*.<sup>23</sup>

The primary difference is that whereas nomadology is flamboyantly pluralistic, to the point of explicit relativism and syncretism — aka *bricolage* — borderless philosophy is fully open-minded and pluralistic, yet also retains an objective, universalist philosophical core derived from *radical enlightenment* thinking in general and *Kantian philosophy* in particular.<sup>24</sup>

§24. Now like Diogenes, I'm always *more-or-less* cynical.

But in my *more* cynical moods, I think that the only thing standing between the night of the living philosophical dead that is contemporary professional academic philosophy, and *the daylight of the living* that is borderless philosophy, is, well, *money*.

Oh!, what I could do for borderless philosophy with even *as little as* 1 billion \$\$ USD.

Money, get away  
 Get a good job with more pay and you're O.K.  
 Money, it's a gas  
 Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash  
 New car, caviar, four star daydream,  
 Think I'll buy me a football team

Money, get back  
 I'm all right, Jack, keep your hands off of my stack.  
 Money, it's a hit  
 Don't give me that do goody good bullshit  
 I'm in the high-fidelity first-class traveling set  
 And I think I need a Learjet

Money, it's a crime  
 Share it fairly but don't take a slice of my pie  
 Money, so they say

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<sup>23</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press/Semiotext(e), 1986).

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., P. Gay, *The Party of Humanity: Essays in the French Enlightenment* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971); and R. Hanna, THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 4 — *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism: A Theological-Political Treatise* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#), esp. part 2.

Is the root of all evil today  
 But if you ask for a rise it's no surprise that they're giving none away<sup>25</sup>

The moral: as things now stand, and perhaps forever, borderless philosophy is absurdly, pathetically, *moneyless*, "sheltering in [its] barrel," and what the professional academic philosophers inside The Ivory Bunker would mockingly call *a failure*.

— A failure like Diogenes, Socrates, and Prometheus.<sup>26</sup>

So, for the time being anyhow, and perhaps forever, borderless philosophers could and should simply accept and indeed *affirm* their own failure, and just get on with thinking for a living.

**§25. How to socialize the philosophy of mind.** Let us suppose, as per *Embodied Minds in Action*, that minds like ours are necessarily and completely embodied, physically irreducible yet also non-dualistic, immanent structures of living animal organisms, that inherently guide their dynamics and are also inherently poised for free intentional action, and, when, rational, are also inherently poised for self-conscious, responsible agency.

Then the so-called "extended mind" (= the constitutive and not merely causal expansion of conscious and/or intentional mind beyond the animal body) is impossible, since minds like ours are essentially *body-bounded* minds.

But, like Marx, I think that social institutions always, necessarily, and literally constrain, scaffold, and at least *partially even if not wholly determine* our essentially embodied consciousness, desire, emotion, cognition (including perception, memory, imagination, thinking, judging, and inferential reasoning) and intentional action.

Call this *the mind-shaping thesis*.

That is: social institutions always, necessarily, and literally *shape* our essentially embodied conscious, desiderative, emotional, intentional, cognitive, and intentionally active *minds*, and thereby also always, necessarily, and literally shape our *lives*.

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<sup>25</sup> Pink Floyd, "Money," lyrics available online at URL = <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/pinkfloyd/money.html>.

<sup>26</sup> See note 3 above.

§26. Moreover, Marx correctly saw that certain basic social institutions—specifically, human labor under big capitalism<sup>27</sup>—inherently alienate, commodify, enslave, and oppress us both physically (via coercive authoritarianism) and mentally (via hegemonic ideology).

But Marx also *failed* to see that human labor under big capitalism is possible *only* inside the State and State-like institutions; or otherwise put, he *failed* to see that the State is *the condition of the real possibility of big capitalism*.

§27. “The State is the condition of the real possibility of big capitalism.”

—Does this sound like *existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchism*,<sup>28</sup> and *neo-neo-Marxism*, and “therefore” *crazy*?

In any case, I’ll spell out that thought more carefully, and provide an explanatory argument too.

§28. By a *social institution* I mean any group of people who are collectively guided by a set of shared norms and rules for intentional action.

By (primary<sup>29</sup>) *coercion* I mean forcing other people to do things for you by means of violence or the threat of violence, for instrumental reasons—or in other words, treating other people *like mere means or mere things* in order to serve your self-interested or publicly beneficial ends, by means of violence or the threat of violence.

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<sup>27</sup> By “big capitalism,” I mean what happens when the human acquisition and control of private property, the production of goods and their dissemination, exchange, or trade, including profits, transcends the satisfaction of true human needs for everyone involved, and instead becomes a social system that expresses only the (i) rationally unjustified and immoral self-interest of bosses or owners and (ii) the alienation, commodification, and oppression of workers, and at most the satisfaction of their false human needs. Short of that, and contrary to that, it’s “small capitalism.” In my view, then, other things being equal, small capitalism is rationally, morally, and politically OK. So I guess that makes me a *neo-neo-Marxist*.

<sup>28</sup> See Hanna, *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. parts 2 and 3.

<sup>29</sup> There’s also *secondary* kind of coercion that consists in forcing people to do things for you by means of acts or threats that fall short of violence—e.g., firing them from their jobs, fining or reprimanding them, publicly shaming them, emotionally blackmailing them, etc., etc. But the distinction between primary and secondary coercion isn’t crucial for the points I’m making here.

By a *State* or *State-like institution*, following Weber, I mean any social institution that possesses, via its government, a legalistic<sup>30</sup> territorial monopoly on the power to coerce.

The State then emerges from non-State social institutions (nomads, so-called “barbarians,” so-called “brutes,” so-called “primitives,” so-called “savages,” etc., etc.) as *an authoritarian intensification and systematization of coercion*.

More precisely, the State happens when some people come to control a specific means of coercion (knives, axes, swords, guns, bombs, etc., etc.) and then set up a *protection racket* that in effect says to the other people:

“If you do whatever we tell you to do, and come to believe (or at least pretend to believe) that this is completely legitimate and unchallengeable, *just because we say it is and for no other reason*, then we’ll not only let you live, by *not* killing, torturing, or imprisoning you—unless of course you disobey us, in which case we have the right to do *any* of those things to you, at our discretion and according to our arbitrary will—but also protect you from all the others who would like to coerce you.”

Then big capitalism arises as follows:

“And what we will tell you to do, first and foremost, is *to work for us bosses*, either as chattel slaves or as wage slaves.”

§29. Now, on Kantian grounds, it’s always rationally unjustified and morally wrong to treat people as mere means or as mere things.

Therefore, coercion is always rationally unjustified and immoral.

Therefore, States and State-institutions are always rationally unjustified and immoral, even apart from the self-evidently rationally unjustified character of authoritarianism.

Moreover, since big capitalism naturally and necessarily flows from States and State-like institutions, it follows not only that big capitalism is always rationally unjustified

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<sup>30</sup> This resolves an ambiguity in Weber’s original definition, which is sometimes misread as if he’s saying that the State’s territorial monopoly on coercion is *rationally and morally legitimate, as such*. That would of course have to be proved, not merely asserted or presupposed; and on the contrary, in my opinion, the philosophical and political social anarchist has decisive arguments *against* its rational and/or moral legitimacy—see note 28 above.



and immoral, but also that all States and State-like institutions are inherently alienating, commodifying, and oppressive both physically and mentally.

§30. The fundamental two-part claim of a philosophy of essentially embodied minds that has “socialized” itself as per the above (let’s call this, again following Jan Slaby, *political philosophy of mind*), is that since society, not only in an historical, temporal sense, but also in metaphysical, epistemic/conceptual, normative, and even causal senses, *comes before* the State and State-like institutions and essentially *extends beyond* the State and State-like institutions,<sup>31</sup> then

(i) it is *really possible* for there to be non-coercive, non-big-capitalist, non-alienating, non-commodifying, and non-oppressive social institutions (neo-utopianism), and

(ii) we *really should* exit the State and all State-like institutions, in order to create and sustain these non-State and non-State-like institutions, for our own sake and for the sake of everyone else (social anarchism, aka anarcho-socialism).

Or in other words, it’s *really possible* for there to be radically enlightened, constructive, enabling, self-realizing, mutually-aiding social institutions, so we *really should* be exiting the State and all State-like institutions, in order to create and sustain these, for our own sake and also for the sake of everyone else.

Wtf! Why not? C’mon, let’s do it.

### §31. When Merleau-Ponty Met The Whiteheadian Kripke Monster.

Someone, somewhere, once wrote that a super-short but accurate synopsis of *Embodied Minds in Action*, aka EMA, is

*Merleau-Ponty Meets The Kripke Monster*

I rather like that.

Indeed, there’s definitely *something* to this micro-synopsis, *methodologically* speaking, in that EMA fully fuses thoroughly non-reductive *existential-phenomenological methods* with formally rigorous *methods of contemporary Analytic modal metaphysics*.

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<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., P. Clastres, *Society Against the State*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989); and J.C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2017).

§32. Nevertheless someone else, somewhere else, wrote that *he literally didn't understand a word of EMA, because it was too Kantian.*

My micro-synopsis of that so-called review is

*Anti-Kanti Strikes Again*

—He'd probably read only the back flyleaf, where it says I'd already published some books on Kant, and then decided he could "refute" *EMA* by guilt-by-association or unjust neglect (Hurrah!).

§33. But over and above sheer anti-Kantian dogmatism and prejudice, and in order to be extra-charitable, one could, I suppose, from a mainstream Analytic point of view, be officially "surprised" that Maiese and I creatively re-work and re-deploy the notorious notion of *synthetic a priori necessity* in order to characterize the relation between basic mental properties and basic physical properties of living organisms like us.

Our specific claim is that the mental-physical relation is a *synthetic a priori two-way necessary complementarity*, that is, a mental → physical and physical → mental necessary equivalence based on the manifest essence of minded animals like us.

In short, *we're essentially embodied minds.*

§34. Hence Maiese and I called this *the essential embodiment theory.*

It's a specially restricted version of "dual-aspectism."

For other dual aspect theories, think about Spinoza's theological monism (in *The Ethics*), Russell's neutral monism (in *The Analysis of Mind* and *The Analysis of Matter*), or Whitehead's universal panpsychist organicism (in *Process and Reality*).

Unlike Whitehead's universal panpsychist organicism, however, the essential embodiment theory *doesn't* say that *everything, everywhere in the world is somehow minded, as an intrinsic nonrelational property of that thing, from the fundamental level up.*

For that would mean that *even Dale's Pale Ale and the cans that contain it are somehow minded, as an intrinsic nonrelational properties of those things*, which, as much as I like Dale's Pale and those nice red, white, and blue cans, well, is clearly an excessively strong metaphysical thesis.

Nevertheless the essential embodiment theory does, in a *especially restricted* way, share some of the metaphysical benefits of panpsychism—namely, *that in all and only suitably complex kinds of organismic living creatures and their life-processes, causally efficacious mental and physical properties are related by synthetic a priori two-way necessary complementarity.*

Or in other words: *all and only everything in the world that is the right kind of organismic living critter and its life-process, is minded.*

So it's a *especially restricted* version of psycho-organicism.

§35. Here's a relevant sidebar note on the provenance of *EMA*.

I wrote my MA thesis on Whitehead's metaphysics, and was a Whiteheadian true believer for several years.

I even bought myself a first edition copy of *Process and Reality* for more money than I had that month for groceries.

So *EMA* could also have been micro-synopsized as

*Merleau-Ponty Meets The Whiteheadian Kripke Monster*

—Which sounds like a flick directed by Roger Corman.

§36. More specifically, however, the essential embodiment theory says

(i) that minds like ours are *necessarily and completely embodied,*

(ii) that minds like ours are *complex global dynamic structures of our living organismic bodies, aka forms of life,*

(iii) that minds like ours *are therefore inherently alive,*

(iv) that minds like ours *are therefore inherently causally efficacious, just like all forms of organismic life, and*

(v) that minds like ours *emerge over time and in space in all and only certain kinds of living organisms, aka minded animals.*

§37. Ten years after *EMA's* publication, I know it's probably futile and even quixotic—but *let me try yet again* to say, as clearly and distinctly as I can, why the essential

embodiment theory provides a truly revolutionary approach to the mind-body problem, including the problem of mental causation.

§38. I'll start with a very quick review.

Minds like ours are inherently capable of

(i) *consciousness*, that is, *subjective* (= egocentrically-centered in orientable space and unidirectional time) *experience* (= mental acts, states, or processes of any sort) and

(ii) *intentionality*, that is, *directedness to all kinds of things as their cognitive, desiderative, emotional, etc., targets*.

And the two fundamental problems in the philosophy of mind are these:

*The mind-body problem*: what accounts for the existence and specific character of conscious, intentional minds like ours in a physical world?

*The problem of mental causation*: what accounts for the causal efficacy and causal relevance of minds like ours in a physical world?

OK: 'nuff said by way of review.

Here are eight reasons why the essential embodiment theory, aka The EET, is truly revolutionary.

§39. **First**, The EET fully avoids *reducing* the mental to the physical, aka *reductive physicalism*.

Reductive physicalism, presenting itself via the sheep's clothing of the mind-body identity theory or the logical supervenience of the mental on the physical, de facto simply *eliminates* the mental.

But as Galen Strawson never tires of (correctly) pointing out, what could be more epistemically primitive than our subjective experience of ourselves *as* minds, and correspondingly, what then could be more metaphysically/ontologically primitive than the fact of the mental *quâ* mental?

§40. **Second**, The EET fully avoids making the mental naturally or nomologically supervenient on the physical, aka *non-reductive physicalism*.

Reductive physicalism entails epiphenomenalism, hence it robs the mental of all its efficacious causal power.

It's no solution to say that, from a non-reductive physicalist point of view, the mental can still have *causal relevance*: the mental has got to have *efficacious causal powers*, not merely *an important informational bearing on causal processes*.

**§41. Third**, The EET fully avoids reducing the physical to the mental, aka *subjective idealism*.

Subjective idealism makes nature's existence radically dependent on the existence of individual minds.

It's not only highly implausible, but also downright bordering on bonkers, to hold that physical nature came into existence *only after* there were any minded animals.

For, since animals are parts of physical nature, it would follow that *animals came into existence only after there were minded animals*.

Wut?

And it's equally highly implausible, again downright bordering on bonkers, that if all individual minds were to perish, physical nature would go out of existence too.

For in that case, since all animals die, and in most cases after animals die, their corpses continue to exist for a while, it would follow that *necessarily, the last minded animal would have no corpse*.

Wut wut?

**§42. Fourth**, The EET fully avoids making the mental and the physical either essentially or even logically *independent of one another*, aka *Cartesian interactionist substance dualism or property dualism*.

Any form of Cartesian dualism makes it impossible to explain how the mental and the physical causally interact without appealing to some sort of metaphysical mystery: for example, Descartes's God, Leibniz's divine pre-established harmony, an ectoplasmic medium, etc. etc.

And any form of Cartesian dualism also entails the metaphysical impossibility *that experiences could exist without embodiment*.

§43. **Fifth**, The EET fully avoids over-restricting mentality to the brain, aka *the brain-bounded mind*.

§44. **Sixth**, The EET fully avoids over-extending the mental beyond the living animal body, aka *the extended mind*.

§45. **Seventh**, The EET provides adequate metaphysical foundations for a *robust metaphysics of free will and personhood*,<sup>32</sup> a *robust non-consequentialist ethics*,<sup>33</sup> and a *radically enlightened politics*.<sup>34</sup>

§46. **Eighth**, and perhaps most importantly, building on the sixth and seventh points, The EET is an approach to the mind-body problem, including the problem of mental causation, *that is perfectly scaled to the nature, scope, and limits of our “human, all too human” existence in a thoroughly nonideal natural and social world*.

Brain-boundedness *falls short of* the human condition: *it makes us much less than we manifestly are*.

(To put it expletively: I’m *not* nothing but my fucking brain, as causally important as it obviously is.)

The extended mind *exceeds* the human condition: *it makes us more than we manifestly are*.

(Again expletively: I’m *not* also my fucking smart phone or any other piece(s) of extra-bodily technology, as causally and/or culturally important as they obviously are.)

Only the essential embodiment of the mind adequately captures and reflects the human condition: *it tells us exactly what we manifestly are*.

For I just *am* my minded animal body and its “human, all too human” life, for better or worse.

§47. In short, the essential embodiment theory answers *perfectly* to Socrates’s Delphic-Oracle-inspired thesis that an ultimate aim of philosophy is to “know thyself.”

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<sup>32</sup> See R. Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2—Deep Freedom and Real Persons: A Study in Metaphysics* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#).

<sup>33</sup> See R. Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 3—Kantian Ethics and Human Existence: A Study in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Nova Science, 2018), [PREVIEW](#).

<sup>34</sup> See note 23 above.



So, When Merleau-Ponty Met The Whiteheadian Kripke Monster, *a good time was had by all*.

**§48. Kant, universities, The Deep(er) State, and philosophy.** In “What is Enlightenment?,” Kant says that

I have put the main point of enlightenment, of people’s emergence from their self-incurred immaturity, chiefly in matters of religion because our rulers have no interest in playing guardian over their subjects with respect to the arts and sciences. (WiE 8: 41, underlining added)

Even at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this was complete bullshit, as Kant at least implicitly knew.

Of course, it’s true that at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the age of the “enlightened despots” like Frederick the Great, religion retained its hegemonic control over public thinking and everyday life—but this was only *by virtue of the State*.

By *the State* I mean any social organization that possesses a legalistic territorial monopoly on the means and use of coercive power (as per Weber), and that issues commands and compels its subjects to heed and obey those commands *regardless of the moral content of those commands, merely by virtue of its control of coercive power, and just because it says so*.

So all States are inherently coercive and authoritarian.

In fact, even at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it’s *the State* that lies behind people’s “self-incurred immaturity” and their desperate need for (radical) enlightenment, not *religion per se*.

Substitute “21<sup>st</sup> century big science” for “religion,” and the result is functionally the same.

Back then, just as now, States, their governments, and big capitalism have a fundamental interest in ideological control and indeed hegemony, *especially* “with respect to the arts and sciences.”

**§49.** Kant begins his *Conflict of the Faculties*, “First Part: The Conflict of the Philosophy Faculty With the Theology Faculty,” with a brief but surprisingly *sociological* description of the very idea of a university:

Whoever it was that first hit on the notion of a university and proposed that a public institution of this kind be established, [recognized that] it was not a bad idea to handle the entire content of learning (really, the thinkers devoted to it) by mass production, so to speak—by a division of labor, so that for every branch of the sciences there would be a public teacher or *professor* appointed as its trustee, and all of these together would form a kind of learned community called a *university*.... The university would have a certain [kind of] autonomy (since only scholars can pass judgment on other scholars) and accordingly it would be authorized to perform certain functions through its *faculties* to admit to the university students seeking entrance from the lower schools and, having conducted examinations, by its own authority to grant degrees or confer the universally recognized status of “doctor” on ... teachers who are not members of the university... —in other words, to create doctors.<sup>35</sup>

Notice that the “certain [kind of] autonomy” of the university, in this context, has nothing to do with *intellectual* or *moral* autonomy (that is, free thinking or free agency), but instead consists entirely in the *quality-control* exerted by some scholars over other scholars and their scholarly work, by means of the former’s judgments about the latter.

In this way, some scholars play the role of *bosses* or *managers* over other scholars, hence the “certain [kind of] autonomy” of the university is wholly a *proprietary* control over its production and products.

§50. More generally, what’s really going on here?

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, universities were already, in effect, *intellectual mirrors of big capitalism*.

As Kant explicitly points out, universities were established as special factories for mass-producing goods, including *ideas, information, and knowledge* (disseminated as lectures, books, essays, reports, etc.) and *people-with-degrees* (“doctors”), and supplying services (teaching and training students for specialized jobs outside the university, as well as inside the university—professors or researchers, aka *scholars*, administrators, etc.), all for fees, where the division of labor sorts itself into *faculties*.

—And nowadays, also sub-sorted into departments, programs, etc., etc.

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<sup>35</sup> I. Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. M. Gregor (parallel texts edn., New York: Abaris, 1979), p. 23, underlining added.

So universities not only *mirror* the big capitalist system of money/property accumulation, producing goods, and supplying services, they also directly *supply* that system.

§51. But big capitalism is really possible only by means of States, which supply the legalistic territorial monopoly on the means and use of coercive power that is needed to keep the big capitalist accumulation of property/money, and its control over the production of goods and provision of services, *intact and safe from invaders, thieves, and pirates*, and rolling ever forward.

Hence by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, universities were *the intellectual arm* of the big capitalist system and its coercive authoritarian matrix, the State.

§52. In turn professional academic philosophy, which, according to Kant, is the highest of “the higher faculties” of the university, is supposed to be the *controller* of that intellectual arm, by virtue of its (supposed) intellectually autonomous power of judgment:

Now the power to judge autonomously—that is, freely (according to principles of thought in general)—is called reason. So the philosophy faculty, because it must answer for the truth of the teachings it is to adopt or even allow, must be conceived as free and subject only to laws given by reason, not by the government. But a department of this kind, too, must be established at a university.; in other words, a university must have a faculty of philosophy. Its function in relation to the three higher faculties [of theology, law, and medicine] is to control them and, in this way, be useful to them, since truth (the essential and first condition of learning in general) is the main thing, whereas the utility the higher faculties promise the government is of secondary importance.<sup>36</sup>

But in fact, as Kant himself points out in “What is Enlightenment,” since the social purpose of professional academic philosophy, via the so-called *public* (that is, non-instrumental, intellectually autonomous) use of reason, is *only* to “argue as much as you will and about whatever you will, *but obey!*” (WiE, 8: 37—as per Frederick the Great), whereas in the so-called *private* (that is, instrumental, official-functionary) use of reason, it is *to obey even without arguing* (WiE 8: 37), then professional academic philosophy is at best *the obedient yet endlessly disputatious pseudo-controller* of the intellectual arm of big capitalism and its coercive matrix, the State.

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<sup>36</sup> Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, pp. 43 and 45, underlining added.

§53. Notice especially, moreover, that *neither* the “public” *nor* the “private” use of reason by professional academic philosophers is *morally* autonomous, even aspirationally.

For in the context of the State, the morally autonomous use of reason by professional academic philosophers would be *dangerous*.

Thus if professional academic philosophers, like other official functionaries,

should want to put before the public their objections and doubts about ecclesiastical and civil laws that have been given, they would be inciting the people to rebellion against the government.<sup>37</sup>

As a consequence, professional academic philosophers, as members of the highest of the higher faculties of the university, must instead

put their objections and doubts only to one another, as scholars, and the people [will] pay no attention to such matters in a practical way, even if they should hear of them; for, agreeing that these subtleties are not their affair, they feel obliged to be content with what the government officials, appointed for this purpose, announce to them.<sup>38</sup>

In other words, professional academic philosophers must argue endlessly amongst themselves, and publish more-and-more about less-and-less, so that ordinary people will take no interest *whatsoever* in what they are blathering about—and then, ultimately, they must obey the government too.

And so it went at universities and in philosophy departments or faculties, through the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(More on that, shortly.)

§54. Things seemed to change sharply, at least in Anglo-American philosophy departments or faculties, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the revolutionary emergence of Analytic philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

But by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, Anglo-American (and many other European and non-European) universities had become the intellectual arm of what Eisenhower called

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<sup>37</sup> Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, pp. 47, underlining added.

<sup>38</sup> Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 47, underlining added.

<sup>39</sup> See §§8-20 above.

*“the military-industrial [that is, big capitalist] complex,”* aka *“The Deep State,”* that runs the State at one remove, by power-controlling and media-controlling the government.

And by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, with its radically expanded opportunities for constant, 24-7 thought-control and surveillance via CCTV, smart phones, TV, online news, online journalism, books, movies, and other forms of digital media, it's now a military-industrial-digital complex that runs the State, hence *The Deep(er) State*, at one remove, by *digitally* power-controlling its government.

So nowadays, utterly pervaded by digital media like everyone else in contemporary big capitalist neoliberal democratic States, universities have become the intellectual arm of the military-industrial-digital complex, *The Deep(er) State*.

And professional academic philosophy — mostly mainstream Analytic philosophy but also its dialectical professional opposite and nemesis-in-blather, the more recent and increasingly influential identitarian, coercive moralist, multiculturalist philosophy — just keeps going and going and going, like an *intellectual Energizer Bunny*, as its obedient yet endlessly disputatious pseudo-controller.

§55. Therefore, it's hardly surprising that *neither* the people-with-degrees produced by the university system — its “bachelors,” its “masters,” and its “doctors” — *nor* its specialized laborers, the university-insiders, or at least 99% of them, would ever be seriously critical of the big-capitalist and State system itself, including its intellectual arm, the university, challenge any of them, or rebel against any of them.

And this is above all true of contemporary professional academic philosophy, the intellectual Energizer Bunny of the contemporary university, the obedient yet endlessly disputatious pseudo-controller of *The Deep(er) State's* intellectual arm.

§56. Correspondingly, and by negation, then, it's no accident that in the early-to-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the Young Hegelians — especially including Marx — and the early socialist and social anarchist intelligentsia, like Engels, and above all the later Marxist communist intelligentsia, were virtually all *unemployed* academics or otherwise *failed* academics.

As it happened, however, *they* didn't ever seriously criticize, challenge, or rebel against the *universities* — that was left to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See 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 F. Nietzsche, “On

Instead, the Young Hegelians, Marx, the early socialist and anarchist intelligentsia, and the later Marxist communist intelligentsia all ignored the universities and radically criticized and rebelled against *religion, big capitalism, and Statism*.

But in any case, it remains true that whenever universities fail to absorb and/or protect their own, then they're very likely to generate a class of highly intelligent and highly trained, but alienated and exiled, unemployed or underemployed, angry dissenters—radical critics of society and rebels against it.

§57. Later however, by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, after World War II, especially in North America, flush as it was with private and public funding that wasn't already being spent directly on Cold War military build-up, universities became *very* efficient at hiring, retaining, and pacifying their own university-insider people-products, their own university personnel, thereby reducing social dissent by them almost to zero again.

Nevertheless the *contemporary* situation of universities worldwide, in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, The Global Ivory Bunker, significantly resembles that of German universities in the 1830s and 40s.

They're neither absorbing (by hiring) nor protecting (by means of tenure, which as it also turns out, *doesn't* actually protect professional academic freedom of expression even despite its official verbiage, aka bullshit, to the contrary) all or even most of their own, and indeed alienating, exiling, and/or expelling some of their most talented and free-thinking personnel, turning them, willy-nilly, into intellectual hobos, nomads, and renegades.

Therefore, we might reasonably expect *these* intellectual nomads and renegades to become radical critics and rebels of contemporary society at *every* level—targetting not only big capitalism and the State, but *also* the professional academy itself, as the intellectual arm of The Deep(er) State, and *also* its obedient yet endlessly disputatious pseudo-controller, its intellectual Energizer Bunny, professional academic philosophy.

As a consequence, we might also reasonably expect that a class of specifically *philosophical* nomads and renegades would also arise.

§58. Indeed, there is even some logical space in Kant's sociology-of-the-university for them.

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the Future of Our Educational Institutions," trans. J.M. Kennedy (London: Toulis, 1910), available online at URL = <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28146/28146-h/28146-h.htm>>.



In his original sketch of the university and its “incorporated (*zunftigen*) scholars,” Kant also explicitly describes a special class of intellectuals he calls

*unincorporated (zunftfrei) scholars, who do not belong to the university but simply work on part of the great content of learning, either forming independent organizations, like various workshops ... or living, so to speak, in a state of nature so far as learning is concerned, each working by himself as an amateur and without public precepts or rules, at extending [his field of] learning.*<sup>41</sup>

The *incorporated* scholars, the professional academics, especially including professional academic philosophers, all work within the framework of “public precepts or rules” and can argue as much as they like and about whatever they like, provided that they ultimately obey.

Their so-called intellectual autonomy, their so-called “public use of reason,” is at best obedient yet endlessly disputatious blather, falling infinitely short of moral autonomy.

But *unincorporated* scholars, aka *independent* scholars, aka *anarcho-scholars*, especially including *unincorporated, independent, anarcho-philosophers*, are intellectual and philosophical hobos, nomads, and renegades who exist

*in a state of nature, so far as learning is concerned, each working by himself as an amateur and without public precepts or rules.*

Hence the *unincorporated, independent, anarcho-philosophers* are the *only* philosophers who really can, even if only *aspirationally*, be authentically intellectually and morally autonomous.

§59. The significant challenges of being a contemporary *intellectual* hobo, nomad, and renegade, and in particular of being a contemporary *philosophical* hobo, nomad, and renegade in big capitalist neoliberal nation-States, whose governments are controlled by the military-industrial-university-digital complex, aka The Deep(er) State, of course, are these:

*due to their extra-university status, they will have no jobwork that is inherently related to their lifework, hence no source of jobwork income for their lifework, and, due to overt or covert blacklisting and/or censorship, they will have little or no access to mainstream venues of dissemination and publication.*

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<sup>41</sup> Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, p. 25, underlining added.

§60. Their only hope for physical, intellectual, and moral survival is to rely on the generosity of a few patrons, and to create their own *samizdat*-style vehicles of philosophical dissemination and publication.

So they will simply have to go on like intellectual versions of Beatrix Potter's happy-go-lucky, pastoral *Flopsy Bunnies*, who were "very improvident and cheerful" — the very antithesis of the relentless, mechanized Energizer Bunny.

I ironically mean, that contemporary philosophical hobos, nomads, and renegades *will simply have to tough it out*; and let's hope they're not kidnapped by pirates!

Oh well, whatever — if it be so, then so be it.<sup>42</sup>

**§61. Realistic idealism: ten theses about mind-dependence.** I strongly believe that some or another version of metaphysical idealism is true; but I also strongly believe that the true version of metaphysical idealism must be *substantively realistic*.

How can this be so?

To show how, I'll present ten theses about mind-dependence that add up to a *realistic idealism*.

§62. I'll start with some background notions.

By a *veridical appearance* I mean anything *X* that appears as *F*, or appears *F*-ly, or appears to be *F*, to any or all rational human cognizers, *just insofar as, and precisely because, X really and truly is F*.

For example, if I say "It appears that Sweetpea the cat, who lives at my daughter's place in Los Angeles, is looking at me from her cat-cave," like this —

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<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., *Philosophy Without Borders*, available online at URL = <https://www.patreon.com/philosophywithoutborders>; *Against Professional Philosophy*, available online at URL = <https://againstprofphil.org/>; and *Borderless Philosophy*, available online at URL = <https://www.cckp.space/>.



or “It appears that  $2 + 2 = 4$ ,” or “It appears that The Minimal Law of Non-Contradiction[i] applies universally,” and what I say is literally correct, then all the things I am talking about are veridical appearances.

*By the manifestly real world, I mean the world as it veridically appears to any or all rational human cognizers or agents.*

*By logical possibility, I mean analytic or weak metaphysical possibility; and by real possibility, I mean synthetic or strong metaphysical possibility.*

*Real possibility entails logical possibility, but logical possibility does not entail real possibility.*

For example, 10,000 year old human animals are really possible and also logically possible; immortal human animals are logically possible but not really possible; and mortal immortal human animals are logically impossible and really impossible.

Now for the ten theses.

§63. Thesis 1: A world that cannot veridically appear, a world “in itself,” a *noumenal* world, is logically possible but not really possible. (**The Real Impossibility of a Noumenal World**)

Thesis 2: Necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then the specific characters of its basic structures systematically correspond to the specific characters of the innate structures of the rational human cognitive and practical capacities. (**World-to-Mind Conformity**)

Thesis 3: Necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then if rational human cognizers/agents had been/were differently constituted as to their innate cognitive or practical capacities, the manifestly real world would have been/be correspondingly differently constituted as to its basic structures. (**World-to-Mind Covariance**)

Thesis 4: Necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then if some rational human cognizers/agents were to exist, they would be able to know or change that manifestly real world to some salient extent, by means of the normal operations of their innate cognitive or practical capacities. (**Mind-to-World Access**)

Thesis 5: Even if any or all rational human cognizers/agents were to go out of existence, nevertheless it is really possible for the manifestly real world not only to remain in existence but also to retain all the specific characters of its basic structures. (**The Mind-Independence of the Manifestly Real World**)

Thesis 6: Necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then if some rational human cognizers/agents were to exist, they would all be able to know or change that world in essentially the same ways. (**The Objectivity of the Manifestly Real World**)

Thesis 7: Necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then for *some but not all* spacetime locations  $L$  in the manifestly real world, if any given rational human cognizer/agent—call it *Bob*—were to have been/be actually present, cognizant, and active at  $L$ , then the manifestly real world would have been/be differently constituted at  $L$  than it would have been/be had Bob *not* been present, cognizant, and active at  $L$ . (**The Observer-Dependence of Some Proper Parts of the Manifestly Real World**—for example, Heisenberg-style quantum mechanical effects.)

Thesis 8: Necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then rational human cognizers/agents are not only logically (analytically, weakly metaphysically) possible but also really (synthetically, strongly metaphysically) possible. (**Anthropocentricity 1**)

Thesis 9: Necessarily, if rational human cognizers/agents had not been really possible, then the manifestly real world would not have existed. (**Anthropocentricity 2**)

Thesis 10: It cannot be the case that both (i) the manifestly real world exists, and also (ii) rational human cognizers/agents are really impossible. (**Anthropocentricity 3**)

§64. If theses 1-10 are all true, then the manifestly real world is non-trivially mind-dependent *even though subjective idealism and irrealism are both false* — that is, realistic idealism is true.

**§65. Processualism, organicism, and the two waves of the organicist revolution.** In late Spring or early summer 2018, I read a newly-published essay by John Dupré and Daniel J. Nicholson, “A Manifesto for a Processual Philosophy of Biology.”<sup>43</sup>

I think that the publication of this essay, together with the edited collection that the essay introduces, is of paradigm-shifting, earthshaking, head-exploding philosophical significance.

This is *not* book-blurb bullshit: *I really and truly believe this* — but why?

It’s because I think that *processualism* is essentially the same as what I have called *organicism*, and also that, with the mainstream, big-ass-academic-press publication of this essay and book by OUP, we’re now at the very beginning of the second wave of what I’ve called *the organicist revolution*.

§66. Organicism is a *liberally naturalistic* and *pro-scientific*, but also *anti-mechanistic* and *anti-scientistic* conception of the world, including ourselves.

Organicism is committed to the metaphysical doctrine of *liberal naturalism*.

Liberal naturalism says that the irreducible but also non-dualistic mental properties of rational minded animals are as basic in nature as biological properties, and metaphysically continuous with them.

More precisely, according to liberal naturalism,

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<sup>43</sup> J. Dupré and D. J. Nicholson, “A Manifesto for a Processual Philosophy of Biology,” in J. Dupré and D.J. Nicholson (eds.), *Everything Flows: Towards a Processual Philosophy of Biology* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2018), pp. 3-45.

rational human free agency is an immanent structure of essentially embodied conscious, intentional, caring human animal mind;

essentially embodied conscious, intentional, caring human animal mind is an immanent structure of organismic life;

and organismic life is an immanent structure of spatiotemporally asymmetric, non-equilibrium matter and/or energy flows.

Each more complex structure is metaphysically continuous with, and embeds, all of the less complex structures.

Again:

Human freedom is dynamically inherent in and dynamically emerges from essentially embodied conscious, intentional, caring human animal mind.

And essentially embodied conscious, intentional, caring human animal mind is dynamically inherent in and dynamically emerges from life.

Thus human freedom is dynamically inherent in and dynamically emerges from life.

Moreover, life is dynamically inherent in and dynamically emerges from spatiotemporally asymmetric, non-equilibrium matter and/or energy flows.

Therefore, human freedom, human mind, and life are all dynamically inherent in and dynamically emerge from spatiotemporally asymmetric, non-equilibrium matter and/or energy flows.

Here is a simplified diagram of the basic metaphysical continuities and structural embeddings, according to the liberal naturalist conception:

**free agency→human animal mind→organismic life→asymmetric, non-equilibrium matter/energy flows**

§67. In view of liberal naturalism, to borrow an apt phrase from the later Wittgenstein, our rational human free agency is just our own “form of life,” and free agency, as such, grows naturally in certain minded animal species or life-forms.

Correspondingly, freedom grows naturally and evolves in certain species of minded animals, including the human species, precisely because minds like ours grow naturally and evolve in certain species of animals, including the human species.<sup>44</sup>

§68. Another name for liberal naturalism is “objective idealism.”

Objective idealism is sharply distinct both from *subjective idealism*, which says that *the world is nothing a phenomenal mental construction of an individual cognizer* (as defended, for example, by Berkeley, the neo-Kantians, early Carnap, C.I. Lewis, and Nelson Goodman) and also from *absolute idealism*, which says that *the world is nothing but a giant mind, its thought-forms, and its thought-processes* (as defended, for example, by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel).

As opposed to either subjective idealism or absolute idealism, liberal naturalism, aka objective idealism, says that rational human mindedness *grows naturally* in the manifestly real physical world, in organisms whose lives have an appropriately high level of non-mechanical thermodynamic complexity and self-organization.

The manifestly real natural physical world necessarily includes our real possibility and is immanently structured for the dynamic emergence of lives like ours and minds like ours.

Or in Thomas Nagel’s formulation: “rational intelligibility is at the root of the natural order.”<sup>45</sup>

When we conjoin organicism or liberal naturalism with the ten theses I laid out in §§61-64 above, then we’ve discovered, in effect, *the contemporary Kantian philosopher’s stone*:

an original and appropriately weak version of transcendental idealism that’s at once robustly *realistic* and robustly *objective*.

—Now I’m just waiting for the world to beat a path to my door, and the big bucks to start rolling in.

§69. Above all, however, organicism is directly opposed to *Natural Mechanism*.

Natural Mechanism says that all the causal powers of everything whatsoever in the natural world are ultimately fixed by what can be digitally computed on a universal

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<sup>44</sup> For an elaboration and defense of the “mind-in-life” thesis, see E. Thompson, *Mind in Life* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007).

<sup>45</sup> T. Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), p. 17.

deterministic or indeterministic real-world Turing machine, provided that the following three plausible “causal orderliness” and “decompositionality” assumptions are all satisfied:

- (i) its causal powers are necessarily determined by the general deterministic or indeterministic causal natural laws, especially including the Conservation Laws, together with all the settled quantity-of-matter-and/or-energy facts about the past, especially including The Big Bang,
- (ii) the causal powers of the real-world Turing machine are held fixed under our general causal laws of nature, and
- (iii) the “digits” over which the real-world Turing machine computes constitute a complete denumerable set of spatiotemporally discrete physical objects.

In direct opposition to Natural Mechanism, however, the world-conception of organicism says that the causal powers of biological life (and in particular, the causal powers of living organisms, including all minded animals, especially including rational human animals) are *neither* fixed by, identical with, *nor* otherwise reducible to the Conservation-Law-determined, Big-Bang-caused, real-world-Turing-computable causal powers of thermodynamic systems, whether these causal powers are governed by general deterministic laws or general probabilistic/Statistical laws.

So if the general thesis of organicism is true, then anti-mechanism is true and Natural Mechanism is false.

§70. As a direct consequence of its anti-mechanism, organicism is also committed to the doctrine of what the early 20<sup>th</sup> century British philosopher Samuel Alexander—following the Romantic poet Wordsworth—called *natural piety*.

According to Alexander:

I do not mean by natural piety exactly what Wordsworth meant by it—the reverent joy in nature, by which he wished that his days might be bound to each other—though there is enough connection with his interpretation to justify me in using his phrase. The natural piety I am going to speak of is that of the scientific investigator, by which he accepts with loyalty the mysteries which he cannot explain in nature and has no right to try to explain. I may describe it as the habit of knowing when to stop in asking questions of nature.



[T]hat organization which is alive is not merely physico-chemical, though completely resolvable into such terms, but has the new quality of life. No appeal is needed, so far as I can see, to a vital force or even an *élan vital*. It is enough to note the emergence of the quality, and try to describe what is involved in its conditions.... The living body is also physical and chemical. It surrenders no claim to be considered a part of the physical world. But the new quality of life is neither chemical nor mechanical, but something new.

We may and must observe with care our of what previous conditions these new creations arise. We cannot tell why they should assume these qualities. We can but accept them as we find them, and this acceptance is natural piety.<sup>46</sup>

According to natural piety, *neither* are you alienated from nature (a Cartesian ghost-in-a-machine) *nor* are you a “lord and master” of nature (a Baconian/Cartesian technocrat).

To believe both of these at once was Victor Frankenstein’s tragic mistake, repeated endlessly and magnified infinitely in the deeply misguided epistemic and metaphysical doctrines, and scientific-technocratic ideology, of Natural Mechanism:

Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of [naturally mechanistic] knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.<sup>47</sup>

§71. Organicism fully conforms to modern physics, and in particular to *non-equilibrium thermodynamics*, under the non-deterministic interpretation of it offered, for example, by Ilya Prigogine.<sup>48</sup>

Therefore organicism also fully conforms to modern chemistry, biology, and the cognitive neurosciences, insofar as these are all construed in terms of the non-deterministic interpretation of non-equilibrium thermodynamics and liberal naturalism.

In other words, *organicism takes natural science seriously too*.

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<sup>46</sup> S. Alexander, “Natural Piety,” in S. Alexander, *Philosophical and Literary Pieces* (London: Macmillan, 1939), pp. 299-315, at pp. 299, 310-311, and 306.

<sup>47</sup> M. Shelley, *Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus*, 1818 edn., available online at URL = <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/frankenstein>, vol. 1, ch. 3.

<sup>48</sup> See, e.g., I. Prigogine, *The End of Certainty: Time’s Flow and the Laws of Nature* (New York: Free Press, 1997). A title that more accurately described the contents of this truly revolutionary book would have been *The End of Mechanism*.

More specifically, it is not scientifically *unserious* to be a liberal naturalist and hold that non-equilibrium thermodynamics, comprehending both physics and chemistry, and biology, especially including organismic biology and ecosystemic biology, and finally cognitive neuroscience, are all anti-mechanistic.

Why must all the basic sciences be interpreted in accordance with Natural Mechanism?

After all, Church and Turing show us that logical truth in every system at least as rich as classical first-order polyadic quantified predicate logic with identity, aka “elementary logic,” cannot be determined by Turing-computable algorithms, and therefore cannot be naturally mechanized; and Gödel’s incompleteness theorems show us that every mathematical system at least as rich as Peano arithmetic cannot be naturally mechanized.<sup>49</sup>

Yet no one regards *elementary logic* and *Peano arithmetic* as somehow less than seriously scientific.

If *formal* piety about logic and mathematics is intelligible and defensible, as they surely are, then by the same token, so too is *natural* piety about physics, chemistry, biology, and cognitive neuroscience.

So if one can be fully serious about logic and mathematics without holding Natural Mechanism about them, then one can fully serious about physics, chemistry, biology, and cognitive neuroscience without holding that Natural Mechanism is true about them, since all of the natural sciences presuppose logic and mathematics.

In particular, if the non-deterministic interpretation of non-equilibrium thermodynamics, together with Church’s and Turing’s discoveries about logic, together with Gödel’s incompleteness theorems, are all true, then Natural Mechanism is false even about *physics*, and yet we can still be fully serious about logic, mathematics, and physics.

Organicism, together with its doctrines of formal piety and natural piety, clearly meet this theoretical standard.

§72. The contemporary British philosopher Helen Steward has remarked that

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<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., G. Boolos, and R. Jeffrey, *Computability and Logic* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn.; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

[t]he task [of understanding free will and agency] requires some reflection on the organizational principles of living creatures, for it is only through such reflection ... that we can start to understand where the difference really lies between, on the one hand those things that are true agents, and, on the other, mere machines, entities that nothing will ever be up to, however impressive they may be.... I am exceedingly hopeful that the next few years will see the beginnings of a revolution in our conception of the human person, as philosophical and everyday conceptions of the scientific picture of the world are freed from outdated Newtonian ideas and begin to take more note, both of the complexities of science as it really is and of the undeniable fact of our animal nature.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed, along with Steward, I believe that we are at the beginning of an *Organicist Revolution* in philosophy that is fully comparable to Kant's "Copernican Revolution" in metaphysics.

Kant's Copernican Revolution says that in order to explain rational human cognition and authentic a priori knowledge, we must hold that necessarily, the world structurally conforms to our minds, rather than the converse.

The Organicist Revolution, in turn, says that the real possibility of human consciousness, cognition, caring, rationality, and free agency, and *therefore also the "Copernican" necessary structural conformity of world-to-mind, provided that we actually do exist*, is built essentially into the non-equilibrium thermodynamics of organismic life, and necessarily underdetermined by naturally mechanical processes and facts.

Hence the Organicist Revolution in philosophy that is implied by liberal naturalism and natural piety not only *includes* Kant's Copernican Revolution, but also goes one full revolutionary cycle *beyond* it.

§73. Since the 17th century, philosophical revolutions have happened roughly every one hundred years, and each revolution takes roughly twenty years to unfold:

(i) *the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century anti-Scholastic Rationalist revolution* — Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, but also including *Newtonian scientific mechanism*, followed by an Empiricist reaction,

(ii) *the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century anti-Rationalist, anti-Empiricist Kantian Copernican Revolution and absolute idealism* — Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel,

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<sup>50</sup> H. Steward, *A Metaphysics for Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), pp. 198-199, underlining added.

followed by an anti-Hegelian reaction, including Kierkegaard and neo-Kantianism, then by Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and existential phenomenology,

(iii) *the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century anti-idealist Analytic philosophy revolution*—Frege, Russell, Moore, and early Wittgenstein, followed by Vienna Circle logical empiricism, later Wittgenstein and ordinary language philosophy, then by Quinean and Sellarsian scientific naturalism, and Strawsonian conceptual analysis, Davidson-style semantics of natural language and/or Chomsky-style psycholinguistics, the consciousness-and-cognitive-science craze, and currently, Analytic metaphysics.

Now it has been almost exactly 100 years since the early Analytic anti-idealist philosophical revolution.

So if the historical pattern persists, then we are actually at the beginning of another philosophical revolution, over the next 20 years and fully into the heart of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although it may be difficult to see its precise shape because we do not have the benefit of historical hindsight, or an adequate emotional and reflective distancing from actual historical processes.

§74. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce and Henri Bergson, and then in the 1920s, in direct reaction to the cataclysmic devastation of World War I, there was in fact a short-lived *first wave* of the Organicism Revolution in philosophy: we can find this directly expressed, for example, in Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* in 1907, in Samuel Alexander's *Space, Time, and Deity* in 1920, in John Dewey's *Experience and Nature* in 1925, and in A.N. Whitehead's "philosophy of organism" in *Process and Reality* in 1929.

At roughly the same time, there were also several closely related important dynamicist, organicist, conceptual developments in biology/ethology and physics, including C. Lloyd Morgan's *Emergent Evolution* in 1923, and, in 1944, Erwin Schrödinger's pioneering work on quantum mechanics and the nature of biological life, *What is Life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell*.

Schrödinger's book initiated *non-equilibrium thermodynamics* and *complex systems dynamics*, as developed by Ilya Prigogine and J.D. Bernal in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and alongside this in the 1970s and 1980s, *the autopoietic approach to organismic biology* worked out by Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana.

But except for some suggestive remarks in Wittgenstein's 1953 *Philosophical Investigations* about "forms of life," Hans Jonas's *Phenomenon of Life* in the mid-1960s,<sup>51</sup> and the short-lived Whitehead-inspired Process Philosophy movement in the USA in the late 1960s and early 70s, the first wave of the Organicist Revolution simply crashed onto the barren, rocky shores of 20<sup>th</sup> century professional academic philosophy and was destroyed.

§75. What accounts for the fifteen year gap between Whitehead's *Process and Reality* in 1929 and Schrödinger's *What is Life* in 1944?

And what ultimately destroyed the first wave of the Organicist Revolution in philosophy?

From a critical-historical point of view, I think the answer is obvious: the coming-to-power of the devilishly malevolent, totalitarian, imperialist Nazis in Germany in the 1930s, along with the rise of other forms of totalitarian, imperialist fascism in Japan and Italy, then the second global cataclysm of World War II, then post-war Stalinist Russian communist totalitarian imperialism in eastern Europe, and the Cold War, and then finally, since the fall of the Berlin Wall in the 1980s, almost complete world-domination by what I will call *The Four Horsemen of the New Apocalypse*:<sup>52</sup>

- (i) global corporate *capitalism*,
- (ii) the worldwide rise of political *neoliberalism*,
- (iii) the *Americanization* of world culture via information technology and social media, and
- (iv) an all-encompassing scientific, technocratic philosophical conception of non-human nature and human nature alike, *Natural Mechanism*.

§76. If I'm correct, then in a direct reaction to the economic, political, sociocultural, and spiritual devastations of the New Apocalypse, we are now in the earliest stages of *the second wave of the Organicist Revolution*, which will finally bring to completion what the most brilliant and radical philosophy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century started, before fascism, World War II, the Cold War, and the New Apocalypse all so violently intervened.

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<sup>51</sup> H. Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966).

<sup>52</sup> The Four Horsemen of the Biblical Apocalypse were *Conquest, War, Famine, and Death*.

§77. I said in §65 that I think that processualism is *essentially* the same as organicism, by which I meant that processualism's basic ontological and metaphysical commitments are extensionally equivalent and, up to a moderate level of finegrainedness, even intensionally equivalent, to organicism's basic ontological and metaphysical commitments.

But, at the same time, I do also think that there are two non-essential yet still *ideologically significant* differences between processualism as Dupré and Nicholson—henceforth D&N—have spelled it out, and organicism as I've spelled it out.

(Sidebar note: Here it's important to remember that "ideology" just means "system of ideas, beliefs, or opinions, often in the form of a narrative."

Hence *not all ideology is a bad thing*: on the contrary, some ideologies are good, and some are simply more-or-less neutral, or anyhow in-between, on the moral or sociopolitical value scale.

Only a *hegemonic*—that is, socially predominant and domineering, mind-controlling, institutionally oppressive—ideology, or any otherwise *morally evil* ideology, is a bad thing.)

§78. The **first** ideologically significant difference between processualism as D&N have developed it, and organicism as I've developed it, is that they're committed to a *scientific naturalist* metaphysics of a broadly Quinean sort, whereas I'm committed to a *liberal naturalist* metaphysics of a broadly Kantian sort.

Broadly Quinean scientific naturalism, in turn, entails *epistemic empiricism* and *scientism*, whereas broadly Kantian liberal naturalism entails *epistemic apriorism* and some or another version of *idealism*—namely, *realistic* idealism and *objective* idealism, as per §§61-64 and §68 above.

What's particularly interesting about any version of a *process metaphysics*, including of course D&N's, which says

- (i) that dynamic processes are fundamental in nature, and
- (ii) that things or substances are derivative from them,

however, is that processualism entails the *denial* of natural mechanism.

Yet scientism as it is standardly construed, is fully committed to natural mechanism.

Hence it seems clear that, at the end of the philosophical day, in order to hold a rationally consistent and coherent view, D&N must either give up their processualism or give up their scientism.

§79. And the **second** ideologically significant difference between processualism as developed by D&N, and organicism as I've developed it, is that for them, as far as I can tell, processualism is innocent of all *moral and sociopolitical value* implications, whereas for me, organicism has significant moral and sociopolitical value implications.

Indeed, precisely because the first wave of the organicist revolution was *ultimately destroyed by* violently repressive, regressive, devolutionary politics, the second wave will also be *necessarily accompanied by* a liberationist, progressive, dynamacist politics.

Or in other words, the emancipatory implications of the organicist revolution are *essential* to its philosophically revolutionary character.

§80. Nevertheless, there is currently a serious and widespread *cognitive illusion* standing in the way of the second and decisive wave of the organicist revolution in philosophy, both inside philosophy itself and outside it, in the larger sociocultural and political world.

Clearly, Natural Mechanism and scientism are pervasive default assumptions of mainstream Logical Empiricist/Positivist and post-Positivist analytic philosophy, from 1929, when the Vienna Circle published their revolutionary manifesto, "The Scientific Conception of the World,"<sup>53</sup> through post-World War II Anglo-American philosophy, until today.

But over that period, carried on the back of the The Four Horsemen of the New Apocalypse, Natural Mechanism and scientism have also seeped like *poison gas* (the doomsday weapon of WW I) and exploded like *an atomic bomb* (the doomsday weapon of WW II) into the larger cultural and practical world, especially into the authoritarian politics of the modern state, encompassing not just contemporary Anglo-American culture or contemporary European culture, but also world-culture, and contemporary human life.

From the standpoint of organicism, one can clearly see that scientism and Statism play essentially the same functional role in their respective cultural domains, and that they

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<sup>53</sup> See The Vienna Circle, "The Scientific Conception of the World," available online at <<http://evidencebasedcryonics.org/pdfs/viennacircle.pdf>>. Actually, the manifesto was co-written by Rudolf Carnap, Hans Hahn, and Otto Neurath on behalf of the other members of the Circle.

also mutually support one another, indeed are symbiotic, each taking in the other's conceptual and practical laundry, and each making the other's existence and survival possible.

**On the one hand**, the Natural Mechanism of scientism tells us that we are nothing but deterministic or indeterministic decision-theoretic “biochemical puppets”<sup>54</sup> or “moist robots.”<sup>55</sup>

And **on the other hand**, Statism tells us that we are obligated to obey the coercive commands of governments—powered by sophisticated exact science and its advanced technology, finance, and industry—no matter how absurd or immoral these commands might actually be, without ever daring to think or act or live for ourselves, lest we fall back into the chaotic, evil, pre-scientific, pre-Statist Hobbesian “war of all against all” in the “state of nature,”<sup>56</sup> and lose the marvelous egoistic or collectivist benefits of life as decision-theoretic biochemical puppets or moist robots.

I call this tightly-circular, dyadic, and symbiotic conceptual and practical system that governs the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century sociocultural and political world, *scientistic Statism*.

§81. Scientistic Statism is the real-world manifestation of Francisco Goya's all-too-true observation and warning in the *Los caprichos* (1797–99) that “the sleep of reason breeds monsters” (*el sueño de la razón produce monstruos*).

Fritz Lang's presciently anti-scientistic and anti-Nazi films from 1922 and 1933, *Metropolis* and *The Testament of Doctor Mabuse*, and the genre of classic dystopian science fiction novels, especially including Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1920–21 *We*, Aldous Huxley's 1931 *Brave New World*, George Orwell's 1984 from 1949, Anthony Burgess's 1962 *The Clockwork Orange*, and Philip K. Dick's 1968 *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, and hundreds of films and novels since then, for example, James Cameron's *The Terminator* from 1984—ominous year!—jointly capture the soul-destroying and freedom-crushing spirit of scientistic Statism in its most blatantly authoritarian and totalitarian manifestations.

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<sup>54</sup> See, for example, S. Harris, *Free Will* (New York: Free Press, 2012).

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Dennett, as quoted by J. Schuessler, “Philosophy That Stirs the Waters,” *New York Times*, 29 April 2013, available online at URL = <<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/30/books/daniel-dennett-author-of-intuition-pumps-and-other-tools-for-thinking.html?emc=eta1&r=0>>.

<sup>56</sup> Here it is not irrelevant to remember that Hobbes was Galileo's friend, and later Francis Bacon's private secretary. So the symbiotic connection between scientism and Statism was also present at the very origins of the historical period we now call “the Enlightenment.”



Correspondingly, Hitler's totalitarian Nazi German state and Stalin's totalitarian Communist Russian state are, to be sure, scientific Statism's most brutal, destructive, and horrific instantiations.

Scientific Statism is how the Enlightenment turned into a Terminator.

Nevertheless, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the very same monster-breeding, Terminator-creating symbiotic system of scientific Statism has been and is fully at work worldwide, not merely in countries with blatantly authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, but also in big-capitalist (neo)liberal democratic nation-States, including the most scientifically-sophisticated and technologically-advanced, financially rich, and industrially powerful ones.

Indeed, the richest and most powerful scientific Statist big-capitalist (neo)liberal democratic nation-State in the world, *the United States of America*, the so-called Land of Liberty, dropped two atomic bombs on hundreds of thousands of Japanese non-combatants, co-authored the Cold War nuclear weapons build-up, supports capital punishment as well as the individual and collective right to bear arms, has one of the biggest economic-welfare gaps in the world between the richest and the poorest people, no universal system of free healthcare, and regularly invades other countries, all without rational or moral justification.

And it *also* claims, backed up by coercive violence or the threat of coercive violence, that its citizens must mechanically obey its political authority over all these and many other rationally unjustified and immoral acts, decisions, and laws.

§82. Now according to the Natural Mechanism of scientific Statism, we are really nothing but "biochemical puppets" and "moist robots," that is, nothing but natural automata, or natural machines, whose evolutionary and neurobiological mechanisms continually generate the cognitive illusion that we are free agents.

But if this were true, then we would be in an even worse cognitive place than Pinocchio, a wooden puppet who longed to be a real boy.

We would be nothing but "meat puppets,"<sup>57</sup> dreaming that we are real human persons.

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, the edgy 90s rock band, The Meat Puppets, "We Don't Exist," available online at URL = <<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?p=the+meat+puppets+we+don%27t+exist+youtube&ei=UTF-8&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-003>>.

Indeed, some contemporary philosophers even think that once we are liberated from this serious cognitive illusion, we will finally clearly see that we are *nothing but* meat puppets *and* that “physics makes us free” in a deterministic block universe.<sup>58</sup>

§83. But according to organicism, any philosophical doctrine which holds

(i) that we are nothing but meat puppets, no matter how highly complex and amazing these puppets are, and

(ii) that “physics makes us free” in a deterministic, block universe,

is something straight out of Orwell’s *1984* and *The Terminator*, a stomach-turning intellectual normalization of what is existentially hideous.

Indeed, it is not hard to see the stomach-turning elective affinity between the scientific slogan “physics makes us free,” and the hideously sanctimonious slogan posted over the gates of Auschwitz, Dachau, and other Nazi concentration camps, *Arbeit macht frei*.

How politically expedient it would be for any 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent of “Big Brother” to be able to convince us that our being nothing but highly complex decision-theoretic, deterministic automata *and* our being “free” are the same thing.

On the contrary, then, it is a direct implication of the organicist conception of the world and ourselves *that it is precisely those who believe and want to convince us that we are deterministic (or indeterministic) natural automata* who are in the grip of a serious cognitive illusion, *not* we who conceive of ourselves as purposive, living, essentially embodied, conscious, intentional, caring, really free rational and moral animals.

Thus *organicism finally liberates us from the sleep of reason*.

Leaving aside those two non-trivial ideological differences, however, processualism and organicism are *so totally on the same philosophical surfing team*, ridin’ and slidin’ the crest of the *Big Kahuna* that’s the second wave of the Organicist Revolution.

**§84. Faces, masks, personal identity, and Teshigahara.** In my philosophical downtime between sleeps, I’m seriously interested in Japanese cinema from the 1930s through the 1950s.

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<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., J. Ismael, *How Physics Makes Us Free* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016).

But in summer 2018 I watched a movie from that tradition and era that, for some strange reason, I'd never seen before, or even heard of—although I'd seen at least one other flick, the famous/notorious *Woman in the Dunes*, by the same director, Hiroshi Teshigahara.

In any case, it truly amazed me.

It was Teshigahara's 1966 sci-fi noir/horror film, *The Face of Another*.



Production-wise, it features two first-rate actors familiar to us from several of Kurosawa's best works and many other excellent Japanese films of that period, Tatsuya Nakadai (who plays the King-Lear-counterpart in *Ran*, for example) as Okuyama, and Michiko Ryu (who, for example, plays the third corner of the ravisher-husband-wife triangle in *Rashomon*) as Okuyama's wife.

Cinematically &/or literarily (if that's actually a word), *The Face of Another* clearly echoes *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Invisible Man*, and Robert Wiene's 1920 *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*.

It also reminded me of three other very good flicks on closely similar themes, Robert Florey's 1941 *The Face Behind the Mask*, Georges Franju's 1959/60 *Eyes Without a Face*, and John Frankenheimer's *Seconds*, also from 1966.

But as good as Florey's and Frankenheimer's films are, *The Face of Another* makes them look like two episodes from *Mr Rogers' Neighborhood* by comparison.

Only *Eyes Without a Face* approaches *The Face of Another* in the intensity of its at-once visceral and visual impact, but Franju's film is less philosophically interesting than Teshigahara's.

§85. As you've no doubt already guessed, *The Face of Another* is all about faces, masks, and personal identity.

Plot-wise, it's the story of a chemical engineer, Okuyama, whose face is grotesquely disfigured in a preventable industrial accident, and whose Caligari-like psychiatrist is also brilliantly proficient at constructing prosthetics, including highly lifelike masks, one of which he fashions for Okuyama.

(I use "Caligari-like" in both senses here: first, in the sense of *Caligari's* inner-narrative, according to which Dr C. is a nihilistic amoralist/immoralist doctor who murders by means of his somnambulist proxy Cesare, and second, in the sense of *Caligari's* outer-narrative, according to which Dr C. is in fact a dutiful, benevolent doctor who's been treating Cesare for delusional paranoid schizophrenia.)

Okuyama has been previously wearing *Invisible Man*-style bandages that he never takes off, even at home with his wife, who, although she's clearly trying very, very hard to get used to the (as it seems to *him*, at least) repulsively disabled person who once was the husband she loved, rejects his awkward, sudden sexual advances.

There's also a parallel plot about a young woman with a similarly grotesque disfigurement on *one side* of her face, although the rest of her face is extremely beautiful.



Okuyama is doubly obsessed with the horror of his mangled face and the beauty of his mask—which of course gives him the appearance of Nakadai, a very good-looking actor in real life—and cannot reconcile his belief that he is the very same person he always was, *inside*, with the duality between his horribly disfigured face and his highly handsome mask.

Okuyama eventually experiences a complete fragmentation of his personality into two distinct individuals using the same body—the conventional, moralistic Dr Jekyll-like Man in the Bandages, and the nihilistic, amoralist/immoralist Mr Hyde-like Man in the Mask—and then seduces his own wife as The Man in the Mask, and under the same guise ultimately murders his Caligari-psychiatrist.

Okuyama even rents two different apartments in the same building, one for each personality.

The Man-in-the-Mask seduction of his own wife is particularly bizarre and poignant.

She recognizes him almost instantly, and plays along passionately without saying anything; and, as The Man in the Mask, his love-making is confident and smooth, utterly unlike his fumbling, frustrated Man in the Bandages.

Yet, after what seems to have been very good sex, he's disgusted by her "infidelity" and angrily berates her — then, in counter-anger, she reveals her prior knowledge of his "real" identity, a complete mess of angry misunderstandings!, which only drives them further apart....

In the parallel plot, the young woman seduces her own brother — the only person who truly accepts, understands, and loves her, even despite, and indeed *at least partially because of*, her half-disfigured face — thereby committing incest with him: and then she commits suicide by walking into the ocean.

§86. Teshigahara was an avant-garde experimentalist; and in addition to everything else that's cinematically and philosophically amazing about *The Face of Another*, there are two exceptionally mind-blowing images:

- (i) just before Okuyama kills the psychiatrist, as they walk together, they're suddenly engulfed by a crowd of people, in what appears at first to be a familiar Tokyo street scene, but then we see that all of them are wearing *featureless* masks, and



- (ii) as the young woman's devastated, intensely ashamed brother helplessly watches her walk into the ocean, from the high window of the room of their oceanside inn, too far away to do anything, he's suddenly seared by the sun's

rays and transformed into a slaughtered, cooked, non-human animal (a boar?) hanging from a hook.



§87. I suppose that, nowadays, either Okuyama or the young woman, especially the latter, could have been significantly helped by reconstructive plastic surgery.

But that's almost completely irrelevant to the existential-metaphysical themes that Teshigahara is so brilliantly exploring.

§88. What, more precisely, are these themes?

One way of philosophically framing them is in terms of Hobbes's highly original doctrine that a human person is wholly constituted by the *personating activity* of the human animal – which for Hobbes is a wholly material and essentially mechanical being that is somehow endowed with an egoistic rational psychology – insofar as it effectively mediates between itself and the highly antagonistic larger world, by either creating-and-projecting, or otherwise authorizing,

either (i) a single dominant sociofunctional guise/role, a *persona*,

or (ii) an organized repertoire of distinct *personae*,

or (iii) a mere successive medley of *personae*.<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, one human animal can also personate another human animal, as when the sovereign personates all of the subjects of his kingdom via the social contract.

In any case for Hobbes, a human person is nothing more than, and diachronically identified with, either its single dominant *persona*, or a certain organized repertoire of *personae*, or a mere successive medley of *personae*.

Or otherwise put: as human persons, we are nothing more than, and diachronically identified with, *some or all the social masks of the egoistic mechanical beast that is our particular human animal*.

Hobbes's mechanistic-egoistic-sociofunctionalist theory of persons and their identity over time is philosophically offbeat and weird, even by *post*-modern standards, and all the moreso by *early*-modern standards, hence it is, in effect and paradoxically, *post*-*post*-modern; and above all it is sharply different from the classical substance-metaphysical views of persons and personal identity that diachronically identify a person

either (i) with its persisting or continuing body (*somatic* views, as per Hobbes's *materialist metaphysics* of human beings, although not as per his mechanistic-egoistic-sociofunctionalist theory of persons and personal identity),

or (ii) with its persisting or continuing mind (*mentalistic* or *psychological* views, as per Locke, Hume, Reid, and Parfit),

or (iii) with its immaterial immortal soul (for lack of a better term, let's call these *psycho-noumenal* views, as per Plato in *The Phaedo*, the medieval Scholastics, and Judaeo-Christian theology).

Descartes, of course, held that our persisting or continuing rational mind and our immaterial immortal soul *are one and the same thinking substance*: hence, his view would be the conjunction of a mentalistic/psychological view and a psycho-noumenal view.

§89. Now back to Teshigahara and *The Face of Another*.

The Caligari-psychiatrist is *clearly* a neo-Hobbesian.

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<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., R. Hanna, "Persons and Personation in Hobbes's *Leviathan*," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 21 (1983): 177-191, available online at URL =

<[https://www.academia.edu/16906488/Persons\\_and\\_Personation\\_in\\_Hobbes\\_Leviathan](https://www.academia.edu/16906488/Persons_and_Personation_in_Hobbes_Leviathan)>.



For example, he worriedly (or perhaps: only pretend-worriedly, and with malign intent) thinks out loud to Okuyama about the possible disastrous moral and sociopolitical consequences of his masks.

More specifically, he thinks out loud that, like the *Republic's* thought-experimental user of a Ring of Gyges, and like the protagonist of *The Invisible Man*, everyone would begin to use his artificial masks to commit all sorts of wicked acts, without fear of their identities being revealed, and without fear of legal punishment, thus returning society to *the state of nature*, and *the war of all against all*.

In other words, behind everyone's "natural" masks—that is, their human faces and their social roles—are nothing but mechanical egoistic beasts under the coercive sociopolitical control of the sovereign or government: so, if you give them *artificial* masks, then they'll immediately revert to being nihilistic amoral/immoral beasts.

But of course, whether unintentionally or intentionally, this only serves to plant *firmly* the very idea of neo-Hobbesian nihilistic, amoral/immoral mayhem-&-murder-without-fear-of-punishment in Okuyama's Man-in-the-Mask personality.

§90. More explicitly now, my philosophical reading of *The Face of Another* is this.

Okuyama is a man who has unreflectively absorbed the hegemonic philosophical ideology of a classical *Cartesian* theory of persons and personal identity; yet after his catastrophic injury, and also perhaps triggered by his Caligari-psychiatrist's intentionally insidious suggestions, Okuyama finds himself traumatically thrown into an essentially *neo-Hobbesian* theory of persons and personal identity, epitomized by his Man in the Bandages mask on the one hand, and his handsome Nakadai-mask on the other hand.

Okuyama is clearly a somewhat inflexible personality, a conformist, and a conventional-rule-following thinker and agent—for example, he says that he had raised no worries at all about the clearly highly dangerous operating procedures that led to his preventable accident.

And there is further cinematic evidence of his being somewhat of a control freak, in the fussy way he organizes his two new apartments.

In any case, for whatever reason or reasons, Okuyama simply cannot reflectively, emotionally, or pragmatically reconcile his sharply contrary Cartesian/Dr Jekyll and neo-Hobbesian/Mr Hyde ways of thinking and feeling about himself, and falls apart, incommensurably, into The Man in the Bandages and The Man in the Mask.

§91. The primary women characters in the movie—the half-disfigured young woman and Okuyama’s wife—are much better philosophers, and indeed far saner, than either Okuyama or the Caligari-psychiatrist.

The young woman clearly has an integrated, sane personality.

It’s just that the only person she knows who truly accepts, understands, and loves her, even despite, and indeed at least partially because of (this is revealed in the incest scene), her half-disfigured face, is her own brother, and *incest is taboo*.

So, as per the radical psychiatrists R.D. Laing and Thomas Szasz—whose work Teshigahara had no doubt read, or at least knew about—*it’s contemporary morals and society that are fucked-up, essentially disintegrated and insane*, not the young woman and her brother.

Correspondingly, Okuyama’s wife also clearly has an integrated, sane personality.

She continues to live with Okuyama, despite everything, and also struggles to live a reasonably normal life, has hobbies, etc.

She also philosophizes about the first-personal and sociopolitical functions of women’s make-up, applies these ideas to herself in the seduction episode, and goes through with the seduction in a perfectly self-aware, willing way, intensely hoping that it will bring them both closer together again—as I’ve mentioned above.

She also frankly admits that her single integrated personality contains many different aspects, which seems undeniably true.

And here’s a plausible counterfactual:

Had Okuyama been allowed (or had allowed himself) to live with his wife after the accident, even with the mask, but *without* the Caligari-psychiatrist’s further interference, then eventually he would have been OK.

§92. I’ve briefly spelled out the (in effect and paradoxically) post-post-modern Hobbesian mechanistic-egoistic-sociofunctional theory of persons and personal identity, and also the classical substance-metaphysical views: somatic, mentalistic/psychological, and psycho-noumenal.

But now what do *I* think about persons and their personal identity; and how does this relate to *The Face of Another*?

On my view, *The Minded Animalist* view, as I spell it out and defend it in *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*,

- (i) human persons are *essentially embodied minds* and *rational minded animals*, and
- (ii) they're identical with each and all parts of their "human, all-too-human" rational lives, that is, they're identical with the individual dynamic, forward-directed, spatiotemporal processes of their lives, from the inception of conscious experience in the third trimester of pregnancy through (if they're lucky) infancy, childhood, youth, and rational adulthood, all the way to their inevitable deaths.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, their lives are also *saliently shaped and partially determined by the social institutions they belong to*.

So, roughly speaking, if you combined the disfigured young woman's fundamental way of thinking about herself and encountering her world—her existential metaphysics—with Okuyama's wife's existential metaphysics, then the result would be *The Minded Animalist* view.

§93. But what are *Minded Animalism's* existential-metaphysical *payoffs*?

The *Minded Animalist* view construes human persons *neither* as nothing but social masks, *nor* as nothing but their animal bodies, *nor* as nothing but their minds/psychologies, *nor* as nothing but immaterial eternal souls, but instead as their *whole lives as a single dynamic conscious, rational essentially embodied process, shaped by all their social interactions*.

Therefore, it's a huge mistake for people either to *reduce* themselves to nothing but a single static substance of some sort or an atomistic series of such substances, or to *externalize* themselves by fetishizing a single social mask or by melting away into a repertoire or successive medley of different social masks.

Okuyama is impaled on the horns of this *reduce/externalize* dilemma about human personhood and personal identity.

From the standpoint of *Minded Animalism*, however, as difficult as it might have been in actual practice, Okuyama should have found a way of not merely *reconciling* himself

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<sup>60</sup> Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2—Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. chs. 6-7.

to his mangled face, but *affirming* it, and living *at least with his wife in an everyday way* without bandages or a mask.

Perhaps they could have used the mask during lovemaking, just as many other couples use a vibrator or other sex-toys: indeed, his wife had already shown in the seduction episode that she was perfectly comfortable with *that* kind of love-game.

And perhaps he could have negotiated the larger social world by sometimes using his bandages and sometimes his mask, depending on context.

Whatever.

The point is that he himself, and the two of them together, could have and should have *managed* it.

Then in turn, all these experiences, individual actions, and collective actions in a thoroughly nonideal natural and social world would have essentially *belonged to Okuyama, to his whole life-process, and to no else*, just in case he could also freely *take full responsibility* for each and all of them.

So in that sense, according to The Minded Animalism theory, human persons and their identities, against the backdrop of the social institutions that shape them, are *existential-moral-rational achievements, and always in some sort of solidarity with others*.

Otherwise put, *we are the sole authors, and yet also to some extent the collaborative co-authors, of our own lives, their meaning, and their value*.

§94. But of course, if Teshigahara had tried to say and show *all that*, then *The Face of Another* would have been a *very, very* boring movie, instead of the absolutely brilliant and deeply disturbing existential-metaphysical-themed masterwork it is.

**§95. The philosophy of old age.** Back in June, some dude named “Anthony Bourdain” died by suicide.

I gathered from friends and the internet that he was a big deal—some sort of celebrity chef and Hunter-S.-Thompson-esque media personality and writer, with a twist of existentialism and a dash of progressive politics—but believe it or not, I’d never actually heard of him before the day he died.

This is probably because I haven’t watched TV for the last 20 years or so—as you know, I mostly just shelter in my barrel.

But I did notice that Bourdain was “only” 61, namely, the same age I am now.

It seems he had longstanding problems with depression; and/or maybe he simply couldn't deal with getting old; who knows?

In any case, all that set me thinking about old age and its depredations, slings, and arrows—not for the first time, of course.

Is there a philosophy of old age?

Well, there is now.

§96. I'm going to start with T.S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas.

Here's what Eliot wrote in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*:

I grow old ... I grow old ...  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?  
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.  
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.  
I have seen them riding seaward on the waves  
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back  
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea  
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.<sup>61</sup>

And here's what Thomas wrote in “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night”:

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,

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<sup>61</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” in *T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems: 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), pp. 13-17, at p. 17, available online at URL =

<<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/44212/the-love-song-of-j-alfred-prufrock>>.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.<sup>62</sup>

And here's a basic philosophical thesis:

Old age, senescence, old-fart-dom, whatever you want to call it, is all about *the natural and subjectively experiential human life-process during the advanced stages of our personal development, dying, and death.*

So that's what I'm going to focus on in this set of notes.

(No, I'm not going to complain about young people—I mean anyone under 60—and how shallow they all are these days—especially the really good-looking and talented ones.

Nor am I going to whinge about my aches and ailments, as fascinating as that might otherwise be.)

§97. It is simply a brute fact of human life that we are always getting closer to what Kant aptly called “the end of all things,” in a 1794 essay of the same name—he was born in 1724 and died in 1804, so he was in his 70s at the time—whether this will be a purely natural ending to everything human, or a man-made Apocalypse, like something out of Neville Shute's grim 1957 novel, *On the Beach*.

But at a first-person level, it is also a brute fact that from the very moment I begin to live as the conscious subject of my own real personal life, I am always getting closer to the cessation or end of that life.

Therefore, I am always getting closer to my own death.

In that sense, my life-process is *identically the same as* the process of my dying.

My own life is *also* my own death.

This recognition, as they say, concentrates the attention.

§98. What is death?

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<sup>62</sup> D. Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night,” in O. Williams (ed.), *The Pocket Book of Modern Verse* (New York: Washington Square, 1973), p. 486, available online at URL = <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/do-not-go-gentle-good-night>.

Minimally, the English natural language term “death,” and correspondingly the concept of death, mean “the cessation or end of life.”

But unfortunately for those of us who live and die, who are also conscious and self-conscious, and who are autonomous intentional agents, therefore able to think about our own lives and deaths—i.e., all rational minded human animals, i.e., all normal adult real human persons—the concept of death is crucially ambiguous, in at least *five* different ways.

§99. The **first** crucial ambiguity about the concept of death concerns *the type of life* we are talking about when we say that life ceases or ends:

- (i) inorganic life,
- (ii) organic life,
- (iii) minded animal life, and
- (iv) real personal life.

Correspondingly, there are four different sub-types of death:

- (i\*) inorganic death,
- (ii\*) organic death,
- (iii\*) minded animal death, and
- (iv\*) real personal death.

Many things have inorganic lives.

This includes artificial or humanly-fabricated machines like automobiles, dishwashers, and refrigerators—indeed, these are often sold along with a legally binding “lifetime warranty”—but also more or less large scale non-artificial natural mechanisms like weather systems, tropical storms, mountains, mountain ranges, planets, stars, and galaxies.

Principles of complex systems dynamics and evolutionary theory apply to their cosmic emergence, development, and eventual destruction.

Such things therefore all encounter inorganic deaths at the end or cessation of their inorganic lives.

Indeed, even the universe as a whole can, at least in principle, have an ultimate inorganic “heat-death,” via entropy.

In this sense, death is the cessation or end of something’s characteristic mechanical operations or, more generally, the cessation or end of its inorganic complex thermodynamics.

Let us suppose that organic activity, as not only complex thermodynamic, but also self-organizing, hence purposive and self-guiding, and minimally spontaneous, hence underdetermined by what has preceded it and creative or productive, is not only *epistemically or conceptually* distinct, but also *metaphysically distinct*, from the activity of natural mechanisms.<sup>63</sup>

As Kant compactly puts it in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, “a mere machine ... has only a **motive** power, while the organized being possesses in itself a **formative** power” (*CPJ* 5: 374).

Then all organisms have categorically and specifically *organic lives*, including micro-organisms, plants, and animals.

It is not inconceivable that there could even be entire planets possessing organismic (and indeed minded) lives, like the one imagined in Stanislaw Lem’s brilliant science fiction novel *Solaris*, and represented visually in Andrei Tarkovsky’s equally brilliant science fiction film *Solaris*, the eponymous Solaris.

In any case, all *minded animals*, as living organisms, have categorically and specifically organic lives.

And since all real human persons are also minded animals, so too do all real human persons have such organic lives.

But, obviously, not everything that has an organic life—say, a unicellular micro-organism, or a plant—has either a minded animal life or a real human personal life.

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<sup>63</sup> See Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2—Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. chs. 1-3.



So there is an important difference between, on the one hand, the cessation or end of an organic life, *per se*, and on the other hand, the cessation or end of either a minded animal life or a real human personal life.

In particular, the real human personal life of a creature can temporarily or permanently cease or end, while its organic life or minded animal life continues

- (i) temporarily, for example, in cases of fainting, unconsciousness, or a coma;
- (ii) permanently in one sense, while organic life but not minded animal life continues, for example, in cases of persistent vegetative states produced by an artificially-induced or disease-based brain-trauma, as in the famous Karen Ann Quinlan, Nancy Cruzan, and Terry Schiavo cases; and
- (iii) permanently in another sense, while organic life and minded animal life both continue, for example, in cases of degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's, as in the famous case of the philosopher Iris Murdoch.

And on the other hand, at least in principle, real human personal life can continue across even very long temporary gaps in organic life and minded animal life, for example, in cryogenic re-animation.

Inorganic death, organic death, and the death of the minded animal, while philosophically important for various reasons, and by no means irrelevant to morality, nevertheless are not of *primary* moral importance.

Only the deaths of *real persons* are of primary moral importance.

Moreover, at the very center of what I've called *The Web of Mortality*,<sup>64</sup> are the lives and deaths of rational *human* minded animals and real *human* persons.

Furthermore, and even more radically, I hold that all meanings, truths, reasons, principles, and values of any kind, whether merely relative values or absolute values, are in the world just because rational human minded animals or real human persons *are* in the real world—or at least just because rational minded animals or real persons *really can be* in the world.

Let us call this *the real-human-person-centered metaphysics of moral value*.

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<sup>64</sup> See Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 3—Kantian Ethics and Human Existence*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. chs. 3-6.

Now of all the minded animals and real persons we know, we ourselves are the only ones we have encountered, so far, that are also what I'll call *Kantian* human minded animals.

I am talking about precisely the sort of human minded animals that are capable of actively reading and understanding these sentences, who are self-conscious, who are autonomous intentional agents, and who in turn are precisely those human minded animals that are also capable of reflecting on the meaning of their own lives.

Insofar as the real-human-person-centered metaphysics of value is true, then since conscious, self-conscious, autonomous agential human minded animals are at the very center of the class of real human persons, it follows that *Kantian real human persons like us* are at the very center of everything that really and truly matters: in that special metaphysical sense, *the Universe revolves around us*.

By sharp contrast, as regards caring, value, and what really and truly matters, the Universe has *no* point of view.

For the rest of this set of notes on the philosophy of old age, then, I will focus exclusively on the deaths of Kantian human minded animals—*real human persons like us*.

The deaths of such real human persons are categorically distinct from organic deaths per se and also from the deaths of minded animals per se—in the dual sense

- (i) that both organic life and minded animal life can continue even though the life of the Kantian real human person like us has permanently ceased or ended, and
- (ii) that both organic life and minded animal life can temporarily end or cease without the death of the real human person like us—even though, of course, every Kantian real human person is necessarily also a living organism and a minded animal.

**§100.** The **second** crucial ambiguity about the concept of death concerns *the temporal duration* of the cessation or end of life, and in particular, whether it is

- (i) temporary, or
- (ii) permanent.

Now it is obvious that there can be temporary cessations or endings of rational consciousness—for example, fainting, unconsciousness, or a coma—that are not also permanent.

Correspondingly if, as seems easily conceivable, were the technology and science of *cryogenics* to be developed somewhat further, then there could be even very long temporary cessations or ends of the organic lives of Kantian real human persons—the temporary deaths of their living bodies—that are neither the permanent deaths of their minded animals nor the permanent deaths of the Kantian real human persons they are.

For in these easily conceivable scenarios, when the body of the dead real human person is reanimated, then the Kantian real human person's life is also resumed, just as it would be after a fainting fit, unconsciousness, or coma.

What seems far less easily conceivable is the supposed possibility of *reincarnation*, that is, the possibility of a Kantian real human person's body's suffering a permanent organic death, therefore also being temporarily dead as a real human person, but then resuming their real human personal life in a new body.

According to the Minded Animalist theory of the nature of personhood and personal identity that I've worked out and defended in *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, reincarnation is strongly metaphysically (and more precisely, synthetic a priori) impossible.<sup>65</sup>

This is because preserving the diachronic identity of a minded human animal's living body is a constitutively necessary condition of real human personal identity.

But in order to keep things *relatively* simple here, I don't want to re-argue these somewhat controversial claims now; so for the specific purposes of this set of notes, I will simply bracket any further discussion of reincarnation.

In any case, the basic point I am making here is secured by the real possibility of *reanimation*.

Again for the specific purposes of these notes, I am going to concentrate almost exclusively on the *permanent* deaths of real human persons like us; that is, I am going to

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<sup>65</sup> Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2—Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, [PREVIEW](#), chs. 6-7.

concentrate almost exclusively on the annihilation or extinction of any such person as a rational, conscious, and self-conscious subject, forever.

I say “almost exclusively,” because a little later on I will briefly critically consider the concept of immortality, or more precisely, the concept of an sempiternally endless or infinite real human personal life.

But aside from that brief discussion, and unless otherwise specified, I will be talking only about the permanent deaths of real human persons like us.

**§101.** The **third** crucial ambiguity about the concept of death is in many ways the most important one.

This concerns the moral-metaphysical distinction between

(i) the *state* of my actually being dead (which I will call “death<sub>s</sub>”), and

(ii) the *process* of my dying (which I will call “death<sub>p</sub>”).

The state of my actually being dead, my death<sub>s</sub>, necessarily occurs immediately *after* the process of my dying, my death<sub>p</sub>.

Now since I am concentrating almost exclusively on the permanent deaths of Kantian real human persons, then my kind of death<sub>s</sub>, once it has occurred, lasts forever.

The process of my dying, my death<sub>p</sub>, by sharp contrast, necessarily occurs *during* my life as a real human person.

Otherwise put, death<sub>p</sub> is necessarily *infra*-life, whereas death<sub>s</sub> is necessarily *post*-life.

Many serious philosophical, existential, and moral confusions have been created by failing to distinguish between death<sub>s</sub> and death<sub>p</sub>.

For example, Lucretius famously wrote this:

Look back at time ... before our birth. In this way Nature holds before our eyes the mirror of our future after death. Is this so grim, so gloomy?<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, as quoted in S. Luper, “Death,” section 3.2, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), E.N. Zalta (ed.), available online at URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/death/>.

In many other words, Lucretius asserted in his not merely compact but *sub-compact*, poetic way that

since (i) the time prior to the beginning of my life and the time after the permanent cessation or end of my life are perfectly symmetrical and in effect metaphysical mirrors of one another, and

since (ii) we are never (or at least almost never) concerned about the fact that we did not exist before we were born,

then (iii) we should not be concerned about the time after we die, that is, we have no good reason to fear our own deaths.

But Lucretius was simply *wrong* about this symmetry-or-mirroring thesis, so his argument is unsound.

The pre-natal non-existence of a real human person is *essentially* different from her death<sub>s</sub>, precisely because her death<sub>s</sub> is *necessarily post-life*, and therefore it *inherently presupposes her actual death<sub>p</sub>*, whereas her pre-natal non-existence is necessarily *not* post-life, and therefore it does *not* moral-metaphysically include her actual death<sub>p</sub>.

But that's by no means the worst of the confusions that have been created by failing to distinguish between death<sub>s</sub> and death<sub>p</sub>.

Most non-philosophers who think about death, and many or even most philosophers who have written about death, have consistently failed to draw the distinction between the state of actually being dead and the process of dying, and have therefore fallen into serious confusions about whether death is always a bad thing for the one who died, or not.

Sometimes they are talking about death<sub>s</sub>; sometimes they are talking about death<sub>p</sub>; and sometimes it is crucially unclear precisely *which* kind of death they are talking about.

In any case, as we will also see, it is entirely possible and perfectly coherent to hold

(i) that a real human person's death<sub>s</sub>, by its very nature, is necessarily *neither* a good thing *nor* a bad thing for the one who dies (hence never a good thing and never a bad thing for the one who dies),

while at the same time also holding

(ii) that a real human person's death<sub>p</sub>, by its very nature, is *sometimes* a good thing for the one who dies and also *sometimes* a bad thing for the one who dies.

§103. These points lead on naturally to the **fourth** crucial ambiguity about the concept of death.

This concerns the fact that a Kantian real human person's permanent death, whether this is her death<sub>s</sub> or her death<sub>p</sub>, can be considered and/or evaluated

either (i) from *the inside*, that is, from the first-person point of view,

or (ii) from *the outside*, that is, from the third-person point of view.

Following David Suits, who originally discovered this deeply important distinction—or in any case, who first formulated it clearly<sup>67</sup>—I will say that whenever a Kantian real human person's death<sub>s</sub> or her death<sub>p</sub> is considered and/or evaluated from the first-person point of view, then this is considering or evaluating some fact that is *for* the one who died, and therefore an *intrinsic* or internal fact with respect to that Kantian real human person.

But by sharp contrast, whenever a Kantian real human person's death<sub>s</sub> or her death<sub>p</sub> is considered or evaluated from the third-person point of view, then this is considering or evaluating some fact that is only *about* the one who died, and therefore at best an *extrinsic* or external fact with respect to that Kantian real human person.

The main reason this distinction is so important is that although a Kantian real person's death<sub>s</sub> or death<sub>p</sub> can involve various good or bad facts *about* her, from the third-person point of view, it does *not* follow that any of these facts is a good or bad fact *for* her.

So apart from Suits, few philosophers who have discussed the nature of death have been able to recognize that although there may be good arguments showing that the permanent death<sub>s</sub> of a Kantian real human person is always, or almost always, a bad thing *about* that person—because, had she lived, she would have had more good experiences, hence her permanent death<sub>s</sub>, in a certain sense, is a “deprivation” for a counterfactual counterpart of that person—it does *not* follow that the permanent death<sub>s</sub> of a Kantian real person is ever a bad thing *for* that person.

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<sup>67</sup> D. Suits, “Why Death is Not Bad for the One Who Died,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38 (2001): 69-84.

This is simply because death<sub>s</sub> has no personal subject for whom *anything* can ever be a good thing or a bad thing.

Moreover, not even Suits has recognized that although it is quite true that the permanent death<sub>s</sub> of a Kantian real human person is never either a good thing or a bad thing for the one who dies, simply because death<sub>s</sub> has no personal subject, nevertheless it does *not* follow that the death<sub>p</sub> of that very person is not also a good thing or a bad thing *for* that very person.

By its very nature, death<sub>p</sub> has a living personal subject who is also in the process of dying; and, as I will argue later, very often or even usually the death<sub>p</sub> of a Kantian real human person is, tragically, a bad thing for that very person.

§104. And this brings me to the **fifth** and final crucial ambiguity about the concept of death.

This concerns the question of *whose death* is at issue, and in particular whether it is

- (i) *my own* death, or
- (ii) *someone else's* death,

that is at issue.

The difference between my own death and the death of another Kantian real human person is fundamental, whether we are thinking about death<sub>s</sub> or death<sub>p</sub>.

This, in turn, is because although we necessarily *have* first-person access to the contents of our own lives, we necessarily do *not* have first-person access to the contents of the lives of other Kantian real human persons.

Otherwise, we would *be* those other persons.

Differently put, “the problem of other minds” applies every bit as directly to the *deaths* of Kantian real human persons as it applies to the *lives* of such persons.

Necessarily, by the nature of my essentially embodied mind, I am both pre-reflectively consciously aware and also self-consciously directly aware of my own real personal life, but not of anyone else's real personal life.

It follows that my own death, whether it is my death<sub>s</sub> or my death<sub>p</sub>, *necessarily is no one else's death*.

In this sense, we necessarily die alone, just as we necessarily live our lives alone.

We are, to be sure, always living our lives alongside others' real human personal lives, and in more or less direct interaction and solidarity with others's real human personal lives.

So in that sense, we always live our lives *with* other real persons' lives.

But we do not *live* those lives, only our own.

Mutatis mutandis, we are always dying alongside the deaths of other real human persons like us, in more or less direct interaction and solidarity with those others' deaths, and in that sense we are always dying *with* the deaths of others.

But we do not *die* those deaths, only our own.

**§105.** Death<sub>s</sub>, the state of being dead, is the same as the permanent cessation or end of a Kantian real human person's *consciousness*.

Why so?

The answer is that, since consciousness is necessarily and completely neurobiologically embodied in a suitably complex living organismic system, the permanent cessation or end of organismic life in our own animal bodies necessarily entails the permanent cessation or end of our consciousness, which in turn necessarily entails the permanent cessation or end of our personal lives.

In short, death<sub>s</sub> is a three-way *thanatological identity*:

The end of my living animal body = the end of my essentially embodied consciousness = the end of my life.

**§106.** To be sure, there are some real-world cases of full resuscitation after bodily processes have actually shut down, when the overall complex dynamic system of the human organism remains temporarily in a hiatus-state, capable of reactivation.



And a temporary life after the death<sub>s</sub> of the body — say, a reanimation after the cryogenic preservation of one's corpse — is indeed not only conceptually or logically possible, and synthetically or really possible, but also nomologically possible.

Furthermore, it may also *seem* that a sempiternally endless or infinite Kantian real human person life after the actual death<sub>s</sub> of the human body, or even without any actual death<sub>s</sub> of the body — immortality — is conceptually or logically possible.

But even so, that appearance of conceptual or logical possibility has nothing directly to do with the real metaphysics, epistemology, or ethics of Kantian real human persons.

Indeed, and sharply to the contrary, the appearance of the possibility of human immortality is nothing but a powerfully deceptive cognitive illusion: *the very idea of human immortality is incoherent and a priori impossible.*

Then it a priori necessarily flows from the nature of a Kantian real human person's life that she will die, and that her death<sub>s</sub> will be, just like her personal life and her death<sub>p</sub>, once and forever:

O, I die, Horatio;  
 The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
 I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
 But I do prophesy the election lights  
 On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
 So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
 Which have solicited. The rest is silence.<sup>68</sup>

**§107.** One striking consequence of this conception of death is that my own death<sub>s</sub> cannot be subjectively experienced by me.

My own conscious, intentional, caring, rational human life will permanently cease or end, but I will never subjectively experience the state of being dead.

For death<sub>s</sub> has no personal subject.

As Wittgenstein puts it in these two propositions from the *Tractatus*:

6.431 [I]n death ... the world does not change, but ceases.

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<sup>68</sup> W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act V, scene ii.

6.4311 Death is not an event of life. Death is not lived through. If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present. Our life is endless in the way that the visual field is without limit.<sup>69</sup>

In other words, our own conscious, intentional, caring, self-conscious, rational human minded animal lives will go on and on and on—until they simply end forever.

Full stop, and “the rest is silence.”

Each such forever-silencing full stop on a conscious, intentional, caring, self-conscious, rational human minded animal life will be essentially unique, and thus my own death<sub>s</sub> will be essentially unique: it will be *my very own* death<sub>s</sub>.

In that sense, as I mentioned already, each of us necessarily dies alone.

This does not mean that other people and loved ones cannot be gathered around us as we finish the process of dying, or that things cannot positively or negatively affect us in an extrinsic or third-person sense after we die—both of these are really possible, and frequently actual.

It means only that my death<sub>s</sub>, just like my death<sub>p</sub>, and just like my own life, is necessarily my very own.

Out of the materials given me, over which I had little or no control, in a highly-structured, thoroughly nonideal world that I did not choose or create, *I freely shaped my life and my death, using just those materials and within just those constraints.*

So it is my very own, no one else's, and nothing else's.

Hence my death<sub>s</sub> has a “my very own-ness” in essentially the same sense that necessarily a single-authored book written by me is *my very own book*, even despite all the grateful acknowledgments to others who helped it come into existence, and even despite its readers, who can think about my book in ways over which I have no control, and who can keep my book alive even when I am not.

**§108.** In any case, my very own essentially unique death<sub>s</sub> cannot be subjectively experienced by me either as an intentional content or as an intentional object.

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<sup>69</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 185.

For if my death<sub>s</sub> were either an intentional content or an intentional object of my subjective experience—as in so-called “after-death experiences”—then obviously that would imply the existence of my subjective experiences, and thus imply the existence of my own conscious, intentional, caring, rational human minded animal life.

On the contrary, however, my permanent death<sub>s</sub> is my permanent annihilation and non-existence.

Similarly a full stop, or period, is the end of a sentence and inherently belongs to the sentence as a proper part of its syntactic structure, but is not itself one of the words or phrases in the sentence.

Punctuation formally or structurally terminates what is said by a sentence, but by itself does not say anything.

So too, my very own essentially unique death<sub>s</sub> will be a termination that is cognitive, affective, practical, and vital *syntax*, but not cognitive, affective, practical, and vital *semantics*.

Thus my very own death<sub>s</sub> will belong to the immanent structure of my conscious, intentional, caring, rational human minded animal life, but not to its vital stuffing, or occurrent mental content and objects.

Or in other words, my death<sub>s</sub> is nothing more and nothing less than *the immanent terminating form* of my very own life.

It confers a definite, defining constraint and limit on the scope and shape of my entire life.

It permanently *fixes* that very scope and that very shape.

It makes my entire life *whatever it was for me*, once and forever.

**§109.** These points all hold as much for one’s own *natural death*, for example, one involving the gradual decline of my powers and well-being in old age, as they do for the various possible *strange deaths* arising from the well-known personal identity considerations and thought-experiments that professional academic philosophers know and love—fictional “transporter” cases, fictional “pseudo-Napoleon” cases, and fictional “Lefty” and “Righty” fission cases—that is, simultaneous left-brain and right-brain transplants from real persons with split-brains/neocommissurotomy, into two new recipient bodies—and so-on, and so forth.

Thus when I am the split-brain case who is replaced by Lefty and Righty, *my very own* life ceases, full stop, and *their* lives begin.

I do not subjectively experience my own death<sub>s</sub>, because death is necessarily never subjectively experienced, yet it is a definite limit on my life just the same, at some definite time *t*.

Lefty and Righty, both living at time  $t + n$ , each share all my memories, together with further and different present conscious experiences in different living animal bodies.

But neither of them is *me*, because my very own life ended at *t* and thus all of my subjective experiences full-stopped right there.

The spatiotemporal, neurobiological, and phenomenological structures of my very own life are all intrinsic to my real human personhood.

Indeed, I am just my complete, finite, and unique life—so when it full-stops, necessarily I full-stop too.

The natural or objective time of my death<sub>s</sub>, necessarily occurring after my death<sub>p</sub>, is the literal end of my personal or subjective time, the literal end of my “having the time of my life.”

So finite durations of time and my death, whether it is my death<sub>p</sub> or my death<sub>s</sub>, are a priori necessarily connected.

In this way, one’s own death<sub>s</sub> is nothing more and nothing less than an immanent structural and inherently temporal terminating constraint and limit on the occurrent mental content of one’s own complete, finite, and unique rational human minded animal life, again like punctuation at the end of a sentence, but also with a metaphysical time-stamp that completes and rounds off all the events of a single personal life.

As they say, time is of the essence.

**§110.** Failing to recognize this, however, we naively imaginatively project a first-person standpoint on death<sub>s</sub> from the *other* side of this time-stamped limit, thereby generating the strong impression that death<sub>s</sub> somehow strangely belongs to the content of our lives, like a ghostly afterword or postscript.

But this is a *cognitive illusion* with serious existential and moral implications.

This strong naïve impression that death<sub>s</sub> is a ghostly “event of life” that is, or anyhow can be, “lived through,” in turn, gives rise to the even more serious *conceptual illusion* that personal *immortality* is a coherent notion.

But in fact, we do not have the slightest idea how the concept of sempiternally endless temporal extension or infinity applies to the concept of the life of a Kantian real human person, far less to the concept of the life of any other sort of real human person.

So it also turns out that immortality is a priori impossible for creatures like us.

§111. Here are three theses about the morality of one’s own death.

**First**, the concept of an *untimely death<sub>p</sub>* is fully meaningful and also has actual instances.

**Second**, an untimely death<sub>p</sub> is necessarily an inherently bad thing for the Kantian real human person who dies in this way, regardless of the other ways in which it might also be bad—for example, in an intrinsic or first-person way, by way of its bodily painfulness, or, in an extrinsic relational or third-person way, by way of its being contrary to the person’s self-interest, or its having bad consequences for others.

This is precisely because, in the process of dying, that Kantian real human person fails to achieve or realize what I call *principled authenticity* (that is, an emotionally and cognitively coherent Kantian real human person, over time, whose agency is inherently guided by non-hedonistic, non-egoistic, non-consequentialist principles) at least partially or to some degree.

Hence by dying in this way she has, tragically, to that extent, *wasted her life*.

**Third** and corresponding to the other two theses, I also hold a thesis I will call **Death’s Excluded Middle**:

All death<sub>p</sub> of Kantian rational human minded animals are either *untimely*, in that they are inherently bad for the Kantian real human person who dies, or else they are *timely*, in that they are inherently good for the Kantian real human person who dies, and they are never both untimely and timely.

§112. If these three theses are correct, then necessarily there are no death<sub>p</sub> that are neutral or null with respect to intrinsic moral value, understood in terms of principled authenticity.

This is precisely because the subject of death<sub>p</sub> is necessarily always a Kantian real human person, and such creatures are necessarily never neutral or null with respect to intrinsic moral value, understood in terms of principled authenticity.

From these three theses, then, it follows immediately that

either (i) all deaths<sub>p</sub> are untimely and thus inherently bad for the Kantian real human person who dies,

or else (ii) only some deaths<sub>p</sub> are untimely, because some other deaths<sub>p</sub> are, on the contrary, timely deaths and thus an inherently good thing for the Kantian real human person who dies.

As I have indirectly indicated already, my view is that (i) is false and (ii) is true.

Hence we should all be endeavoring with all our hearts, throughout our lives, to have timely deaths<sub>p</sub>.

That is the core thought of what I call *The Rage-Against-the-Dying-of-the-Light Theory* of the nature and moral value of one's own death.

§113. And here's more of the rationale behind that core thought.

The process of a real human person's life is identically the same as the process of her dying.

Hence a real human person's life is also her own death<sub>p</sub>.

Now the ultimate meaning or purpose of a Kantian real human personal life is to achieve or realize principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

Therefore, to the extent that one *fails* to achieve or realize principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, then death<sub>p</sub> is a bad thing for the person who dies.

Many people's natural deaths<sub>p</sub> are untimely in the sense that they occur in lives that do not exemplify principled authenticity at all.

But this is not necessary, it is merely widespread.

For not every natural death<sub>p</sub> is an untimely one.

One's own natural death<sub>p</sub>, that is, one's own life up to the very moment of the beginning of the permanent condition of one's own death<sub>s</sub>, *can* exemplify principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

Thus we have no sufficient reason to fear an untimely natural death<sub>p</sub>, because as long as we are wholeheartedly trying to achieve or realize principled authenticity, then in fact we are *already* achieving or realizing principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

Then we are already *on the way*, already *embarked*, on the achievement or realization of principled authenticity.

And as long as you are alive, sentient, and sapient, you can always change your life.

So as long as you are alive, sentient, and sapient, *then there is always enough time left for everything that really matters.*

Therefore, you ought to "rage, rage against the dying of the light."

§114. This is further demonstrated by the very obvious fact that someone can have-a-life and be-the-subject-of-a-life, yet fail ever to choose or do anything meaningful or that achieves or realizes principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, and either just *drift listlessly* towards death<sub>s</sub> or (what is perhaps even worse) *busily busy-bee* towards death<sub>s</sub>.

— Always making more and more money, more and more honey, always embodying The Spirit of the Beehive, always being the good little capitalist boss, professional, or worker do-bee of the post-World War II coercive authoritarian neoliberal nation-State.

In other words, it is really possible *to waste your life.*

And that is a *tragedy*, in the specifically *modern European*, post-15<sup>th</sup> century sense of that classical Greek and Aristotelian notion, which typically involves the actuality or real possibility of greatness of character in a certain individual, a correspondingly great character flaw in that person, a terrible downfall for them as a direct result of that great character flaw, and some sort of cathartic experience for the witnesses of this downfall, and so-on.

§115. The most vivid pre-20<sup>th</sup> century literary expression of this modern European tragedy is Shakespeare's Hamlet:

Who would fardels bear,  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
 But that the dread of something after death,  
 The undiscovered country, from whose bourn  
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
 With this regard their currents turn awry  
 And lose the name of action.<sup>70</sup>

As Hamlet's fictional case shows, it is possible, tragically, to lack all purity of heart, lack all wholeheartedness, and lack all single-mindedness, and yet also to be fully self-conscious of this very lack.

Hamlet is the ultra-self-conscious Prince of Denmark, the ultra-self-conscious Prince of Double-Mindedness, and the ultra-self-conscious Prince of Losing Heart alike.

It is self-evident that Hamlet's sort of life and Hamlet's sort of death<sub>p</sub> are both inherently bad and tragic, not inherently good.

Thus it is self-evident, by practical negation as it were, that what I will call a *Contra-Hamlet's* sort of life and a *Contra-Hamlet's* sort of death<sub>p</sub> would both be inherently good and sublime, not inherently bad and tragic.

**§116.** According to my view, *the life of a Contra-Hamlet* is a life in which principled authenticity is achieved or realized, at least partially or to some degree.

Correspondingly, in order to make the very idea of a life of principled authenticity more concrete, we can think here of Socrates as represented by Plato in the *Dialogues*; of the heroically absurd "Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance," Don Quixote, in Cervantes's *Don Quixote*; of Kierkegaard's "Knight of Faith" in *Fear and Trembling*; of the "Idiot" Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*; of Renée Falconetti's brilliant portrayal of Joan of Arc in Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*; of Takashi Shimura's equally brilliant portrayal of the dying civil servant Kanji Watanabe in Kurosawa's *Ikiru*; and also of the real-life, therefore "human, all too human," and thus

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<sup>70</sup> W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act III, scene i.



“sinner-saints,” but still genuine moral heroes Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Mother Teresa.

And there are *many, many* unsung others just like them.<sup>71</sup>

All of these Contra-Hamlets and sinner-saints, whether fictional or real-life, died deaths<sub>p</sub> that were inherently good, sublime, and timely, just as they lived.

So we should all be trying with all our hearts to live and die like them, in our own unique contexts and in our own unique ways, in the time remaining to us.

§117. What I hold, then, is that *not all* deaths<sub>p</sub> are untimely, and that *at least some* deaths<sub>p</sub> are timely and therefore an inherently good thing for the Kantian real human person who dies.

Moreover, I hold that a Kantian real human person’s death<sub>p</sub> *D* is timely if and only if

either (i) *D* is an inherently good thing for the Kantian real human person who dies, because continued life would be in some way personhood-destroying for them (and perhaps this was Anthony Bourdain’s rationale for suicide— who knows?),

or (ii) *D* is not only an inherently good thing for the Kantian real human person who dies, but also a supremely good thing for her, because by means of her process of dying she achieves or realizes principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

In cases that fall under (i), death is an intrinsically good thing for the Kantian rational human minded animal who dies, precisely because their dignity as a real human person is thereby preserved in the face of the real threat of its loss or irrevocable degradation.

Again, this might have been true in Bourdain’s case, for all I know.

In cases that fall under (ii), death is also the highest inherently good thing for the Kantian real human person who dies<sub>p</sub>, precisely because her ultimate end or purpose as a real human person with dignity is thereby achieved or realized, at least partially or to some degree.

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<sup>71</sup> See, e.g., R. Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell* (London: Penguin, 2009); and L. MacFarquhar, *Strangers Drowning* (New York: Penguin Books, 2016).

This, in turn, is because principled authenticity is the Highest or Supreme Good for every Kantian real human person.

§118. The basic idea behind The Rage-Against-the-Dying-of-the-Light Theory of the nature and moral value of death, then, is this.

Although *death<sub>s</sub>*, the state of being dead, is *nothing for us*, nevertheless *death<sub>p</sub>*, the process of dying, is of *overriding importance for us*.

The ultimate significance of one's own death<sub>p</sub> is contained necessarily and completely immanently within the essentially embodied, intentionally active, life-process of the Kantian real human person whose death<sub>s</sub> provides a unique, permanent closure on their entire life-process.

Thus the ultimate significance of one's own death<sub>p</sub> lies entirely and exclusively in what one actually chooses and does with one's own Kantian real human personal life.

The ultimate meaning of one's own life, which is identical to one's own process of dying, in turn, is just the global pattern or shape of the total set of specific diachronic and synchronic profiles of her Kantian real human life-process and death-process—a global pattern or shape that is dynamically emergent from her active pursuit of principled authenticity, within the necessarily finite limits of the complete, unique, permanent, full-stop, time-stamped structural closure provided by their own death<sub>s</sub>.

And the rest, really and truly, is nothing but silence.

§119. Hamlet's central and tragic mistake lay precisely in his thinking that there *could be* something for him after death<sub>p</sub>, some sort of ghostly tag-end of his life viewed from the non-existent standpoint of his death<sub>s</sub>.

Otherwise he would not have put off endlessly till tomorrow what he could only ever have done eternally in the present.

Single-mindedness, purity of heart, or wholeheartedness—in a word, authenticity—is living as if Nietzschean eternal recurrence were true, and as if everything always really mattered right here and now.

On the contrary, however, whether ultra-self-conscious, only ordinarily self-conscious, or even mostly un-self-conscious, Hamletian double-mindedness, impurity of heart, half-heartedness, or lack of heart—in a word, inauthenticity, or what Simon Critchley

aptly calls “passive nihilism”<sup>72</sup>—*is living as if Nietzschean eternal recurrence were impossible, as if there could somehow be something more than a finite, unbounded life and death<sub>p</sub>, something after death<sub>p</sub>, the ghostly realm of death<sub>s</sub>, an “undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns.”*

This is also to live as if nothing ever really mattered right here and now because you yourself are, for example, nothing but a fleshy deterministic or indeterministic and indestructible Turing machine eternally programmed for endlessly yielding the same result—presumably, ‘42’<sup>73</sup>—in a spaceless and timeless After-Life created and ruled by an infinitely distant all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good God, The Divine Commander.

So there is a set of very deep-running connections, essential analogies, and thus *elective affinities* between

- (i) the belief in immortality,
- (ii) existential inauthenticity,
- (iii) passive nihilism,
- (iv) the belief in universal natural determinism,
- (v) the belief in theism combined with Divine Command Ethics, and
- (vi) mindless obedience to the inherently rationally unjustified coercive authoritarianism of the State and other State-like institutions.

But here I am verging on fundamental issues in what I call *political theology*, that I discuss in detail in *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*.

§120. Finally, we arrive at the moral-existential sticking-point in the philosophy of old age.

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<sup>72</sup> S. Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. 3-6.

<sup>73</sup> See D. Adams, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* (New York: Ballantine/Del Rey, 2002). The digit ‘42’ is the justly famous answer provided by the supercomputer Deep Thought, after 7.5 million years of computing, to the Ultimate Question of the Meaning of Life, the Universe, and Everything. Sadly, however, the Ultimate Question itself remains unknown.

By a *natural death<sub>p</sub>*, I mean a death<sub>p</sub> that is neither the result of mercy-killing, nor the result of self-sacrifice, nor the result of suicide, nor an accidental death<sub>p</sub>, nor a not-unexpected death<sub>p</sub>.

The prime example of a natural death<sub>p</sub> is dying in old age from the deleterious natural effects of aging.

This can include dying from one or more of the same causes that, at an earlier stage in one's life, would have classified a death<sub>p</sub> as accidental—for example, diseases such as cancer, or a heart-attack.

So the “naturalness” of a natural death<sub>p</sub> is determined, in part, relative to the normal life-expectancy for real human persons like us under the particular environmental, historical, and social conditions obtaining in that context.

**138.** Now given Death's Excluded Middle, all natural deaths are either timely and inherently good for the person who dies (aka “dying with dignity”) or else untimely and inherently bad for the person who dies, and never both.

Moreover, a natural death  $ND_p$  is timely if and only if

either (i)  $ND_p$  is an inherently good thing for the higher-level or Kantian real human person who dies, because continued life would be personhood-destroying for them,

or (ii)  $ND_p$  is not only an inherently good thing for the higher-level or Kantian real human person who dies, but also a *supremely* good thing for them, because by means of the process of dying they thereby achieve or realize principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

Otherwise, all other natural deaths are untimely.

Or in other words, all natural deaths for lives in which principled authenticity has *not* been manifested in *any* way are inherently bad for the Kantian real human person who dies, precisely because she has thereby failed to satisfy the high-bar moral norm of achieving or realizing principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

In short, in a moral sense, such lives have been *wasted*.

**§121.** Granting that, and taking a realistic and moderately cynical, but still not *excessively* cynical, view of rational “human, all-too-human” nature, and of the rational

human condition, it seems very likely that in the natural course of things, sadly, *a great many natural deaths<sub>p</sub> have been, are, and will be untimely.*

In this way, a very obvious but also very important moral question arises at the egocentric center of The Web of Mortality:

Should I—should we—fear an untimely natural death<sub>p</sub>?

My answer to this question, from the standpoint of existential Kantian ethics and The Rage-Against-the-Dying-of-the-Light Theory of the nature and moral value of death, is:

*No*, we ought not to fear an untimely natural death.

There are three reasons for this.

**§121. First**, I think that a reasonable (i.e., non-foolhardy) level of bravery is morally obligatory with respect to the statistically low but still non-trivial prospect of an accidental death<sub>p</sub> for any ordinary Kantian real human person.

But natural death<sub>p</sub> adds nothing to accidental death<sub>p</sub> that would give us a new sufficient moral reason for fear.

Hence reasonable bravery is also morally obligatory with respect to all natural deaths<sub>p</sub>, including the untimely ones.

**§122. Second**, although it is true, as both Aristotle and also Nagel have correctly argued,<sup>74</sup> that it is possible for people to be harmed in an extrinsic relational sense after their natural deaths<sub>p</sub> and during the finite or sempiternal time of their deaths<sub>s</sub>—for example, by the post-mortem revelation of awful secrets about them, by the bad post-mortem consequences of their choices or acts, or by the post-mortem misfortunes of their loved ones, friends, families, or larger social communities, etc.—nevertheless this is always something that is only ever a bad thing *about* them, from the third-person point of view, and never something that is a bad thing *for* them, from the first-person point of view.

Intrinsic or first-personal harms require a living Kantian real human person who is harmed in the actual course of her real human personal life-process, that is, in the actual spatiotemporal and causal sequence of her complete, finite, and unique life.

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<sup>74</sup> See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1100a10-32 and 1101a11-1101b9 ; and T. Nagel, "Death," in T. Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 1-10, at pp. 4-7.

Furthermore, the only intrinsic, first-personal harms that we morally have sufficient reason to fear are those that harm us by violating our dignity.

Since, like all real persons, all Kantian real human persons are literally identical with their complete, finite, and unique life-processes or lives,<sup>75</sup> then they have dignity just as long as they are alive, and at no other times.

Hence Kantian real human persons cannot be harmed by violating their dignity *after* their natural deaths<sub>p</sub>, hence during the finite or sempiternally infinite time of their deaths<sub>s</sub>.

And for the same reason, they cannot be harmed by violating their dignity *before* they are born.

This moral fact about us is quite easy to see with respect to the natural time prior to the beginning of our lives, when we did not yet exist; but the very same moral fact applies just as much to the finite or sempiternally infinite time following our own deaths, when we no longer exist.

So on the one hand, in this specific regard Lucretius was absolutely right: There is indeed at least one metaphysical and moral symmetry or mirroring between the time prior to our births and the finite or sempiternally infinite time during our deaths<sub>s</sub>, in that we cannot be intrinsically morally harmed during either time.

Therefore we should not fear being intrinsically morally harmed *after* our own untimely natural deaths<sub>p</sub>, any more than we do or should fear being intrinsically morally harmed *before* our lives begin.

On the other hand, however, as I noted earlier, Lucretius was as it were “dead wrong” about the symmetry or mirroring thesis with respect to death<sub>p</sub>.

The pre-natal non-existence of a Kantian real human person is essentially different from her death<sub>s</sub>, precisely because her death<sub>s</sub> is necessarily post-life, and therefore it inherently presupposes her actual death<sub>p</sub>, whereas his pre-natal non-existence is necessarily not post-life, and therefore it does not metaphysically include her actual death<sub>p</sub>.

**§123. Third**, and most importantly of all, the second individually sufficient (but not individually necessary) condition for a timely natural death<sub>p</sub> *ND* says that *ND* is not

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<sup>75</sup> See §92 above.

only an inherently good thing for the Kantian rational human minded animal who dies, but also a *supremely* good thing for her, because by means of the process of dying she achieves principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

What I want specifically to highlight with respect to this second criterion is that it is really possible to achieve principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, *even only at the very end of one's life*, by means of dying a natural death<sub>p</sub>.

One way of seeing this is to double-underline a remarkable *moral-existential-bootstrapping* feature of the pursuit of principled authenticity.

If you really and truly are wholeheartedly trying to achieve or realize principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, then you are thereby *already* really and truly achieving or realizing principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree.

And your natural death<sub>p</sub> cannot change this essential moral fact about you and your life.

Indeed, for someone who is really and truly wholeheartedly trying to achieve or realize principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, his natural death<sub>p</sub> is precisely the intrinsic closure of such an inherently morally good life, at least to that extent.

Therefore it is a timely natural death<sub>p</sub>, and "dying with dignity."

Here I am not talking about "Stoicism," as that notion is commonly understood.

It seems to me self-evidently true that if one were to achieve principled authenticity even , at least partially or to some degree, even only at the very end of one's life, by dying a natural death<sub>p</sub>, then a proper part of this achievement would *not* be to accept the beginning of one's own death<sub>s</sub> with passive and emotionless rational resignation in the face of overwhelming natural forces, but on the contrary to affirm both one's own natural death<sub>p</sub> and also one's own death<sub>s</sub> wholeheartedly as the intrinsic closure of one's own complete, finite, and unique life, and the terminating form or immanent structure of one's own life.

What is needed, then, is a thoroughly *active and passionate Kantian Stoicism*.

Furthermore, as should be obvious by now, it also seems to me that the moral-emotional core of this thoroughly active and passionate Kantian Stoicism about death<sub>p</sub>

and death<sub>s</sub> alike, is captured precisely by Dylan Thomas's famous poetic rant, at once Dionysian and Thanatosian:

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.<sup>76</sup>

§124. I will assume, now, that The Rage-Against-the-Dying-of-the-Light Theory of the nature and moral value of death is true.

It follows that since our own states of being dead, our death<sub>s</sub>, inherently cannot be subjectively experienced, then at the very moment of death<sub>p</sub>, our process of dying, which brings us up to the very beginning of our permanent death<sub>s</sub>, we will still be alive and subjectively experiencing.

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<sup>76</sup> See note 62 above.



Now also suppose also that at that time we are lucky enough to have suffered no personhood-destroying accident or disease, and are also still Kantian real human persons, in possession of our basic capacities for intentionality, caring, and rationality.

In all such cases, then even if someone has not yet achieved or realized principled authenticity *at all*, nevertheless there is always enough time left for her wholeheartedly to affirm her own natural death as the intrinsic closure of her own complete, finite, and unique life—or more generally, wholeheartedly to choose or do something or another for the sake of any of her own moral principles and the Categorical Imperative—since this can be chosen at any time right up to and including the very moment of the beginning of her own death<sub>s</sub>.

In so choosing or so doing, she can thereby achieve principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, by freely conferring timeliness and “dying with dignity” on her own natural death<sub>p</sub>.

**§125.** In this way, seemingly paradoxically, even only at the very end of your life, *your own natural death<sub>p</sub> can also be a way of changing your life.*

And if we can achieve principled authenticity, at least partially or to some degree, at any time right up to and including the very moment of the beginning of our own death<sub>s</sub>, by freely conferring timeliness and “dying with dignity” on them, by changing our lives, and by converting them from ongoing projects into completed projects, like finishing a book or creating a work of art, then there is no sufficient moral reason for us to fear our own untimely natural death<sub>p</sub>.

For every such natural death<sub>p</sub> will necessarily be timely and dignified, not untimely and undignified.

On the contrary, then, there is instead a sufficient moral reason for each and every one of us wholeheartedly to affirm his own natural death<sub>p</sub> as the intrinsic closure of his complete, finite, and unique life, or more generally, wholeheartedly to choose or do something or another for the sake of any of her own moral principles and the Categorical Imperative, through respect for the dignity of real persons, whether others’ dignity or one’s own, at any time right up to and including the very moment of the beginning of his death<sub>s</sub>, provided that it constitutes a genuine change-of-heart.

So no matter how *wrong* everything else has been in your life, as long as you are still alive, sentient, and sapient, then there is always enough time left for getting it at least partially or some degree *right*.

And that thought provides us all with some genuine rational, moral, and existential hope for our old age.

**§126. The philosophy of borders, immigration, and refugees.** Everyone was agog during 2018 about US-Mexico border-control and immigration issues, split families, and the Trump Administration's blatant xenophobia, encapsulated in Trump's much-bleated-and-much-repeated promise or threat to build *a big fucking wall*, aka The BFW, along the US-Mexico border.



To be sure, two essential features of *contemporary neoliberal neo-fascism*, which Trump shares with Hungary's Viktor Orbán, Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, and so-on—in addition to the classical-fascist features of (i) ultra-nationalism, (ii) hyper-coercive-authoritarianism and centralization of political power, and (iii) virulent anti-socialism—are

(iv) fomenting fear and hatred of border-crossing migrants in general and refugees in particular, and

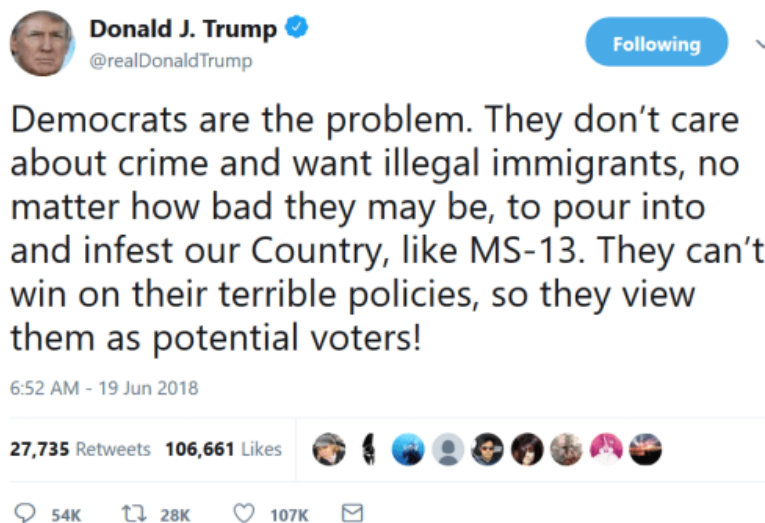
(v) relentlessly promoting a phony “charismatic-strongman” image for mass-media consumption.

And now, in January 2019, Trump has even staged a completely absurd US government shut-down over budget funding for The BFW, merely in order to reinforce his phony charismatic-strongman mass-media image as the never-give-in, true-believer proponent of The BFW.

But at the same time, as of 18 June 2018, a Gallup Poll showed that 45% of the American electorate approved of Trump's Presidential job performance.

—No, sadly, that’s not a typo.

So, as recently as six months ago, all those folks *also* believed, along with Trump— assuming that he actually believes *anything* he says or writes— that locusts and plagues of so-called “illegal immigrants” from Mexico, as he put it in his best dehumanizing turn-of-phrase over Twitter, will “pour into and infest our Country”:

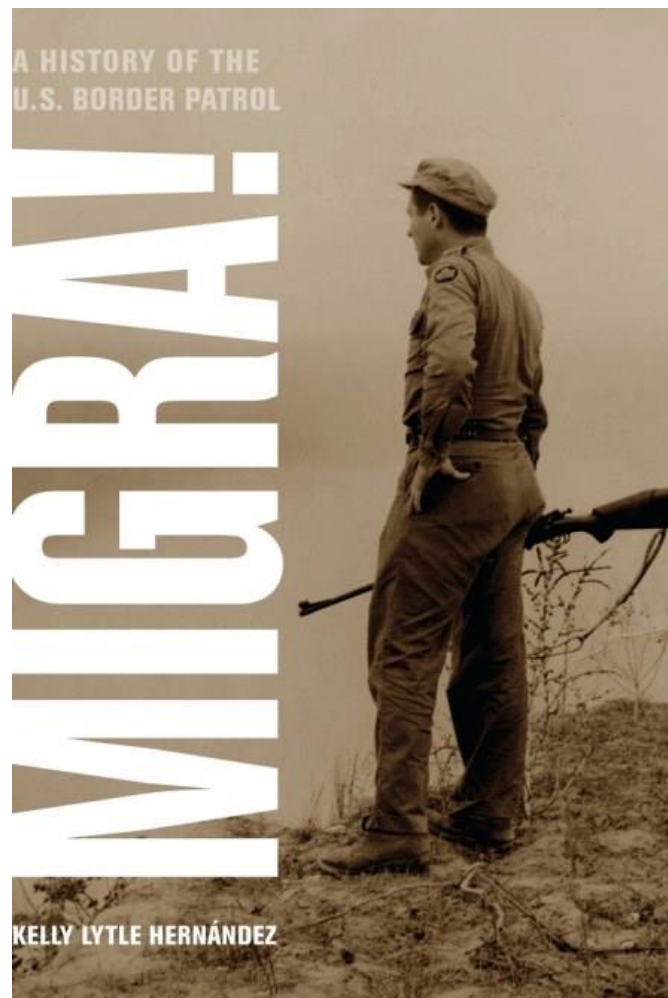


But meanwhile, only a few months *prior* to that, a Pixar/Disney animated feature called *Coco*, that celebrates Mexican culture and music, received wide critical acclaim and won two Oscars at the at the 2017 Academy Awards.



And, as Kelly Lytle Hernández's most excellent 2010 book, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol*,<sup>77</sup> amply shows,

- (i) for more than 100 years, southwestern agribusinesses in Texas, Arizona, and California have been systematically encouraging Mexican so-called "legal" immigration, for the sole purpose of exploiting their labor,
- (ii) while simultaneously the Texas Rangers, the U.S. Border Patrol, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services, aka INS, now the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, aka USCIS, under the umbrella of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, aka ICE, have also been systematically chasing, investigating, oppressing, detaining and imprisoning, expelling, or killing so-called "illegal" Mexican immigrants.



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<sup>77</sup> K.L. Hernández, *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 2010).

Robert Frost famously and poetically observed that “something there is, that doesn’t love a wall.”<sup>78</sup>

In a similar spirit, and equally famously, even if slightly less poetically, *Pink Floyd* rock-anthemed that

All in all, it’s just another brick in the wall. You’re just another brick in the wall.<sup>79</sup>

Correspondingly, *human migration*—the movement of people from their original homes to somewhere else, in order to live there, across borders and over, under, or through walls—is a phenomenon that calls out for serious philosophizing.

§127. Human beings are political,<sup>80</sup> or at least *social*, animals, and the States they create all have borders or walls.

In fact, as the political anthropologist James C. Scott has shown, people lived in various kinds of nomadic or sedentary pre-State borderless/unwalled social communities for several millennia before the advent of the earliest States.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, as far as archaeologists and political anthropologists can now discern, the actual lives of these pre-State people were no more solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, or short than the lives of those who were bundled and collected into the earliest States.

Indeed, since the bundling-and-collection of people and non-human animals into States almost inevitably produced *deadly epidemics*, the lives of those who were bordered and walled *inside* States was in fact generally *much shorter* than those of the pre-State peoples on the outside.<sup>82</sup>

So “politics” in the sense of *organized human communal or social life* is a significantly wider concept than *Statist* or *bordered/walled* politics.

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<sup>78</sup> R. Frost, “Mending Wall,” in R. Frost, *North of Boston* (London: David Nutt, 1914), available online at URL = <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44266/mending-wall>>.

<sup>79</sup> Pink Floyd, “Another Brick in the Wall Lyrics, Part 2,” *Pink-Floyd-Lyrics*, available online at URL = <<http://www.pink-floyd-lyrics.com/html/another-brick-2-wall.html>>.

<sup>80</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics*, book I, 1253a8.

<sup>81</sup> J.C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2017).

<sup>82</sup> Scott, *Against the Grain*, ch. 3.

In fact, it is only *Statists* who call these pre-State, borderless/unwalled people “barbarians,” “brutes,” “primitives,” “savages,” etc., especially when they want to enslave them or steal their land.

**§128.** Human migration includes *political refugees*, that is, people fleeing various kinds of State-driven authoritarian coercion and direct persecution, across State borders and walls, but it is a much larger category, since it also includes

(i) *environmental refugees*, that is, people fleeing disastrous climate change or other natural disasters, across State borders and walls,

(ii) *economic refugees*, that is, people fleeing poverty, labor exploitation, or otherwise seeking economic betterment, across State borders and walls,

(iii) *internally displaced people*, people fleeing authoritarian coercion and direct persecution, disastrous climate change or other natural disasters, or poverty, or seeking economic betterment inside States, and

(iv) *nomads*, people who simply want to move freely across the Earth and live in different places, whether inside States or across State borders and walls, in order to satisfy their true human needs.

In this connection, we should also never forget the crucial point that State-made borders and walls are created as much to keep their own people *locked inside them*, as they are to keep so-called barbarians/brutes/primitives/savages and other “foreigners” *locked outside them*.

The contemporary, real-world moral scandal and tragedy of millions of human lives lost or ruined while attempting human migration across State borders and walls or inside States therefore makes philosophizing about political borders and walls profoundly important and urgent.

**§129.** An enabling necessary condition of all political borders or walls is cultural conflict.

By *cultural conflict* I mean the mutual antagonism that arises between groups of people with different skin color, different languages, different ethnicity, different religions or religious traditions, different gender, different sexuality, different age groups or generations, different social castes, different economic classes, different political parties, and so-on, or who simply live in different places from one another.

Such conflict ranges all the way from mutual distrust and insults, to mutual coercion including threats of violence or actual violence, to systematic mutual or one-way persecution including imprisonment, torture, and murder, to war, “ethnic cleansing,” mass murder, or genocide.

The very idea of cultural conflict, in any one of its instances, implies the existence of a centered group, *Us*, that is the *agent* and first participant in a given cultural conflict, and an external group, or set of groups, that is the *target* and second participant in that conflict, *Them*.

Let us call the agent-group, *Our People*, and the target-group or set of groups, *Other People*.

To the extent that *Our People* have Our own (relatively) unique political practices and policies, that set Us apart from Them, the *Other People*, these practices and policies jointly constitute an *identity politics*.

**§130.** Now The Age of Trump is going to last *at least another 2 years, perhaps 6 years*.

Throughout the 2016 Presidential election campaign and especially since Trump’s election and actual Presidency, the following highly disturbing cultural and social fact has become vividly manifest.

On the one hand, we find President Trump’s Republican, nativist, racist, anti-feminist, anti-LGBTQ, big capitalist, right-(neo)liberal, *Know-Nothings*,<sup>83</sup> unified by their identity-politics.

And on the other hand, we find the Clinton(s)-Obama era Democratic, anti-nativist, anti-racist, militant-feminist, pro-LGBTQ, big capitalist, left-(neo)liberal, *Social Justice Warriors*,<sup>84</sup> unified by *their* identity-politics.

Indeed, the 2016 USA Presidential election was, at bottom, *all about cultural conflict*, as Mark Lilla’s controversial essay, “The End of Identity Liberalism,”<sup>85</sup> clearly shows.

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<sup>83</sup> See Wikipedia, “Know Nothing,” available online at URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Know\\_Nothing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Know_Nothing).

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, Wikipedia, “Social Justice Warrior,” available online at URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_justice\\_warrior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_justice_warrior).

<sup>85</sup> [xi] M. Lilla, “The End of Identity Liberalism,” New York Times (20 November 2016), available online at URL = <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/opinion/sunday/the-end-of-identity-liberalism.html>.



Trump's Know-Nothings fear and hate foreigners, people with different skin color, people with different languages, people with different ethnicity, people with different religions or religious traditions, and people with different sexuality, and above all, *they fear and hate the Clinton(s)-Obama era Social Justice Warriors.*

And, in return, above all, the Clinton(s)-Obama era Social Justice Warriors *fear and hate Trump's Know-Nothings*, which in turn is but a specific manifestation of a general problem with the identity politics of the Social Justice Warriors that John Gray, bang-on aptly, calls *hyper-liberalism*.<sup>86</sup>

In short, there is fear and hatred everywhere in the contemporary USA, cultural conflict everywhere, and it is all fundamentally driven by *identity politics*, whether of the big capitalist (neo)liberal Republican right or the big capitalist (neo)liberal Democratic left.

**§131.** Now the concept of *intersectionality* has been used by critical identitarians in order to stress the ways in which members of very different identity groups can suffer essentially the same kinds of oppression.

But as Kwame Anthony Appiah has rightly pointed out, intersectionality is in fact an implicit *rejection* of identity politics.<sup>87</sup>

For if intersectionality appeals to the ways in which very different kinds of people can all be oppressed in essentially the same ways, for essentially the same bad reasons, then, as autonomous individuals who possess human dignity and are worthy of respect, those oppressed people are also fully capable of thinking, speaking, and acting against oppression *for themselves*, in solidarity with other oppressed people of *all kinds*, *without* the need for any sort of identity politics.

So identitarianism, whether of the right or of the left, is a moral and political *dead letter*, just as Lilla and Gray have argued.

**§132.** Well, what is to be done?

As the perhaps surprising solution to the problem of cultural conflict, I am proposing **2-Phase Universal Open Borders**, aka 2P-UOB:

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<sup>86</sup> J. Gray, "The Problem of Hyper-Liberalism," TLS (27 March 2018), available online at URL = <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/public/john-gray-hyper-liberalism-liberty/>.

<sup>87</sup> K.A. Appiah, "Go Ahead, Speak for Yourself," *New York Times* (10 August 2018), available online at URL = <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/opinion/sunday/speak-for-yourself.html>.



**Phase 1:** Starting in 2021, there will be universal open borders with Canada and Mexico, and everyone who moves across those borders and then claims residence in the USA, will receive *temporary or permanent residence in the USA* provided that *all new residents also fully respect the human dignity of everyone else in the USA and elsewhere in the world.*

**Phase 2:** Also starting in 2021, the USA, Canada, and Mexico will collectively form a *Global Refugee Consortium (GRC)*, with three-way open borders to *any political refugee, economic refugee, or asylum seeker from anywhere in the world (aka "global refugees")*, who will receive *temporary or permanent residence in the USA, Canada, or Mexico*, provided that *all new residents also fully respect the human dignity of everyone else in the GRC and elsewhere in the world.*

§133. Here's another line of reasoning in support of 2P-UOB.

Alexander Betts has compellingly argued for the moral and global political acceptance of a concept he calls *survival migration*, which he rationally motivates and defines as follows:

This book develops the concept of "survival migration" to highlight the conditions under which a person cannot get access to a fundamental set of rights in his or her country of origin and so (as a last resort) needs to seek those rights in another country. Survival migrants can be defined as "persons who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or solution."<sup>88</sup>

In turn, following Henry Shue, Betts explicitly unpacks the notion of a "fundamental set of rights" as "the minimum conditions of human dignity and self-respect."<sup>89</sup>

I'm fully onboard with the concept of survival migration and that explicit unpacking, but I also think that this package extends *radically further than Betts himself is prepared to allow*, since he explicitly wants to hold that "not all international migrants are survival migrants"<sup>90</sup> (p. 24), and also that "although the term 'survival migration' is more

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<sup>88</sup> A. Betts, *Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2013), p. 23.

<sup>89</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration*, p. 23.

<sup>90</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration*, p. 24.

inclusive than 'refugee', it is not intended to offer a *carte blanche* for anyone in a weak or fragmentary state to seek asylum."<sup>91</sup>

Think of it this way.

Consider any sane person who wants to migrate across national borders because that person has what they take to be a sufficient reason for migrating, such that they are sincerely convinced that at least one, or even many, of their true human needs are not being met in their country of origin.

In turn, it's self-evident that among the list of true human needs are

- (i) freedom from harmful and pervasive racial, ethnic, gender-based, or sexual-preference-based discrimination,
- (ii) freedom of opinion and/or expression,
- (iii) freedom from poverty and/or access to economic opportunity,
- (iv) free access to adequate housing and healthcare, and
- (v) free access to a violence-free (and especially gun-violence-free) living environment.

Now the satisfiability of true human needs, *including the sincere conviction that one's own basic human needs are being met*, is a minimum condition of human dignity and self-respect.

Therefore any sane person who wants to migrate across national borders because that person has what they take to be a sufficient reason for migrating, such that they are sincerely convinced that at least one, or even many, of their true human needs are not being met in their country of origin, is a survival migrant.

Or otherwise put, a direct consequence of the concept of survival migration and its unpacking in terms of a fundamental set of human rights is *universal open borders*, and 2P-UOB is merely *a specific instance of universal open borders*.

**§134.** Here is an obvious objection to 2P-UOB, which I will call *The Inevitability of Cultural Conflict*:

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<sup>91</sup> Betts, *Survival Migration*, p. 25.

Since people are by nature egoistic and mutually antagonistic, then whenever they group together and become an Us, they will naturally and inevitably engage in cultural conflict with *Them*, the *Other People*. So universal open borders with Canada and Mexico, or to global refugees, will *never* work, precisely because they would *inevitably lead to even more and greater cultural conflicts than already exist*, and perhaps even *lead to war*. Therefore, *the USA should always have (more or less) closed borders to everyone, forever*.

And here is my reply to that objection, in three parts.

**§135. First**, it is simply empirically false either that all human beings are inherently egoistic and mutually antagonistic by nature or neurobiology, or that all human beings are even all-but-inevitably egoistic and mutually antagonistic by virtue of culture.

Moreover, the very belief that people are inherently or inevitably egoistic and mutually antagonistic, is nothing more and nothing less than a cognitive illusion and myth that directly serves the self-interests of big capitalist (neo)liberal nation-Statists.

**Second**, as far as can be determined from the archaeological, historical, and social-anthropological evidence, cultural conflict exists, and has existed in varying degrees, from minor, to moderate, to major, to intense, all the way to catastrophic, near-satanically evil, holocaust levels, as long as *States* have existed.

Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, in his study of the earliest States, *Against the Grain*, J.C. Scott has pointed out that, in addition to a legalistic territorial monopoly on the power to coerce, a hierarchical and stratified social structure, sedentary grain cultivation, taxation, and the emergence of writing for the purposes of making lists, *walls, aka borders, make States*.<sup>92</sup>

Therefore, it is entirely reasonable to hold that, conversely, *States and walls, aka borders, make cultural conflict*.

**Third**, and following on from the crucial thesis that cultural conflict is actually an artifact of Statism, it is self-evident that people are most inclined to cultural conflict with others, via their identity politics, *when they are already very angry, anxious, bitter, frustrated, or frightened about other things, for whatever reasons* — for example, poverty and economic oppression, being unemployed or having to do a shit job, the inaccessibility of

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<sup>92</sup> Scott, *Against the Grain*, p. 137.

higher education, or healthcare hell — *and then they project those powerful negative emotions onto Other People.*

In so doing, *Our People* thereby *cognitively demonize and stigmatize the Other People*, then *actively fear and hate the Other People*, or even, in the most extreme cases, *cognitively de-humanize the Other People*, by seeing them as wild beasts or vermin, or even as human garbage or human offal, fit only to be eliminated and exterminated.

§136. Nevertheless, holding fixed the brute fact that we live in a world of States and State-like institutions, overt cultural conflict is generally a *somewhat extreme, pathological situation*, and very far being the *normal situation* between people in different cultural groups.

Of course, there are always some difficulties and tensions.

Consider, for example, the commonplace difficulties and tensions between men and women, or between older people and younger people, not to mention between the currently “hot button” and media-touted difficulties and tensions between people of different sexual orientations, or between cisgendered and transgendered people, etc., etc.

Nevertheless, it is not at all uncommon for *sharply* different cultural groups, even a *multiplicity* of sharply different cultural groups, to get along just fine, all things considered, to their mutual aid and benefit, with only the ordinary sorts of “human, all too human” problems, *whenever the larger economic, social, and political backgrounds are appropriately supportive.*

Real-world examples of this abound: happy marriages and other intimate partnerships, happy families, good camaraderie and friendships across even sharply different cultural groups, good working relationships across even sharply different cultural groups, and so-on.

Indeed, *the city of Toronto, Canada*, is an excellent real-world example of all of this.

I hasten to add that I am *not* saying that people are perfect, or somehow magically more than “human, all-too-human,” whether in Toronto, or anywhere else: *far from it.*

But the essential point is that people of even sharply different cultural groups inside both past and present States and State-like institutions *really can* and *often do* get along pretty well, provided that, whether by design or sheer luck, there is the right background-setting of sufficiently supportive economic, social, and political structures.

The amazing thing, then, is how often we forget or overlook this self-evident fact.

Therefore, *the very best thing that could possibly be done in the face of cultural conflict in the USA* is to create a two-phase UOB situation in which everyone in the USA, Canada, and Mexico is moving freely across borders between the three countries and living wherever they want to, global refugees are given universal safe-haven in the Global Refugee Consortium (GRC) consisting of the USA, Canada, and Mexico, and therefore people from all over the USA, Canada, Mexico, and global refugees from the rest of the world, can thereby all actually see each other, hear each other, and interact as neighbors, without wire fences, walls, or fear of any sort of persecution or violence.

§137. What, then, is the genuine alternative to the cognitively illusory *false dilemma* that consists in our being seemingly compelled to choose between the identity politics of the big capitalist (neo)liberal Republican right on the one hand, and the identity politics of the big capitalist (neo)liberal Democratic left, on the other, *tertium non datur*?



“Okay,” [Rick] said, nodding. “Now consider this. You’re reading a novel written in the old days before the war. The characters are visiting Fisherman’s Wharf in San Francisco. They become hungry and enter a seafood restaurant. One of them orders lobster, and the chef drops the lobster into the tub of boiling water while the characters watch.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> P.K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (New York: Ballantyne, 1968).

Tyrell: “Is this to be an empathy test? Capillary dilation of the so-called blush response? Fluctuation of the pupil. Involuntary dilation of the iris...”

Deckard: “We call it Voight-Kampff for short.”<sup>94</sup>

In Philip K. Dick’s brilliant classic science-fiction novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, and again in Ridley Scott’s equally brilliant classic science-fiction film *Blade Runner*, it is philosophically highly insightful and significant that *the Voight-Kampff test* for telling *human persons* apart from “replicants” or *androids*, is an *empathy test*.

Indeed, the psychological capacity for empathy is *an innate capacity of all human persons*.<sup>95</sup>

In turn, the essential key to understanding my perhaps surprising solution to the problem of cultural conflict, namely 2P-UOB, is what I call *empathy politics*, which is the diametric opposite of *identity politics*.

Frequently it is said that the alternative to the corrosive influence of identity politics, which emphasizes *difference, exclusion, and exceptionalism*, is a politics of *commonality or universality, and shared interests and values*.

That’s true, but still too superficial.

What in fact lies at the ground of a politics of commonality and universality is *treating all people in all and only the ways that express sufficient respect for human dignity*.

In turn, what evokes and sustains respect for human dignity is the emotion of *empathy*: the ability to mirror and simulate inside oneself the consciousness or subjective experiences—especially including desires, feelings, and emotions—and, more generally, the subjectively-centered beliefs and perspectives, or worldviews, of other people.

This does not mean that you have *to agree with other people, or even to like other people, particularly*: all you have to do is to be able to *empathize with them, and respect them*.

Empathy is inherently outward-looking, not inward-looking, self-absorbed, navel-gazing, or narcissistic.

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<sup>94</sup> *Blade Runner*, directed by R. Scott, 1982.

<sup>95</sup> See, e.g., Hanna and Maiese, *Embodied Minds in Action*; and M. Maiese, *Embodiment, Emotion, and Cognition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Empathetic people are naturally inclined towards generosity, graciousness, kindness, and tolerance, and, at a minimum, towards politeness, and *not* towards arrogance, callousness, cruelty, rudeness, or intolerance.

Creating and cultivating personal and cultural *practices of empathy* are therefore *the moral and political antidote to the morally and politically poisonous and pathological influence of identity politics in States and State-like institutions.*

§138. Q: What do I mean by *practices of empathy*?

A: There are obviously many different ways of opening yourself to other minds, other languages, other nations, other traditions, and other ways of living and being human: studying their history, reading their literature, watching their movies, etc., etc.

But above all, what I mean is that *we should all engage in frequent domestic and foreign travel, including actually living in many different places, all over the USA, Canada, Mexico, and the rest of the world.*

In short, to that extent, and in effect, we should all become *modern-day, cosmopolitan nomads.*

We would thereby recapitulate the best aspects of the lives of the ancient, pastoral nomads tribes that (pre)historically preceded, and then surrounded, States and other State-like institutions—so invidiously and threateningly called “barbarians,” “primitives,” “savages,” and “uncivilized brutes” by early and later Statists (think, for example, of the sad and morally scandalous fates of the nomadic indigenous peoples of North America, South America, Africa, and the Antipodes)—without also suffering, of course, the many natural difficulties of human life more than 5200 years ago.

Then, once we are all modern-day, cosmopolitan nomads, and once all sorts of different kinds of people are actually our next door neighbors, then we will naturally and inevitably see *how ordinary and pretty much similar everyone really is, everywhere, even despite their interesting differences, hence we will all be able to empathize with them and sufficiently respect them as real human persons with dignity, just like us.*

But in order to make this modern-day, cosmopolitan nomadism really possible for most people, we need *the two-phase UOB system.*

To sum up my argument so far, then, here are two individually excellent and conjointly decisive reasons for implementing all of these proposals, *right now.*

**First**, if two-phase UOB were not implemented starting in 2021, then most people living permanently in the USA would still suffer from cultural conflict and the institutional sociopathy of closed borders.

**Second**, therefore, under the system of two-phase UOB, cultural conflict in the USA and the institutional sociopathy of closed borders would be ended forever.

§139. Finally, and by way of wrapping up this set of notes, here are some further thoughts that in a sense I've already anticipated by way of my GRC proposal and the argument for it from the concept of survival migration, about an intimately-related huge real-world problem that greatly concerns me: the global refugee crisis, especially especially including its recent and current manifestation in Europe.<sup>96</sup>

All human persons, aka people, are

- (i) absolutely intrinsically, non-denumerably infinitely valuable, beyond all possible economics, which means they have dignity,
- (ii) autonomous rational animals, which means they can act freely for good reasons, and above all they are
- (iii) morally obligated to sufficiently respect each other and to be actively concerned for each other's well-being and happiness, aka kindness, as well as their own well-being and happiness.

Because the Earth is a sphere, because planetary spheres are finite but unbounded spaces with no inherent edges or borders, and because all people live on our planetary sphere within essentially interconnecting surface-spaces, they must share this Earth with each other.

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<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., P. Boehler and S. Peçanha, "The Global Refugee Crisis, Region by Region," *The New York Times* (26 August 2015), available online at URL = <<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/09/world/migrants-global-refugee-crisis-mediterranean-ukraine-syria-rohingya-malaysia-iraq.html>>; Various Contributors, "What Can Countries Do to Help Refugees Fleeing to Europe?," *The New York Times* (15 September 2015), available online at URL = <<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/09/15/what-can-countries-do-to-help-refugees-fleeing-to-europe?>>; and for recent information, see, e.g., Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders, "Responding To The Global Refugee Crisis," ALERT 19 (Fall 2018): 26-27.



People are essentially embodied conscious, intentional animals living in forward-directed time, and living in spaces whose inherent directions (right-left, etc.) are all centered on, and determined by, the first-persons embedded in those spaces.

In order to live, and in order to live well and be happy, people need to be able to occupy certain special spaces in which they eat, rest or work, sleep, have intimate emotional relationships and/or families, etc., aka homes, and also to move freely across the surface of the Earth, without having their dignity or autonomy violated, and without violating others' dignity or autonomy.



By virtue of the spherical shape of the Earth, by virtue of their essential embodiment, but above all by virtue of their dignity and autonomy, all people inherently belong to a single universal cosmopolitan moral community, aka *humanity*, that transcends any political State.

By sharp contrast, everyone also accidentally belongs to one or more arbitrarily-established social institutions, *nation-States*, that occupy arbitrarily-divided areas of the Earth's surface, and are ruled by special groups of people called *governments*, whose rule is enforced by police and armies.

The function of governments is to issue commands of various kinds, without regard to their specific moral content, justified instead by *political authority*, backed up by force or

the threat of force, aka *coercion*, for the purpose of protecting various self-interests of certain people specifically enclosed, governed, and controlled by that nation-State, call them *citizens*.

Other people who live within these nation-states, and are also controlled by those States, but are not citizens of them, are *foreigners*.

The recent and current refugee crisis is, **first**, caused by authoritarian, wicked governments of certain contemporary nation-States, and also by certain brutal insurgencies, themselves *wannabe nation-States*, e.g. ISIS, that are violating the dignity of innocent citizens and innocent foreigners living within various States, mistreating them in various ways, and often torturing or murdering them, leading to massive migration of those oppressed people, in order to survive and in search of a better life.

This recent and current crisis is also, **second**, caused by the existence of arbitrarily-established borders and walls between other contemporary nation-States, expressing highly restrictive government-imposed travel and immigration policies in those States, for example, Brazil, Hungary, and the USA, including many States that are comparatively quite well-off, or even very rich, and also significantly less coercive authoritarian and/or wicked.

But, by virtue of their dignity, autonomy, and essential embodiment, people need homes, and they need to be able to move freely, and they also need to be treated with kindness by others, most obviously by those who live in immediately adjoining nation-States, but also by everyone on the face of the Earth, even if they live very far away from those others, for example, in North America, simply because everyone shares the same spherical space of the Earth and because they all inherently belong to humanity.

Therefore the citizens of all relatively well-off, and significantly less coercive authoritarian and/or less wicked nation-States in the world, especially including those in continental Europe, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom/British Isles, South America, and above all North America, should voluntarily do the following:

each local community, as determined by a reasonable cadastral map of that country, guaranteeing fair distribution, should raise enough money to support one entire family, or, say, 4-10 people, and re-locate them to a safe place somewhere on the Earth, where their dignity and autonomy are respected and where they are treated with kindness, including finding them homes and providing them with free health care, free education, including free higher

education, a truly generous basic income, non-shit jobs, etc., and more generally, safe haven.

Ideally, the families or 4-10 people would be given safe haven in the particular local community that provides support for them.

Since each re-located group would contain no more than 10 people, it would not constitute an “invasion of foreigners,” and since all re-located people would receive a new home, and experience the special benefits of safe haven in that local community, they would be extremely unlikely to move in large numbers and high concentrations to areas that lacked these special benefit.

This in turn would remove one major psychological trigger of nativist, xenophobic thinking—for example, Trump’s so-called “thinking” about locusts and plagues of illegal immigrants from Mexico who are ready to “pour into and infest our Country” — and also the irrational fear of Other-filled slums, the irrational fear of “District 9s.”

But more generally, everyone should do their best to recognize and suppress in themselves, and to recognize and criticize in others, the irrationally fearful thinking expressed by such all-too-familiar slogans as “Foreigners get out!,” “Vas y étrangères!,” and “Ausländer raus!”

Once relocated to their new homes in safe havens, these survival migrants would be permitted to become citizens of the nation-State in which they had their new homes.

But otherwise, survival migrants would also be permitted autonomous freedom of movement anywhere within that nation-State, and more generally across the surface of the Earth, *without* borders, provided that they also respected the dignity and autonomy of all other members of humanity, and were prepared to treat them with very same sort of kindness that they themselves had received.



**§140. The philosophy of policing, crime, and punishment.** A year ago, on Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, Chelsea Manning tweeted this:



Needless to say, she was widely abused and excoriated for *f-bombing* the police.

And on 21 June 2018, four former and current professional football players, Doug Baldwin, Anquan Boldin, Malcolm Jenkins, and Benjamin Watson, wrote this in *The New York Times*:

President Trump recently made an offer to National Football League players like us who are committed to protesting injustice. Instead of protesting, he suggested, we should give him names of people we believe were “unfairly treated by the justice system.” If he agrees they were treated unfairly, he said, he will pardon them.

To be sure, the president’s clemency power can be a valuable tool for redressing injustice. Just look at Alice Johnson, age 63, who was serving a life sentence for a nonviolent drug conviction until her sentence was commuted by President Trump. He should be commended for using his clemency power in that case.

But a handful of pardons will not address the sort of systemic injustice that [N.F.L. players have been protesting](#). These are problems that our government has created, many of which occur at the local level. If President Trump thinks he can end these injustices if we deliver him a few names, he hasn’t been listening to us.

As Americans, it is our constitutional right to question injustices when they occur, and we see them daily: police brutality, unnecessary incarceration, excessive criminal sentencing, residential segregation and educational inequality. The United States effectively uses prison to treat addiction, and you could argue it is also our largest mental-health provider. Law enforcement has a responsibility to serve its communities, yet this responsibility has too often not met basic standards of accountability.

These injustices are so widespread as to seem practically written into our nation's DNA. We must challenge these norms, investigate the reasons for their pervasiveness and fight with all we have to change them. That is what we, as football players, are trying to do with our activism.<sup>97</sup>

The NFL-ers too were widely abused and excoriated—even though their little essay, saying essentially the same thing as Manning's (*f-*)*bomb-throwing-anarchist-sounding* tweet, was not only very meticulously written and carefully argued, but also very calm, measured, and Statist in its rhetoric.

But the serious problems being highlighted by Manning and the NFL-ers are *not* about the essentially trivial, attention-deflecting issue of whether the police in particular or the legal justice system in general deserve to be profanely *dissed* or submissively *respected*, although I must also frankly admit that I hereby fistbump the former and take a knee against the latter.

The serious problems being highlighted are about the very idea and the all-too-real-world fact of *policing* and of what I'll call *The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America*, and whether they are rationally and morally justified, or not.

And here is where some serious philosophical thinking can help out.

**§141.** In his breakthrough 2017 book, *The End of Policing*, Alex Vitale compellingly argues for these claims:

The massive increases in policing and incarceration over the last forty years rest on an ideological argument that crime and disorder are the results of personal failing and can only be reduced by harsh punitive sanctions. This

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<sup>97</sup> D. Baldwin, A. Boldin, M. Jenkins and B. Watson, "N.F.L. Players to Trump: Here's Whom You Should Pardon," *The New York Times* (21 June 2018), available online at URL = <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/opinion/trump-pardon-nfl-players.html>.

neoconservative approach protects and reinforces the political, social, and economic disenfranchisement of millions who are tightly controlled by aggressive and invasive policing or warehoused in jails and prisons.

We must break these intertwined systems of oppression. Every time we look to the police and prisons to solve our problems, we reinforce these processes. We cannot demand that the police get rid of those “annoying” homeless people or the “threatening” youth on the corner and simultaneously call for affordable housing and youth jobs, because the state is only offering the former and will deny us the latter every time. Yes, communities deserve protection from crime and even disorder, but we must always demand them without reliance on the coercion, violence, and humiliation that undergird our criminal justice system.<sup>98</sup>

Vitale’s claims are strongly supported by recent historical or sociological micro-studies of policing and mass incarceration—for example, Kelly Lytle Hernández’s *City of Inmates*,<sup>99</sup> a history of the LAPD and the Los Angeles County prison system.

And in a very cool, cogent, and insightful *New York Times* article from 2017, Khalil Gibran Muhammed accurately and movingly describes The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America:

Two new books offer timely and complementary ways of understanding America’s punitive culture and, in the process, stark pleas to abolish it. In “Locking Up Our Own,” James Forman Jr. explains how and why an influx of black “firsts” took the municipal reins of government after the civil rights movement only to unleash the brutal power of the criminal justice system on their constituents; in “A Colony in a Nation,” Chris Hayes shows that throughout American history, freedom — despite all the high-minded ideals — has often entailed the subjugation of another....

Drawing heavily on personal experiences as a white kid growing up in the crack-era Bronx and attending a magnet school on the border of East Harlem, much of Hayes’s book unfolds along the axis of two “distinct regimes” in America. One for whites, what he calls the Nation; the other for blacks, what he calls the Colony. “In the Nation, you have rights; in the Colony, you have commands,”

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<sup>98</sup> A. Vitale, *The End of Policing* (New York: Verso, 2017). pp. 227-228.

<sup>99</sup> K. L. Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2017).



Hayes explains. “In the Nation, you are innocent until proven guilty; in the Colony, you are born guilty.” ....

Many historians have long noted that black folk are simultaneously overpoliced and underprotected. Hayes writes that violence by police or by gangs are “two sides of the same coin.” As such, the Nation evinces a peculiar circular logic: The harm black people do to one another “justifies” the harm the state does in their name. By contrast, the premium on white victimization in the Nation is “painfully clear to people living in the Colony,” Hayes writes. “White lives matter, and it hardly needs to be spoken.”<sup>100</sup>

In other words, then, what has happened in the USA — the wages of its original sin of slavery — is that coercive authoritarian, punitive laws applying to everyone, whether white or non-white, are then specifically applied in a brutal, discriminatory way to non-white people, especially black people.



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<sup>100</sup> K.G. Muhammed, “Power and Punishment: Two New Books about Race and Crime,” *The New York Times* (14 April 2017), available online at URL = <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/14/books/review/locking-up-our-own-james-forman-jr-colony-in-nation-chris-hayes.html>>.

Notice, moreover, that the very idea of a “criminal act” is defined wholly in terms of *the coercive authoritarian, punitive laws that forbid that act, backed up by the threat of legal violence via the police and legal punishment via the prison system.*

Hence without the coercive, punitive law that forbids an act, there is no such thing as a “criminal act” that violates that law, and therefore no ground whatsoever for legal violence or legal punishment.

**§142.** Now in the USA, when anyone, especially non-white people and extra-especially black people, *react against* the coercive authoritarian, punitive laws that are used to criminalize them, imprison them, or kill them — whether by police gun violence or by capital punishment — by committing even more “crimes,” then this fact, which has actually been caused and created by the coercive, punitive laws and their brutal, discriminatory application, is self-servingly used as a sufficient reason to create and justify *harsher, more coercive-and-authoritarian, more punitive laws*, that are then applied to everyone, but in an increasingly brutal, discriminatory way to non-white people and especially black people.



On top of that, as the two books discussed by Muhammed—one of which, *Locking Up Our Own*, won a 2018 Pulitzer Prize—show, it is *not only white people in America* who create and self-servingly “justify” these harsher, more coercive, more punitive laws, that are then applied to everyone, but in an increasingly brutal, discriminatory way to non-white people, and especially black people: it is also *non-white people, and especially black people, who do this very same thing to other non-white, and especially black, people.*



This bizarre, tragic, sociopolitical twist by which *oppressed people become themselves the oppressors of other oppressed people* is simply yet another case, here extended over a whole generation of post-Civil-Rights-era, non-white, and especially black, law-makers and law-enforcement officers, of *internalizing the oppressor*.

Here is how Muhammed eloquently concludes his article:

Taken together “A Colony in a Nation” and “Locking Up Our Own” compel readers to wrestle with some very tough questions about the nature of American democracy and its deep roots in racism, inequality and punishment. Both authors find hope in a shared vision of a future society that protects human dignity and seeks accountability rather than vengeance. “What would the politics of crime look like in a place where people worried not only about victimization but also about the costs of overly punitive policing and prosecution?” Hayes asks. Forman imagines redefining our core values: “What if we strove for compassion, for mercy, for forgiveness? And what if we did this for everybody, including people who have harmed others?”

Because, finally, there may be no pathway to end mass incarceration without reconsidering our handling of all crimes, not just nonviolent ones. Fifty-three percent of all state prisoners are serving time for violent offenses, most commonly robbery. Racism and mass incarceration are systemic problems, but both Forman and Hayes show that the solution will lie not only with policy changes but with individual changes of heart too.

Forman recalls that a 16-year-old he defended was saved from incarceration by the testimony of the victim, who told the judge he didn’t want the teenager to be sent to prison. A system built to make “teeth rattle,” as described by Atlanta’s first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, is not a system capable of transformation; we need to build a new foundation. We need to choose to do it. “Mass incarceration,” Forman writes, “was constructed incrementally, and it may have to be dismantled the same way.”<sup>101</sup>

**§143.** From a specifically existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist point of view,<sup>102</sup> I could not agree more with both Vitale and Muhammed.

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<sup>101</sup> See note 99 above.

<sup>102</sup> See Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 4—Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, [PREVIEW](#).

More precisely and radically,

(i) all punishment is coercive and authoritarian,

and in turn, (ii) all coercion is immoral because it inherently involves treating people as mere means or mere things, backed up by violence or threats of violence, in order to promote the purely instrumental—whether egoistic or Utilitarian—ends of the coercer; and all authoritarianism is rationally unjustified, because it claims that its commands are legitimate only because they've been commanded by someone who controls coercive power;

therefore (iii) *all punishment is rationally unjustified and immoral*, whether its purported justification is retributive, deterrent, rehabilitative, or restitutorial.

Moreover,

(iv) all “crimes” are so-defined in relation to coercive, punitive, authoritarian laws,

(v) but all coercive authoritarian, punitive, laws are rationally unjustified and immoral;

(vi) therefore, all “crime-&-punishment” systems, whether in the USA or in any other State, are also rationally unjustified and immoral.

**§144.** So let me now “wrestle with some very tough questions about the nature of American democracy and its deep roots in racism, inequality and punishment,” by going directly to the heart of the matter, and raising this amazingly hard question:

How can we go about devolving, dismantling, and exiting The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America?

Here are two radical thoughts in that direction.

**First**, by means of repealing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, we should universally abolish the legal right to the possession and use of guns in the USA, *especially including their possession and use by the police*.

Correspondingly, whether most Americans believe it or not, there are actually at least five other contemporary States in which police do not use guns — Iceland, Ireland,

Britain, New Zealand, and Norway—and yet generally, everything works out very well indeed.<sup>103</sup>

Moreover, many countries already seriously restrict the possession and use of guns, with significant benefits for all involved; therefore gun abolition would radically extend and increase those benefits.

It is of course obvious that gun abolition would have to be implemented in very carefully-designed stages, *so as to ensure a non-violent, safe transition from gun-free sub-zone1 to gun-free sub-zone2*, etc.

And in the devolutionary period immediately after the repeal of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, particularly, it might be necessary to create a small public caches of guns, owned by no one, in certain communities, for use under special, critical conditions, for last-resort, defensive, protective, and preventive moral force, by those who have volunteered to help others in this way.

But these would be designed to wither away.

In any case, I hereby emphasize and re-emphasize what I noted just above, namely, that gun abolition would be implemented by, first, repealing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and then, second, universally banning the possession or use of guns thereafter in a step-by-step, zone-by-zone way, by COMBINING the process of civilian gun abolition *with a step-by-step, zone-by-zone police, internal security, military, and intelligence force disarmament, and “the end of policing.”*

Above all, then, by abolishing the possession and use of guns in the USA, especially including their possession and use by the police, we would thereby *end police gun violence*, which is an essential feature of The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America.

**Second**, and most importantly, *we should de-criminalize everything, and shut down all prisons, by simply getting rid of all coercive authoritarian, punitive laws.*

*Non-coercive-non-authoritarian, non-punitive “laws,” aka social principles*, would still be acceptable, important, and even necessary for society: but their purpose would be solely to provide wise, apt guidelines for creating, operating, and sustaining all and only

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<sup>103</sup> See, for example, R. Noack, “5 Countries Where Most Police Officers Do Not Carry Firearms — And It Works Well,” *Washington Post* (8 July 2016), available online at URL = <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/02/18/5-countries-where-police-officers-do-not-carry-firearms-and-it-works-well/>.

constructive, enabling social institutions for our mutual aid, benefit, and self-realization, guided above all by universal respect for human dignity and universal resistance against human oppression.

§145. The most obvious objection to what we have just argued is this:

“Supposing that these radical proposals for dismantling The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America were enacted, then how then could we ever defend and protect innocent people against the bad acts of bad people or prevent these bad acts from happening?”

Here’s my reply.

Although all coercive authoritarianism is rationally unjustified and immoral, nevertheless, *minimal sufficiently effective, last resort, defensive, protective, and preventive moral force is morally permissible or even obligatory*, precisely because its fundamental aim is to support and sustain human dignity.

Correspondingly, I will contextually define “minimal sufficiently effective, last resort, defensive, protective, and preventive moral force” as follows:

A rational human agent X is using minimal sufficiently effective, last resort, defensive, protective, and preventive moral force if and only if X, as a last resort, only either uses the smallest sufficiently effective level of violence or threat of violence, or deploys the smallest sufficiently effective threat of appreciable, salient harm, in order to defend against, protect against, or prevent, X her/himself, or someone else, being coerced, or having their human dignity directly violated.

In view of that, when people are threatened, or about to be harmed, by bad people, we not only *morally can* but also *morally should* protect and defend those people against those bad people, and prevent this harm from happening.

But this protection, defense, and prevention would *not* involve crime-&-punishment, and would *never* involve either the ownership or possession and use of guns<sup>104</sup> or incarceration.

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<sup>104</sup> As I mentioned in §144, in some special critical cases, it would nevertheless be at least permissible to use guns *without* owning or possessing them.

§146. This leads me to a doctrine I call *Crime-&-Punishment Social Anarchism*.

Crime-&-Punishment Social Anarchism rejects The Crime-&-Punishment Machine, whether in America or anywhere else, from top to bottom.

Now The Crime-&-Punishment Machine is a monstrous, Leviathan-size fusion of

- (i) institutionalized vengeance under coercive authoritarian laws,
- (ii) Utilitarian social engineering, and
- (iii) Statism.

Correspondingly, this monstrous fusion is directly reflected in the retributive, deterrent, rehabilitative, and restitutive philosophical theories of punishment.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, in order to reject the very idea of crime-&-punishment, and along with that, in order to dismantle The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America, or anywhere else, the core assumptions of

- (i) institutionalized vengeance under coercive authoritarian laws,
- (ii) Utilitarian social engineering, and
- (iii) Statism

must *all* be rejected.

Now I'm going to make three radical counter-offers to those rejected assumptions.

Instead of institutionalized vengeance, I counter-offer institutionalized *forgiveness*.

This means that in a post-crime-&-punishment world, there would be no coercive, punitive laws, hence there would be *no guilt under the law*.

It also means that since there would be no criminalization, there would also be *no criminals*.

Instead of Utilitarian social engineering, I counter-offer *Kantian existential responsibility*, which means providing a social-institutional backdrop that makes it really possible for

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<sup>105</sup> See, e.g., D. Boonin, *The Problem of Punishment* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008).

people to take deep moral responsibility<sup>106</sup> for the bad and wrong things they have done, and change their lives for the better, in pursuit of principled authenticity, which includes serious commitments to respect for human dignity, resisting oppression, and mutual aid, hence a serious commitment to helping victims.

And instead of Statism, I counter-offer *existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchism*.<sup>107</sup>

In a post-crime-&-punishment world, there would be no legal violence, especially including no capital punishment, which is simply legalized State coercion via arbitrary killing.

There would be no possession and use of guns, hence no gun violence, hence no legal gun violence on the part of the police.

Indeed, *there would no such thing as the police*, as we currently know them.

And there would be no prisons, hence no mass incarceration.

The protection of the innocent, and of people generally, from being threatened or harmed by bad people, would be guaranteed by the principle of minimal sufficiently effective, last resort, defensive, protective, and preventive moral force.

**§147.** It remains true that if the state of things were to reach a special crisis situation, such that the well-being or lives of people were imminently threatened, or they were on the verge of being coerced or otherwise harmed, then we *might* have to use some minimally sufficiently effective, last resort, defensive, protective, and preventive means for neutralizing gun violence or other forms of violence, or for temporarily restraining someone.

And in some extreme cases, this *might* involve the permissible use of guns, although never the ownership or possession of guns.

So, again, *legal gun violence*, especially by the police, *capital punishment*, and *prisons* would all be abolished.

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<sup>106</sup> In *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, I distinguish sharply between *deep* moral responsibility and *shallow* moral responsibility. Deep moral responsibility is an *a first-person ontological fact* that flows from the free choices and actions of the real human person herself, whereas shallow moral responsibility is only a *second- or third-person epistemic fact* that flows from the beliefs and judgments of others.

<sup>107</sup> See note 101 above.

And in this way, *the racist, discriminatory use of police gun violence, capital punishment, and prisons, whether in America or anywhere else, would also all be abolished.*

Hence the violence-neutralizing or temporary restraining that would sometimes be necessary in special crisis situations, would be as infinitely far from The Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America as *utopia now* [\[12\]](#) is from *earthly hell*.

So all in all, in a post crime-&-punishment world, *no one would have to f-bomb the police or take a knee against the Crime-&-Punishment Machine in America ever again, because they'd be nothing but regrettable relics of the bad old days.*

**§148. Fear, loathing, and Pascal in Las Vegas: radical agnosticism.** During summer 2018 I drove through Las Vegas twice: once going west, once going east.

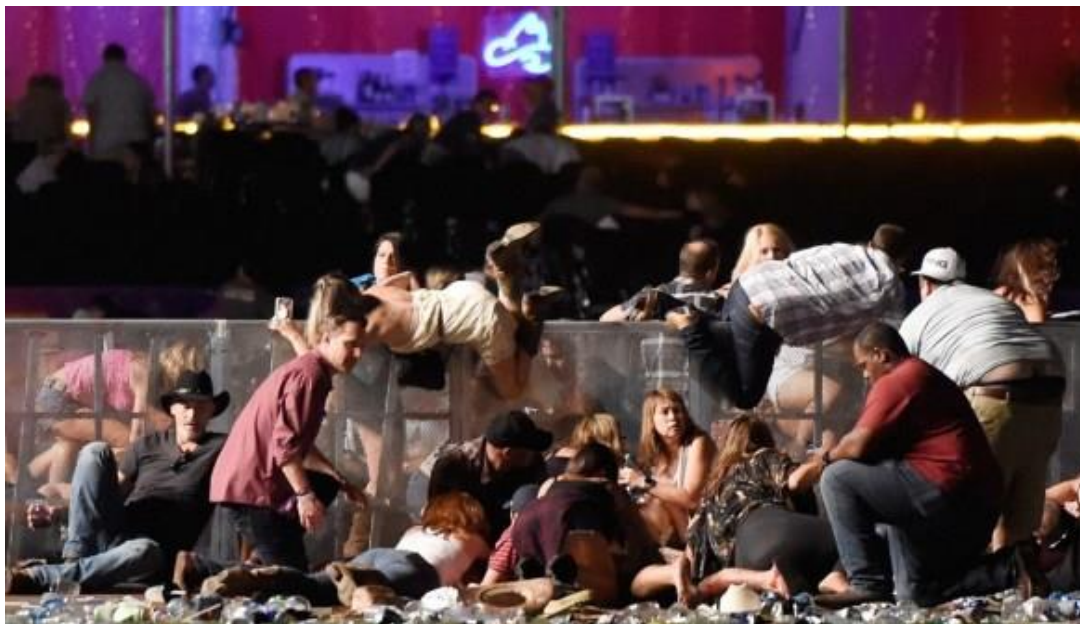


—Yes, that's me, standing beside my pink Cadillac convertible.

Actually I didn't stop there for gambling, or even for gas.



Nevertheless driving through Vegas always sets me to thinking about fear and loathing, human folly (e.g., Johnny Depp’s wine-drinking and spending habits), and evil, especially since the mass shooting there in October 2017<sup>108</sup> —



Similarly, the 2018 and early 2019 bad news cycles are unrelenting.<sup>109</sup>

So by now it is a self-evident fact, if it hadn’t been already, that natural evil and moral evil exist pervasively in this thoroughly nonideal, actual world.

And that self-evident fact, in turn, makes you wonder whether God exists or not.

**§149.** In philosophy of religion and philosophical theology, this is known as *The Problem of Evil*.

By *the concept of God*, I mean the concept of a being that is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnibenevolent (all-good).

This is also known, for short, as the concept of a 3-O God.

By *theism*, I mean the doctrine that a 3-0 God exists.

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<sup>108</sup> See, e.g., Wikipedia, “Las Vegas Shooting,” available online at URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017\\_Las\\_Vegas\\_shooting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Las_Vegas_shooting).

<sup>109</sup> See, e.g., “Bad News,” available online at <http://www.newsnw.co.uk/h/Current+Affairs/Bad+News>.



And by *atheism*, I mean the doctrine that a 3-O God does not exist.

Correspondingly, the classical *Metaphysical Argument For Atheism From The Existence of Evil* runs as follows:

- (1) Assume that a 3-O God exists. (Premise.)
- (2) Assume that evil exists in the world — both natural evil (e.g., disasters and disease) and also moral evil (wicked choices and acts, or just bad things that happen to people). (Premise.)
- (3) Then EITHER a 3-O God is responsible for the existence of evil, in which case a 3-O God is Her/Himself evil and not all-good, which is a contradiction with God's assumed 3-O-ness. (From 1 and 2.)
- (4) OR a 3-O God is not responsible for the existence of evil and yet knew that it was going to happen and could not prevent it — so a 3-O God is not all-powerful, which is also a contradiction with assumed God's 3-O-ness. (From 1 and 2.)
- (5) OR a 3-O God would have prevented evil but did not know it was going to happen, and is not all-knowing, which is another contradiction with God's assumed 3-O-ness. (From 1 and 2.)
- (6) Therefore, given the existence of evil, necessarily a 3-O God does not exist. (From 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.)

If The Metaphysical Argument For Atheism From The Existence of Evil were sound, then it would be logically necessary that a 3-O God does not exist.

**§150.** In the classical response of theism to this atheistic argument, it is claimed that it is at least logically possible that God has a sufficient reason for permitting evil that we are either capable of knowing, or else simply incapable of knowing, given our limited, “human, all-too-human” powers of knowing.

Perhaps this sufficient reason is the Leibnizian “this world is necessarily the best of all possible worlds” doctrine (brilliantly mocked in Voltaire's *Candide*); perhaps it is free will; perhaps it is moral progress; perhaps it is all of these taken together; or perhaps it is something else completely unfathomable by us.

Let us call this classical theistic response *Theodicy*.

In response to Theodicy, the neo-classical *Evidential Argument For Atheism From The Existence of Evil* says that even if it is logically possible that God has a sufficient reason for permitting evil, nevertheless it is significantly more rationally justified to believe that God does not exist, than to believe that God exists.

And so-on, and so forth, and scooby dooby dooby, different strokes for different folks, blah blah blah, World Without End, Amen.

But there is another, sharply different way of thinking about all this.

§151. According to my view, human perception and human knowledge are strictly limited to what falls within the scope of

- (i) our “human, all-too-human” senses,
- (ii) our “human, all-too-human” imagination, and
- (iii) our “human, all-too-human” concepts — even when these perceptions, imaginings, and concepts are extended by the basic natural sciences of physics, chemistry, and biology, by the basic formal sciences of logic and mathematics, or by philosophy.

Yet a 3-O God, simply by virtue of Its/His/Her very nature as ALL-powerful, ALL-knowing, and ALL-good, falls beyond all possible human perception, imagination, and conceptualization.

Therefore, just by knowing the inherent limitations of all human perception, imagination, and conceptualization, we do know THIS with certainty: *that we cannot know with certainty either what’s God’s nature is, or whether God exists or does not exist.*

Let’s call this doctrine, *Radical Agnosticism*.

If Radical Agnosticism is true, then not only The Metaphysical Argument For Atheism From The Existence of Evil, but also Theodicy, as well as The Evidential Argument For Atheism From The Existence of Evil, are equally humanly unprovable.

Indeed, if Radical Agnosticism is true, then God’s existence and God’s non-existence are equally humanly unprovable: for, as a “human, all-too-human” being, given the inherent limitations of your cognitive powers, you cannot rationally justify a belief in God’s existence and you cannot rationally justify a belief in God’s non-existence.

So if Radical Agnosticism is true, then theism and atheism alike are equally rationally unjustifiable.

§152. These radically agnostic facts, in turn, put The Problem of Evil in a completely new light.

If natural evil and moral evil both exist, and there is LOTS of evil of both kinds at all times and all over the place, but God's nature is humanly unknowable and God's existence and non-existence are equally humanly unprovable, *then we can't just do nothing.*

On the contrary, *we've got to deal with them.*

Therefore, natural evil and moral evil are entirely up to us to deal with *collectively*, that is, *they're sociopolitical problems.*

We and we alone, collectively, must deal with natural evil and moral evil, as best we can, by protecting, cleaning up, or fixing up the natural world when it is threatened or breaks down, by responding effectively to even the most horrific and monstrous moral evils, and above all by trying wholeheartedly to respect human dignity in a thoroughly nonideal actual world, as a sociopolitical task.

Look at it this way —

*Either* God does *not* exist, and then we're dealing with natural and moral evil for our own sake; *or else* God *does* exist, natural and moral evil are both parts of God's plan for the world, we must do God's work, under God's jurisdiction, and then we're dealing with moral and natural evil for God's sake.

If Radical Agnosticism is true, however, then we know with certainty that we cannot know with certainty either way.

Nevertheless, either way, we must do *something*, and dealing with natural and moral evil is a sociopolitical task.

Therefore, *let's leap!*, and try to do something about natural and moral evil.

—Call this *the radically agnostic leap of faith.*

§153. The radically agnostic leap of faith has some fundamental parallels with Pascal's so-called "Wager," in his *Pensées*.<sup>110</sup>

How does Pascal's argument unfold?

Let's see, plus a few more evocative images, plus my highly informal commentary, with Pascal's text indented and in italics.



*Infinite — nothing. — Our soul is cast into a body, where it finds number, time, dimension. Thereupon it reasons, and calls this nature, necessity, and can believe nothing else.*

So, we're embodied finite rational beings — human, all too human! — in space and time, both of them mathematically structured.

Just look at how pathetic and puny we are, even just in comparison to The Jewel in the Desert.

*Unity joined to infinity adds nothing to it, no more than one foot to an infinite measure. The finite is annihilated in the presence of the infinite, and becomes a pure nothing. So*

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<sup>110</sup> See, e.g., B. Pascal, *Pascal's Pensées* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958), pp. 65–69.

*our spirit before God, so our justice before divine justice. There is not so great a disproportion between our justice and that of God, as between unity and infinity.*



So, as rational human animals, we're finite beings in the face of the infinite, in comparison to which we're reduced to virtual nothingness.

God too is infinite; but our disproportion to God's moral nature, as the highest good, as the meaning of rational human life, is not as vast as the disproportion between the number one and infinity, since we're endowed with rational capacities.

*We know that there is an infinite, and are ignorant of its nature. As we know it to be false that numbers are finite, it is therefore true that there is an infinity in number. But we do not know what it is. It is false that it is even, it is false that it is odd; for the addition of a unit can make no change in its nature. Yet it is a number, and every number is odd or even (this is certainly true of every finite number). So we may well know that there is a God without knowing what He is. Is there not one substantial truth, seeing there are so many things which are not the truth itself?*

*We know then the existence and nature of the finite, because we also are finite and have extension. We know the existence of the infinite, and are ignorant of its nature, because it*



*has extension like us, but not limits like us. But we know neither the existence nor the nature of God, because He has neither extension nor limits.*

*But by faith we know His existence; in glory we shall know His nature. Now, I have already shown that we may well know the existence of a thing, without knowing its nature.*

*Let us now speak according to natural lights.*

*If there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible, since, having neither parts nor limits, He has no affinity to us. We are then incapable of knowing either what He is or if He is. This being so, who will dare to undertake the decision of the question? Not we, who have no affinity to Him.*



So, we know THAT the infinite exists, because we know that there is no greatest finite number.

Yet we do know not WHAT the nature of the infinite is, given our finite minds.

But in the case of God, we are ignorant not only of WHAT God's nature is, but also we are ignorant of WHETHER God exists or does not exist, because God is a non-spatial,

non-temporal, non-finite being — the highest good, and the meaning of rational human life, incarnate.

Still, even if we cannot KNOW THAT God exists or that God does not exist, we can still HAVE FAITH in God, that is, BELIEVE IN God, that is, BELIEVE IN a highest good, the meaning of rational human life, without a sufficient reason that would logically justify a claim to knowledge.

*Who then will blame Christians for not being able to give a reason for their belief, since they profess a religion for which they cannot give a reason? They declare, in expounding it to the world, that it is a foolishness, stultitiam; and then you complain that they do not prove it! If they proved it, they would not keep their word; it is in lacking proofs, that they are not lacking in sense. "Yes, but although this excuses those who offer it as such, and takes away from them the blame of putting it forward without reason, it does not excuse those who receive it." Let us then examine this point, and say, "God is, or He is not." But to which side shall we incline? Reason can decide nothing here. There is an infinite chaos which separated us. A game is being played at the extremity of this infinite distance where heads or tails will turn up. What will you wager? According to reason, you can do neither the one thing nor the other; according to reason, you can defend neither of the propositions.*

*Do not then reprove for error those who have made a choice; for you know nothing about it. "No, but I blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice; for again both he who chooses heads and he who chooses tails are equally at fault, they are both in the wrong. The true course is not to wager at all."*



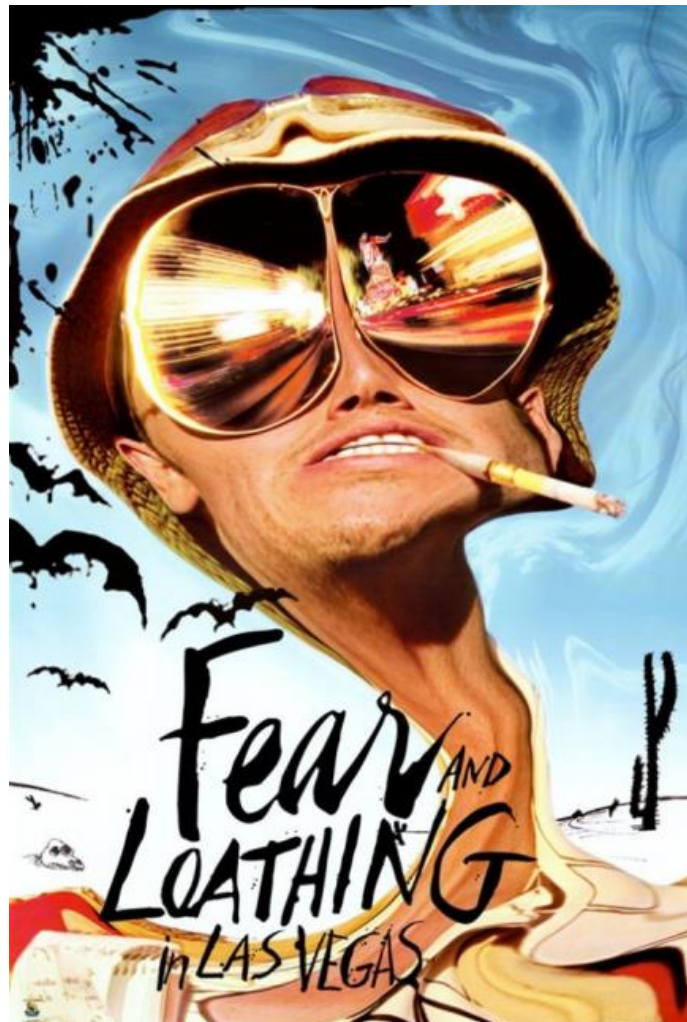
So, as far as our knowledge of God's existence or non-existence is concerned, we must be **RADICALLY AGNOSTIC**: we know that we cannot know, one way or the other.

Yet our need for **FAITH IN** a highest good, and our need for rational human existence to have meaning, drives us inexorably to the question: does God exist or not exist, is there a highest good in this world or not, does rational human life have meaning or not, heads or tails?

It's as if we were forced to gamble literally **EVERYTHING** that matters to us as rational human animals on a single coin toss, when all that we know is that we **CANNOT KNOW** what the outcome of our wager will be.

Far far better, then, not to gamble at all.

*Yes; but you must wager. It is not optional. You are embarked. Which will you choose then? Let us see.*





So, rational human existence is not a mere game that you can decline to play: the question of FAITH IN God, aka the highest good, aka the meaning of rational human life, or the rejection of all such FAITH IN, existential and moral nihilism, and the intense anxiety that accompanies our need to resolve this question, necessarily drive us to choose one way or the other.

*Since you must choose, let us see which interests you least. You have two things to lose, the true and the good; and two things to stake, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness; and your nature has two things to shun, error and misery. Your reason is no more shocked in choosing one rather than the other, since you must of necessity choose. This is one point settled. But your happiness? Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation that He is. — “That is very fine. Yes, I must wager; but I may perhaps wager too much.” — Let us see. Since there is an equal risk of gain and of loss, if you had only to gain two lives, instead of one, you might still wager. But if there were three lives to gain, you would have to play (since you are under the necessity of playing), and you would be imprudent, when you are forced to play, not to chance your life to gain three at a game where there is an equal risk of loss and gain. But there is an eternity of life and happiness. And this being so, if there were an infinity of chances, of which one only would be for you, you would still be right in wagering one to win two, and you would act stupidly, being obliged to play, by refusing to stake one life against three at a game in which out of an infinity of chances there is one for you, if there were an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain. But there is here an infinity of an infinitely happy life to gain, a chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss, and what you stake is finite. It is all divided; wherever the infinite is and there is not an infinity of chances of loss against that of gain, there is no time to hesitate, you must give all. And thus, when one is forced to play, he must renounce reason to preserve his life, rather than risk it for infinite gain, as likely to happen as the loss of nothingness.*

*For it is no use to say it is uncertain if we will gain, and it is certain that we risk, and that the infinite distance between the **certainty** of what is staked and the **uncertainty** of what will be gained, equals the finite good which is certainly staked against the uncertain infinite. It is not so, as every player stakes a certainty to gain an uncertainty, and yet he stakes a finite certainty to gain a finite uncertainty, without transgressing against reason. There is not an infinite distance between the certainty staked and the uncertainty of the gain; that is untrue. In truth, there is an infinity between the certainty of gain and the certainty of loss. But the uncertainty of the gain is proportioned to the certainty of the stake according to the proportion of the chances of gain and loss. Hence it comes that, if there are as many risks on one side as on the other, the course is to play even; and then*

*the certainty of the stake is equal to the uncertainty of the gain, so far is it from fact that there is an infinite distance between them. And so our proposition is of infinite force, when there is the finite to stake in a game where there are equal risks of gain and of loss, and the infinite to gain. This is demonstrable; and if men are capable of any truths, this is one.*

*“I confess it, I admit it. But, still, is there no means of seeing the faces of the cards?” — Yes, Scripture and the rest, etc. “Yes, but I have my hands tied and my mouth closed; I am forced to wager, and am not free. I am not released, and am so made that I cannot believe. What, then, would you have me do?”*



So, at this point, you might try to apply probabilistic, self-interested reasoning — rational decision-theory — to this issue.

But this one of the many ways that oh-so-clever people hyper-intellectualize Pascal's argument, while also completely misunderstanding his actual point.



Correspondingly, they have generated mountains of mathematical and decision-theoretic bullshit to try to prove that we must have FAITH IN something of which we are completely ignorant, both as to its nature and as to its existence or non-existence.

Pascal's actual point, then, is that it would be absolutely absurd and fundamentally self-stultifying for me to try to calculate whether it would be more in my rational self-interest to choose to have FAITH IN, or not — after all, *it is the eternal salvation of my soul and the difference between*

- (i) a world with a highest good, morality, and meaning, in it, and
- (ii) existential and moral nihilism,

that is at issue, a choice that has essentially NOTHING TO DO WITH rational self-interest and calculation.

What the fuck are these rational decision-theorists taking about?

*True. But at least learn your inability to believe, since reason brings you to this, and yet you cannot believe. Endeavour then to convince yourself, not by increase of proofs of God, but by the abatement of your passions. You would like to attain faith, and do not know the way; you would like to cure yourself of unbelief, and ask the remedy for it. Learn of*

*those who have been bound like you, and who now stake all their possessions. These are people who know the way which you would follow, and who are cured of an ill of which you would be cured. Follow the way by which they began; by acting as if they believed, taking the holy water, having masses said, etc. Even this will naturally make you believe, and deaden your acuteness. — “But this is what I am afraid of.” — And why? What have you to lose?*

*But to show you that this leads you there, it is this which will lessen the passions, which are your stumbling-blocks.*

***The end of this discourse.*** — *Now, what harm will befall you in taking this side? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. Certainly you will not have those poisonous pleasures, glory and luxury; but will you not have others? I will tell you that you will thereby gain in this life, and that, at each step you take on this road, you will see so great certainty of gain, so much nothingness in what you risk, that you will at last recognise that you have wagered for something certain and infinite, for which you have given nothing.*

Here, now, is the bottom line.



In the face of radical agnosticism and the self-evident failure of any attempt to apply probabilistic, self-interested reasoning to the most important question about your rational human existence — as if Pascal’s so-called “Wager” were nothing but a Wacked-Out Weekend in Las Vegas In The Sky, With Diamonds — and in the face of your intense anxiety about the question of God, aka the highest good, aka the meaning of rational human life — and add to that *The Problem of Evil* — the only alternative is to ACT



AS IF YOU HAD FAITH IN GOD, aka THE HIGHEST GOOD, aka THE MEANING OF RATIONAL HUMAN LIFE.

For to act in this way is precisely to demonstrate, by your religiously, morally, and existentially faithful actions, that which cannot be logically proved one way or the other.

Call it a radically agnostic “leap of faith” if you want to, like I do.

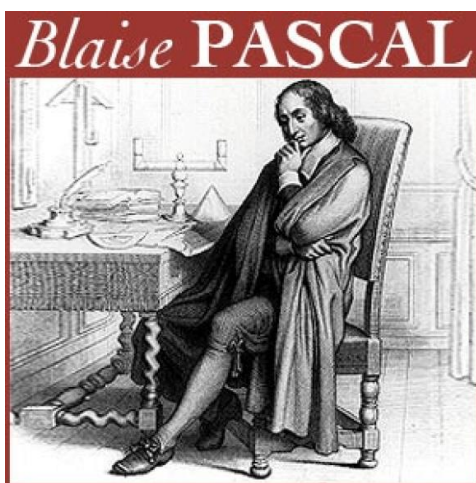
— But DON’T call it that, if this means that it’s an IRRATIONAL choice: on the contrary, it’s the ONLY rational thing to do, given your actual situation.

And now to give it an alternative name that suitably mocks the classical label “Pascal’s Wager,” let’s call this “Pascal’s No-Vegas-In-The-Sky Argument.”

*“Ah! This discourse transports me, charms me,” etc.*

*If this discourse pleases you and seems impressive, know that it is made by a man who has knelt, both before and after it, in prayer to that Being, infinite and without parts, before whom he lays all he has, for you also to lay before Him all you have for your own good and for His glory, that so strength may be given to lowliness.*

Or in other words, Pascal is saying: *Yo, bro:* for my No-Vegas-In-The-Sky Argument ALONE, I should be beatified and then canonized.<sup>111</sup>



<sup>111</sup> See, e.g., “Le pape François pense à béatifier Blaise Pascal,” *Le Monde* (7 November 2017), available online at URL =

<[http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2017/07/11/le-pape-francois-pense-a-beatifier-blaise-pascal\\_5158785\\_3214.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2017/07/11/le-pape-francois-pense-a-beatifier-blaise-pascal_5158785_3214.html)>.

**§154. What is democracy?** As everyone knows, the US Midterm elections were held on Tuesday 6 November 2018; and as everyone also knows, the Republicans not only held but also increased their majority in the Senate—whereas the Democrats “flipped” the House of Representatives by gaining a majority there.

So since then, the US Congress has been effectively legislatively deadlocked as between the Senate and the House, although the Republicans, with their majority in the Senate, retain their all-important power to confirm Supreme Court Justices, especially after recently rigging the rules by which it is managed, so that a bare majority now suffices.

And all this despite the hard-to-explain-to-foreigners facts that

(i) 10 million more people voted for Senate Democrats than for Senate Republicans,<sup>112</sup> and

(ii) that so-called President Trump, a neoliberal neo-fascist who was elected by the Electoral College, but *not* by the popular vote, remains in power for another two years.

Quite apart from the self-evidently depressing facts of *contemporary* US politics, however, please note also some of the basic elements of the logical, moral, and political structure presupposed by those facts:

(i) biannual majority elections across the entire country, although in fact the precise procedures for registering voters and regulating the act of voting itself vary widely across the states—and people in prison, former convicts who cannot pay their prison-debts, permanent residents, legal immigrants without citizenship or permanent residency, and so-called “illegal aliens,” all of whom actually live in the USA and are fully subject to its coercive authoritarian laws, are not even *permitted* to vote;

(ii) de facto, two political parties only;

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<sup>112</sup> See R. Noack, “How to Explain to Someone Living Abroad That Democrats Can Have Over 10 Million More Senate Votes and Still Lose,” The Washington Post (7 November 2018), available on line at URL = <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/11/07/how-explain-someone-living-abroad-that-democrats-can-have-over-million-more-senate-votes-still-lose/>>.

(iii) a bicameral Congress, organized so that gerrymandered voting districts are arranged by the party in power in the House, and every state elects two Senators, even though different states vary hugely in total population;

(iv) a nominally “independent” Judiciary consisting of nine already-quite-old people appointed for life, with tremendous authoritarian power to determine the interpretation and application of coercive laws everywhere in the USA, the gateway to which is in fact politically controlled by the Senate and sitting President;

(v) a President elected independently of the Congress, supposedly by the popular vote, but actually by a minority Electoral College; and

(vi) supposedly majoritarian representation across the board—except, of course, where the *minority* actually rules, namely, the wholly appointed Supreme Court and Electoral College.

That’s *the good old radical experiment of US democracy in The Land O’ Liberty*, right?

But did you notice any *prima facie* inconsistencies in its overall logical, moral, and political structure?

—In fact, even assuming that that’s *all* “democracy” means in *The Land O’ Liberty*, it’s obviously a logical, moral, and political *dog’s breakfast*.

Hence it seems like a good time to think philosophically about the nature of contemporary US democracy in particular and of democracy in general.

**§155.** In an interesting summer 2018 article in the socialist journal *Jacobin*, “Democratic Socialism Is About Democracy,”<sup>113</sup> Shawn Gude writes this:

There are lots of ways to talk about democratic socialism. Some focus on fairness and equality. Others stress the need to fix the “[irrationalities](#)” of capitalism. Still [others](#) speak of “convert[ing] hysterical misery into ordinary unhappiness.”

The democratic socialist du jour, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, [recently gave her own definition](#) on Stephen Colbert’s show:

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<sup>113</sup> S. Gude, “Democratic Socialism Is About Democracy” (7 July 2018), available online at URL = <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/democratic-socialism-democracy-ocasio-cortez>.

I believe that in a modern, moral, and wealthy society, no person in America should be too poor to live. So what that means is health care as a human right. It means that every child, no matter where you are born, should have access to a college or trade school education if they so choose it. And, you know, I think that no person should be homeless if we can have public structures and public policies to allow for people to have homes and food and lead a dignified life in the United States.

Not bad at all.

But here's what I'd emphasize: democratic socialism, at its core, is about deepening democracy where it exists and introducing democracy where it is absent. In countries like the US, that means increasing the scope of popular control in the political arena and broadening it out to include the social and economic spheres.

This may sound fairly innocuous — who isn't for democracy these days? But democratic socialists have something more far-reaching in mind. To us, democracy is not simply a banal amalgamation of procedures, an uncontroversial set of norms and rules that everyone can get behind. It is the quite radical idea that ordinary people — not experts, not elites, not their "betters" — can rule themselves. It is the word we use to describe the flattening of steep hierarchies, the shattering of structures that confer undue wealth and power and privilege.

And in an equally interesting article in *Pacific Standard* in 2017, Tom Jacobs asks the question, "are people losing faith in democracy?"<sup>114</sup>

This is because recent world-wide opinion surveys show that

"[l]evels of support for democracy are high and stable across most parts of the world," South African political scientists Cindy Steenekamp and Pierre du Toit write in the *Journal of Public Affairs*. "However, support for various authoritarian regime types is steadily increasing."

Nevertheless, although both articles are very interesting, in my opinion, they're also very conceptually confused.

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<sup>114</sup> T. Jacobs, "Are People Losing Faith in Democracy?" *Pacific Standard* (8 March 2017), available online at URL = <<https://psmag.com/news/are-people-losing-faith-in-democracy>>.



The questions “is democratic socialism really all about deepening democracy?” and “are people losing faith in democracy?” are shining examples of what are called, in the terminology of philosophical logic, *complex questions*.

A complex question is a question that cannot be intelligibly answered until the positive answer to a logically and semantically *prior* question is established—a positive answer that constitutes its *presupposition*—for example, the cop who asks a motorist: “Have you had enough to drink yet?”

Obviously, the presupposition of the question is that you’ve been drinking alcohol.

But we need to know *whether you’ve actually been drinking alcohol or not*, before we can intelligibly ask whether you’ve had either enough to drink yet, or not enough to drink yet, where “enough to drink yet” means: “a quantity of alcohol in your bloodstream that’s currently at or over the legal limit.”

Correspondingly, before the “is democratic socialism really all about deepening democracy?” and “are people losing faith in democracy?” questions can be intelligibly answered, we need to know the answer to this prior question: “*Do people actually know what democracy is?*”

From here on in, in this set of notes, I’m going to argue that most people, especially including the self-described “experts”—namely, political scientists—*don’t actually know what democracy is*, and also that this has extremely important logical and moral implications for how we should be thinking about politics in The Age of Trump-POTUS.

**§156.** In classical logic, *reductio ad absurdum* (in English: “reduction to absurdity”) is the Latin term for a formally legitimate and non-fallacious argument-strategy that starts with a given set of premises and then proceeds to derive a contradiction from those premises.

Now if a given set of premises really *does* lead to a contradiction, then since, formally speaking, an argument cannot be valid (truth-preserving) or sound (truth-producing) unless it *cannot* lead from true premises to a false conclusion, and since a contradiction is *necessarily false*, then it follows by *reductio* that at least one of the premises is also false.

**§157.** My next claim is that Trump’s Presidency clearly demonstrates the following contradiction:

- (i) US democracy is morally and politically acceptable, and

(ii) US democracy is *not* morally and politically acceptable.

Here's what I mean.

Let's assume that US democracy is morally and politically acceptable.

Then it could never lead to a US President and an administration as bad as Trump and his administration.

But actually, US democracy did lead directly to Trump and his administration, both of which are extremely bad.

Therefore US democracy is also morally and politically *unacceptable*, i.e., it is *not* morally and politically acceptable.

Therefore, given Trump's Presidency, US democracy is both morally and politically acceptable and also not morally and politically acceptable.

*Contradiction!*

Therefore, by *reductio*, at least one of the basic premises of US democracy is false.

This in turn raises again the very hard question with which I began this series of thoughts: what is democracy?

**§158.** In fact, and very confusingly for most people, especially including political scientists, who can't even come to an agreement on the definition of "democracy,"<sup>115</sup> there are at least *three* substantively different concepts of democracy at play in contemporary politics, not just in the USA but also worldwide:

(i) democracy as the rule of the majority of all the people qualified to vote, who then hand over the control of coercive power to an elected or appointed minority, aka *majoritarian-representative democracy*,

(ii) democracy as the open process of critical discussion and critical examination of opinions and social institutions, and, simultaneously, the unfettered expression of different opinions and lifestyles, aka *libertarian democracy*, and

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<sup>115</sup> M. Cummings, "Assessing the Health of American democracy: Q&A with Political Scientist Susan Stokes," *Yale News* (7 March 2017), available online at URL = <<https://news.yale.edu/2017/03/07/assessing-health-american-democracy-qa-political-scientist-susan-stokes?>>.

(iii) democracy as the unwavering commitments to universal respect for human dignity and autonomy, and universal resistance to human oppression, aka *ethical-emancipatory democracy*.

Notoriously, however, the three concepts of democracy are *mutually logically independent*, in that they do not necessarily lead to or follow from one another.

**First**, it is really possible that what is decreed by the majority of all the people qualified to vote is in fact morally evil and wrong, aka *the problem of the tyranny of the majority*—and that is exactly what happened when the Nazis were elected by a majority of German voters in 1932–1933.<sup>116</sup>

**Second**, it is also really possible that what is decreed by the majority of the people qualified to vote is a system in which an elected or appointed powerful minority of those people can actually override the majority, aka *the problem of the tyranny of the minority*—and that is exactly what happens whenever the US Electoral College votes to elect someone, like Trump in 2016, who did not actually win the popular vote.

**Third** and finally, it is also really possible that there could be an open process of critical discussion and critical examination of opinions and social institutions, and simultaneously the unfettered expression of different lifestyles and opinions, which nevertheless leads to a situation in which universal respect for human dignity and autonomy, and universal resistance against human oppression, are in fact undermined and weakened, aka *the problem of an unconstrained, value-neutral process*—and that is exactly what happened in the case of Trump’s election, via the multiple-Party system, the Primaries, and psychologically-manipulative uses of social media and the internet.<sup>117</sup>

In my opinion, the only independently morally and politically acceptable concept of democracy is the *third* concept, *ethical-emancipatory democracy*: democracy as the unwavering commitments to universal respect for human dignity and autonomy, and universal resistance to human oppression.

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<sup>116</sup> [i] See, e.g., Wikipedia, “German Federal Election, March 1933,” available online at URL = <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German\\_federal\\_election,\\_March\\_1933](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_federal_election,_March_1933)>.

<sup>117</sup> [ii] See, e.g., B. Schreckinger, “Inside Trump’s ‘Cyborg’ Twitter Army,” *Politico* (30 September 2016), available online at URL = <<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/donald-trump-twitter-army-228923>>; and Y. Benkler et al., “Study: Breitbart-Led Right-Wing Media Ecosystem Altered Broader Media Agenda,” *Columbia Journalism Review* (3 March 2017), available online at URL = <<http://www.cjr.org/analysis/breitbart-media-trump-harvard-study.php>>.

Nevertheless, *if we conjoined the second and third concepts*, then we could also derive a compound morally and politically acceptable concept of democracy that is driven by the demands of the third concept.

**§159.** In any case, given the contradictions in US democracy that constitute Trump's Presidency, which basic premises of US democracy should we reject?

Here's my four-part proposal.

**First**, everyone needs to recognize that there are three logically distinct concepts of democracy and that only either the third concept of democracy alone, or the conjunction of the second and third concepts, is morally and politically acceptable.

**Second**, we need to get rid of the Electoral College, *altogether*.

**Third**, we need to get rid of the de facto two Party system, the Primaries, and psychologically-manipulative uses of social media and the internet, *altogether*, by starting with a list of self-declared candidates, *all* of them independents, who meet the basic eligibility requirements,<sup>118</sup> and then elect presidents directly and exclusively on the basis of

(i) each candidate's life-history up to the election, as presented in a publicly-accessible and independently fact-checked and confirmed *Curriculum Vitae (CV) document*, with only one small, passport-style, head-shot picture of the candidate allowed, of no more than 10 pages (of single space 12 pt text) in length, of which that candidate is, certifiably, the sole author, and

(ii) each candidate's ethical commitments and proposed policies, and her/his reasons for holding them, as presented in a publicly-accessible and independently fact-checked and confirmed *commitments-and-policies document*, of no more than 20 pages (of single-spaced 12 pt text) in length, of which that candidate is, certifiably, the sole author, and

(iii) an election run-up period lasting exactly one month from the time the candidates' CV and commitments-and-policies documents have been independently fact-checked, confirmed, and certified, and then made generally available to all the eligible voters via official hard-copy mailing and also on a single, official *US Presidential Election Website*, to the election day itself, in order to

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<sup>118</sup> USA Gov, "U.S. Constitutional Requirements for Presidential Candidates," available online at URL = <https://www.usa.gov/election#item-212587>.

give all the eligible voters just enough time to read, think about, and discuss the candidates' CVs and commitments-and-policies documents, but little or no time for psychological manipulation via social media and the internet.

**Fourth**, finally, and most radically, we need to get rid of the coercive majoritarian representative rule of all the people qualified to vote, *altogether*, and replace it by *truly democratic decision procedures*, by which I mean *participatory decision-making*, aka *collective principled negotiation*.<sup>119</sup>

Truly democratic—that is, according to the principles of ethical-emancipatory democracy—decision procedures systematically rule out *both* the tyranny of the majority and *also* the tyranny of the minority.

How can that be?

In order to show how, I'm going to spell out, briefly, the social dynamics of *post-majoritarian-representative, ethical-emancipatory democracy*.

**§160.** Let us first consider the classical majoritarian representative democratic two-valued voting system:

Yes (or Yea)

No (or Nay)

and also the classical *Robert's Rules of Order*-style<sup>120</sup> three-valued voting system:

Yes

Abstain

No

In most versions of the classical majoritarian representative democratic two-valued voting system, full participation of all eligible voters is not required.

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<sup>119</sup> See, e.g., R. Fisher, W. Ury, and B. Patton, *Getting To Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (rev. edn., New York: Penguin, 2010).

<sup>120</sup> See, e.g., *Robert's Rules Online: Robert's Rules of Order 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, available online at URL = <http://www.rulesonline.com/>.

So deciding not to vote, for any reason whatsoever, is functionally equivalent to abstention in that system.

In *Robert's Rules-of-Order*-style three-valued systems—with numerical ranking of candidates or candidate-options, and iterated rounds of re-shuffled rankings in which the least favored candidate or candidate-option is dropped in each round, until a victor is determined—the “abstain” vote is used for any one of three reasons:

- (i) genuine neutrality or unconcern about a proposal, either way (relatively rare),
- (ii) as a polite way of saying “a plague on both their houses,” or
- (iii) as a way of *quasi-nay-voting*, without incurring any social consequences or repercussions (or social stigmata, in voting without secret ballot) that might be attached to actual disagreement.

**§161.** But by sharp contrast to all of the above, consider now the following scheme:

- (i) that group decision-making should not be *a discrete, individual act* (like a vote) that is carried out at a particular moment by a group of people, but instead should be *a temporally extended social-dynamic process containing a medley or symphony of mutually-coordinated individual acts*, that is engaged in and performed by a group of people,
- (ii) that every such process of group decision-making should be a dialogue with people collectively discussing various proposals for institutional group action guided by principles of ethical-emancipatory democracy,
- (iii) that every process of group decision-making should feature a five-valued array of options for taking a position on any given proposal, including two degrees of agreement, one neutral or as-yet-uncommitted value, and two degrees of disagreement, namely—

Strongly Agree

Mildly Agree

Abstain

Mildly Disagree

## Block or Walk

—any of which is registered by each member of a group at any point in a given dialogue about a given proposal being considered by that group,

(iv) that every registration of a position carries with it the option to change or update your position at any time in the dialogue,

(v) that every registration of a position is aimed at a principled, negotiated decision collectively made by that group as whole, and

(vi) that therefore every process of group decision-making ideally involves full participation by all members of the relevant group.

Following the facilitation and principled negotiation traditions in non-mainstream social and political theory since the 1980s, let us call this system *participatory decision-making*.

It could also be called *direct democracy*, although this label is somewhat problematic in view of the fact that the term “democracy” is systematically ambiguous and widely misused, especially in self-congratulatory self-labeled “democratic” States like the USA.

So to avoid confusion, I will stick to the term “participatory decision-making.”

But I must also add eight crucial further points by way of unpacking the specifically ethical-emancipatory democratic *interpretation* of participatory decision-making.

**First**, there is a *basic principle* governing the system of participatory decision-making:

No one is ever coerced in any particular sub-cycle or overall process of participatory decision-making, either with respect to their own position or with respect to their other contributions to the dialogue-towards-deciding, and more specifically, no one is ever forced to walk, or punished for blocking or walking.

**Second**, *blocking* means not merely a strong disagreement with a given proposal, but also that *one block is enough to defeat a given proposal in any given sub-cycle of a particular process of participatory decision-making*.

**Third**, every blocker must also offer, or support, or at least refrain from blocking, *an alternative proposal* in the next sub-cycle of the same decision-making process.

**Fourth**, every participant is permitted *only a limited number of blocks* (say, three or four, or whatever) in a particular decision-making process, but if s/he uses up *all* his or her blocks, s/he must then also *walk away from* that decision-making process and thereby *exit it*.

**Fifth**, walking away from/exiting a particular decision-making process can be done at any point in the process, not only after the permitted maximum number of blocks; and it will always carry some natural consequences, whether good or bad; but these consequences are always freely chosen by the walker/exiter, not coerced, since

(i) according to the basic principle, no one is ever coerced for walking/exiting, hence no one is ever forced to do so or punished for doing so, and

(ii) everyone involved in a particular decision-making process always has the option of staying in that process under one or another of the five positions—except after using up all his or her permitted blocks, which entails walking away from/exiting the process, *but this is part of the rules*, hence agreed-to from the start, and not coerced.

**Sixth**, *mild disagreement* always entails going forward with the current proposal if there is sufficiently strong support for it.

**Seventh**, *sufficiently strong support* means that there is close to or more than 50% strong or mild agreement with the proposal, and no blocks.

**Eighth** and finally, *not participating* in the process—yet, or perhaps ever—for any reason whatsoever, is functionally and normatively equivalent to abstention or walking/exiting, hence it is never coerced, and more specifically, no one is ever forced to participate, punished for not participating, or prevented from participating.

**§162.** The dynamic registration of positions in participatory decision-making according to the scheme I just laid out essentially tells us how a person is *rationally feeling* about any proposal put forward for group decision-making.

Therefore the dynamic registration of positions in participatory decision-making in this sense is *not* majoritarian representative democratic voting: on the contrary, it is dynamically tracking the levels of what Brazilians call *concordar*—literally, “shared heart,” that is, solidarity, onboardness, or team-spirit—about any given proposal for ethical-emancipatory social action, for the sake of which those people are having a dialogue-towards-deciding.



Otherwise put, the dynamic registration of positions in participatory decision-making is tracking the level of people's rationally-guided but also inherently affective (i.e., felt, desiderative, or emotional) *onboardness* about any given proposal for ethical-emancipatory social action, in a way that is relevantly similar to *monitoring the dynamics of team-spirit* in team-sports or to *monitoring the dynamics of mutual cohesion and harmonization* in dancing or musical performances.

**§163.** Let us call the classical majoritarian representative democratic two-valued voting system (yes/no, with or without full participation, and with or without a secret ballot), together with *Robert's Rules of Order*-style three-valued systems (yes/abstain/no, with full participation, with or without a secret ballot, and numerical rankings of candidates or candidate-options), *voting*.

By contrast, let us call participatory decision-making *deciding*.

The fundamental difference between *voting* and *deciding* is essentially analogous and parallel to the fundamental difference between *debate* and *dialogue*. Here are some important conceptual contrasts between dialogue and debate.

- Dialogue requires temporarily suspending one's own beliefs, encourages critical reflection on them, listens in order to understand and find meaning, and opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions. *Dialogue discovers new common aims and thoughts.* Debate dogmatically asserts one's own beliefs, negatively criticizes by denying the validity of others' beliefs, listens only in order to be able to refute, and presupposes that one's own position is the only acceptable or possible solution to any problem. Debate digs in its heels and suppresses or even kills shared creative thinking.
- Dialogue allows the expression of real feelings (in ourselves and others) for understanding and catharsis. Debate expresses feelings to manipulate others and denies others' emotions and feelings as legitimate.
- Dialogue respects the human dignity of all participants and seeks neither to alienate nor oppress. Debate rebuts contrary positions and typically belittles and depreciates all participants who disagree.
- Dialogue is collaborative and all about exploring common ground towards a new understanding and a new synoptic vision of the conceptual and ideological landscape. Debate is combative and all about conversational conquest, closure, and closed minds.

Or to summarize all of this in a single statement:

Dialogue aims to elucidate ideas and enlighten—in the Left Kantian, heavy-duty sense of what I call *radical enlightenment*<sup>121</sup>—all of its participants, but a debater aims only to defeat and silence his conversational opponents.

§164. Classically, in the Platonic tradition, debaters were labelled *Sophists*; in the context of modern majoritarian representative democratic states, they're *demagogues*.

By sharp contrast, but also in the Platonic tradition, people engaging in dialogue were labelled *Socratic philosophers*.

And well within that tradition of Socratic dialogue, but more specifically according to the theory of post-majoritarian-representative democratic social dynamics that I am briefly describing and defending here, people engaging in participatory decision-making in the sense I just spelled out, are *ethical-emancipatory democrats*.

Now debate is inherently aimed at voting.

In standard debating competitions, people in the audience vote at the end to determine who “won.”

And this perfectly parallels political campaigns in modern majoritarian representative democratic states, of which the 2016 US Presidential campaign is a paradigmatic example.

On the one hand, there are the debaters (namely, *Sophists* or *demagogues*), *the politicians*, and on the other hand there is the passive audience, *We the People*, that pretends it is authentically participating by voting at the end of all the debates, in order to determine *who wins* and *who loses*.

Voting, by its very nature and central role in the social and political mechanisms of modern majoritarian representative democratic states, institutionally polarizes and segregates people into *with-me* or *against-me* camps, and also into *winners* and *losers* camps; and ultimately it also coercively demands toe-the-line conformity and inauthentic consensus at the conclusion of the voting process, *since the majority rules*—except, of course, when they appoint a minority that actually rules.

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<sup>121</sup> See Hanna, THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 4—*Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, [PREVIEW](#), part 2.

Moreover, this inherently adversarial and contradictory situation is true whether people vote Yes or No, even if they antecedently possessed much more nuanced, subtle, non-bivalent views before they entered into the voting system.

So it is Yea or Nay, *no matter what* We the People say; and *when they come out of voting*, the system has institutionally polarized and segregated them, and yet also coercively demands their lock-step conformity and their phony consensus.

Three-valued *Robert's Rules of Order*-style voting systems may *seem* to be an improvement on modern majoritarian representative democratic voting polarization; but actually they are not.

Numerical rankings of candidates or candidate-options only promotes *systematic strategic partisan, polarized voting*, and the systematic strategic partisan, polarized destruction of unwanted candidates or candidate-options.

And "abstain" in a *Robert's Rules of Order*-style system merely means, in effect:

"for whatever reason, I am not saying which polarized group I belong to, and I also accept the coercive demand for obedient conformity and artificial consensus that voting imposes in modern majoritarian representative democratic states."

By sharp contrast, participatory decision-making according to the ethical-emancipatory democratic interpretation does *not* institutionally polarize people, thereby segregating them into partisan factions, *nor* does it coercively demand conformity and consensus.

This is because participatory decision-making in the sense I spelled out is essentially dialogical; because it dynamically registers people's levels of *concordar* about proposals for institutional action; because the process of creating *concordar* is a mutual coordination and harmonization of basic affects and moral-political values; and because people take individual and mutual responsibility for the institutional actions they perform at the end of the process.

In modern majoritarian representative democratic voting with the secret ballot, it's true that people are, by virtue of secrecy, protected from the social consequences, repercussions, or stigmata attached to publicly being in this polarized, segregated partisan camp or that one.

But this in turn means that people take no mutual responsibility for their votes.

Moreover, in modern majoritarian representative democratic political debating, no one but the debaters actually gets to contribute to the formation of proposals or the discussion itself.

How people vote at a debate is wholly determined by how *the debaters*, that is, the politicians, whether Sophists or demagogues, verbally convince each atomic, isolated individual to belong to one polarized, segregated partisan camp or the other, always appealing to their rational self-interest only, hence inherently guided by ethical egoism.

And, in an essentially coercive authoritarian way, demands, and imposes, consensus and conformity at the end of the voting-mechanism's functioning, by majority rule.

Thus, to summarize, the modern majoritarian representative democratic voting-debating system

- (i) is inherently polarizing, and it segregates people into partisan factions,
- (ii) in secret ballot versions, it is without mutual responsibility,
- (iii) it is atomistic/solipsistic and driven by rational self-interest only, and
- (iv) it is inherently coercive and authoritarian.

**§165.** But by sharp contrast, participatory decision-making according to the ethical-emanicipatory democratic interpretation is inherently an open, face-to-face group activity, everyone is responsible to everyone else, everyone is also individually responsible for their own contributions, and no one is ever coerced into anything: whether by *the tyranny of the majority* or by *the tyranny of the minority*.

On the contrary, when a group decides on institutional action by means of a process of participatory decision-making according to the ethical-emanicipatory interpretation of democracy, via dialogue, it is because they have mutually coordinated and harmonized their rational affects, and created *concordar* or solidarity, according to shared non-egoistic and non-consequentialist moral and political principles, and have freely taken both individual and shared responsibility for their collective decision.

Someone once said to me, after I'd spelled out (roughly) the same picture of ethical-emanicipatory democracy I just presented above:

"Wow, cool: that all sounds pretty interesting. But how are you going to compel people to participate and to be good?"

After a jaw-dropping double take, I replied:

“In the ethical-emancipatory democratic system I just spelled out, *nobody ever compels or forces people to do anything!* It’s totally *anti-coercion!* It’s rationally and freely chosen, and inherently respects human dignity! That’s the essence of participatory decision-making!”

**§166. Is human free agency really possible? Yes; and here’s how.** Is human free agency really possible in the natural world as correctly described by modern physics, chemistry, biology, and cognitive neuroscience—and if so, *how* is that really possible?

Or more briefly put, given the truth of modern science, are you really a free agent—and if so, *how*?

Yes; here’s how.

**§167.** By *free agency*, I mean the conjunction of *free will* and *practical agency*, which in turn means

(i) that you can choose and do what you want to, or refrain from so choosing or doing, without being in any way compelled or prevented by irresistible inner or outer forces (free will), and

(ii) that you can self-consciously choose and do what you want to, for reasons, and with deep moral or non-moral responsibility (free agency).

And by deep *moral or non-moral responsibility for X*, I mean

(i) that *X* is something you chose or did yourself, whose objective moral value flows from and directly attaches to your freely willed choice or action.

(ii) that deep moral responsibility requires free will—if you weren’t able to choose or do *X*, without being in any way compelled or prevented by irresistible inner or outer forces, then you couldn’t be deeply morally or non-morally responsible for *X*.

An example of choice and action with deep *moral* responsibility would be deciding to join the Democratic Socialists of America and then voting for the local DSA-endorsed candidate in the US midterm elections.

And an example of choice and action with deep *non*-moral responsibility would be creating a work of art, as per my latest poetic creation:

### To Bee Or Not To Bee

Oh! how I long to see, the inner workings of a bee;  
It knows not what it is to be, but only how to be, a bee.

§168. The thesis of *Natural Determinism* says that everything that happens now and in the future is strictly fixed by the laws of nature together with all the actual facts about the past.

And the thesis of *Natural Indeterminism* says that at least some things and perhaps all things that happen are *not* strictly fixed by the laws of nature together with all the actual facts about the past, but also happen more or less randomly, according to mathematical laws of probability.

Most contemporary philosophers and scientists, and many non-philosophers too, hold that you are not really free, because they also believe that the truth of modern science entails a thesis I call *Natural Mechanism*.

Natural mechanism says

(i) that everything that happens is either deterministic, indeterministic, or some mixture of both (say, macroscopically deterministic but microscopically indeterministic at the quantum level), and

(ii) that all the causal and quantitative characteristics of those happenings are not only

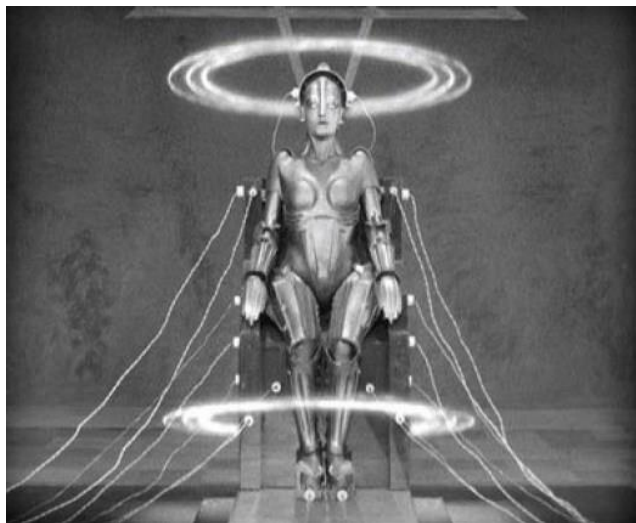
(ii.1) strictly fixed by the general causal laws of nature and/or the mathematical laws of probability, especially those laws governing the conservation of quantities of matter or energy, together with all the settled facts about the past, especially including the Big Bang,

but also

(ii.2) calculable from those laws and facts on an ideal digital computer.

If Natural Mechanism is true, then you are not really free, because, instead, no matter what you may believe about your own freedom, you are really a deterministic or indeterministic natural automaton, ultimately caused by the Big Bang.

So, in effect, you're essentially only a fancy machine like Maria in *Metropolis*, Roy Batty in *Blade Runner*, or Motoko Kusanagi in *Ghost in the Shell*:



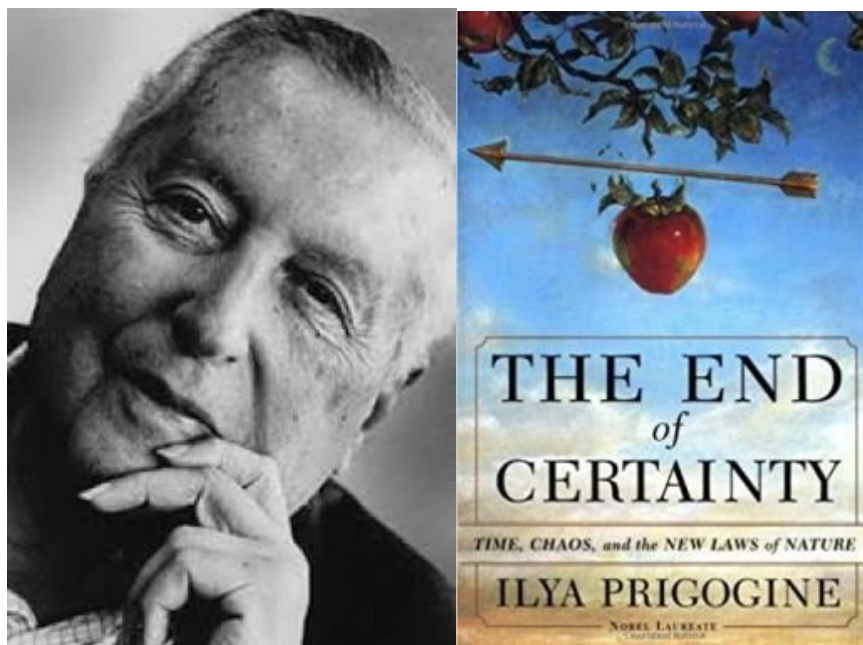


§169. I will now sketch a new theory of free agency that is *neither* contrary to modern science *nor* committed to the thesis of Natural Mechanism, that I call *Natural Libertarianism*, and, correspondingly, also provide a new proof for the *real possibility* of human free agency, by explaining and proving its *actual existence*.

Two philosophical truths for the price of one!

Natural Libertarianism flows from **two** simple but earth-shattering ideas proposed by Kant in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and also from **one** slightly less simple but still earth-shattering idea proposed by Nobel laureate Ilya Prigogine in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in his 1997 book, *The End of Certainty*.





**First**, action that is perfectly in conformity with a law, is not necessarily entailed or otherwise necessitated by that law.

**Second**, real freedom presupposes, in rational human animals, the natural processes specifically characteristic of living organisms; but living organisms are not natural automata, whether deterministic or indeterministic, because they are self-organizing and purposive; hence real freedom is grounded in *biological anti-mechanism*.

**Third**, the correct physics is a non-deterministic interpretation of non-equilibrium thermodynamics. simplicity's sake, I'll call this correct physics NDI-NET.

Let us suppose, for the purposes of argument, that NDI-NET, as worked out, for example, by Prigogine in *The End of Certainty* — actually, it should have been called *The End of Mechanism* — is true, and that all the general causal laws of nature and/or mathematical laws of probability, as formulated by modern science, are also true, under the NDI-NET interpretation.

From these suppositions, taken together with Kant's two ideas, not only does it *not* follow that Natural Mechanism is true and that we are really natural automata, it also follows that Natural Mechanism is *not* true and that we are really *not* natural automata.

§170. To see this, suppose that everything we choose and do is at least consistent with those general causal natural laws and/or mathematical laws of probability, and that therefore we never violate any of them.

And in particular, suppose that we never bring any new matter or energy into the natural world, hence we never violate any of the general causal natural laws and/or mathematical laws of probability governing the conservation of quantities of matter or energy.

Nevertheless, it does *not* follow that whatever we choose and do is entailed or otherwise necessitated by those laws.

This is because, as Kant pointed out, *mere conformity of action with laws* is not the same as *entailment or necessitation by laws*.

Indeed, for any general causal law of nature and/or mathematical law of probability whatsoever, no matter how specific it is, together with all the settled natural facts about the past, nevertheless, there is always some physical “open texture” that is not entailed or necessitated by that law, although it remains perfectly in conformity with the laws.

More precisely, in the wake of the Big Bang, there is always and everywhere some physical *open texture* that, at various stages of far-from-equilibrium, temporally-unidirectional, complex, self-organizing thermodynamic activity, as studied in NDI-NET, creates targets for ultra-specific, context-sensitive physical activity: e.g., the roiling surface-structures of boiling water; the Belousov-Zhabotinsky chemical reaction,<sup>122</sup> plus light excitation; the unfolding of weather systems; the development of viruses; organismic activity including the purposive lives of simple organisms, plants, and animals; the feelings, desires, perceptions, and thoughts of conscious animals; and really free choice and action by conscious animals, including rational human animals.

Let us call these thermodynamic targets *live options*, and this physical open texture *natural open space*.

Given some live options in natural open space, then, even though you never violate any general causal laws of nature and/or mathematical laws of probability and never bring any new matter or energy into the natural world, it remains really possible for you, in context, to choose and do some things you want to, in purposive, creative, and morally-empowered ways, by spontaneously locally re-organizing and re-structuring the total quantity of matter or energy that is always already available then and there.

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<sup>122</sup> See, e.g., Wikipedia, “Belousov-Zhabotinsky Reaction,” available online at URL = <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belousov%E2%80%93Zhabotinsky\\_reaction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belousov%E2%80%93Zhabotinsky_reaction)>.

For example: now type, write down, or declaim aloud any sequence of words that spontaneously comes into your head, for example, my poem, **To Bee or Not To Bee**.

In all likelihood, that amazing sentence—nay, that amazing poem—has never been produced before in the actual history of the natural universe.

Let's call this sort of activity, *natural self-determination*.

Now do a little spontaneous dance by flapping your arms and legs, bobbing your head, and hopping up and down a bit (but be careful not to spill your coffee, or knock over your laptop!)—let's call this **The Freedom Dance**.

This act of natural self-determination is just like a creative artist who makes an original work of art by spontaneously locally re-organizing and re-structuring whatever already-existing materials are given to her: in fact, it is just like creating **To Bee Or Not To Bee**.

As naturally self-determining animals, we are all creative natural artists, *little bangs*, who purposively bring new energy-structures into the world, and thereby actualize potential energy.

The Big Bang has done many things.

But it didn't, on its own, type, write down, or declaim aloud my amazing poem, nor did it do **The Freedom Dance**.

*I* did it, with actual free agency.

Therefore, *I'm* not a natural automaton; instead *I'm* a naturally self-determining animal fully capable of free agency.

Now it's *your* turn: go ahead and act creatively and/or spontaneously for a few seconds!

Didn't that feel good?

Therefore, you and I both *aren't* natural automata; on the contrary, we both *are* self-determining minded human animals capable of free agency.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Notice that *I'm not* saying that it's impossible to design and build a natural machine that, when it's turned on, makes various motions that might fool someone, or even many people, into believing that it was me or you doing **The Freedom Dance**. It's logically, really, naturally, and perhaps even

So, self-evidently, Natural Libertarianism is true, given my original assumptions.

§171. Finally, and as an encore, I'm going to refute my most important (although by no means my only) philosophical opponent, the Hard Determinist.

Here is a typical Hard Determinist–



See how smug and intellectually arrogant he looks!

That's what comes from writing philosophically false but best-selling books that argue unsoundly from natural science by presupposing that Natural Mechanism is true.

Indeed, in his best-selling book, *Free Will*, the public philosopher and cognitive neuroscientist Sam Harris wrote this:

Free will *is* an illusion. Our wills are simply not of our own making. Thoughts and intentions emerge from background causes of which we are unaware and over which we exert no conscious control. We do not have the freedom we think we have.... Either our wills are determined by prior causes and we are not

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technologically possible that there's such a machine. On the contrary, what I'm saying is that, necessarily, the deceptive naturally mechanical motions of such a natural mechanism couldn't be **The Freedom Dance**, since *that* and *only* that was *actually* freely performed by *me* or by *you*, and *not* by any natural machine that was designed and built to resemble us in various ways.

responsible for them, or they are the product of chance and we are not responsible for them.<sup>124</sup>

In other words, Harris is saying

- (i) that human free agency is impossible in the natural world as described by physics, chemistry, biology, and cognitive neuroscience,
- (ii) because we're really nothing but either deterministic automata or indeterministic/probabilistic automata, i.e., really nothing but complex machines,
- (iii) that we're not deeply morally or non-morally responsible for anything, and
- (iv) that our self-defining belief in our own free agency and deep moral or non-moral responsibility is nothing but a cognitive illusion.

Therefore, Harris is defending what contemporary philosophers call *Hard Determinism*.

I think that Harris, and, by direct implication, all other Hard Determinists, are *completely* wrong, in that they are wrong about (i), wrong about (ii), wrong about (iii), and wrong about (iv).

If Natural Libertarianism is true, then they're wrong, wrong, wrong, and wrong again.

But their view is also deliciously *self-refuting*, in the following way.

1. Suppose that one holds what Sam Harris and other Hard Determinists hold.
2. If that is true, then we are all natural machines with an irresistibly strong tendency to create cognitive illusions for ourselves.
3. Therefore, under the supposition that the Hard Determinist's theory is true, any holder of such a view *cannot rule out* the directly relevant possibility that s/he has created a cognitive illusion for herself *by defending Natural Mechanism and Hard Determinism*.
4. But if the Hard Determinist cannot rule out this directly relevant possibility, *then s/he is not rationally justified in believing in her own theory, nor is s/he deeply responsible for formulating it*. In particular, then, if Sam Harris's theory is true, then

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<sup>124</sup> S. Harris, *Free Will* (New York: The Free Press, 2012), p. 5.

he's not rationally justified in believing it and wasn't even deeply responsible for writing his "own" best-selling book: what a sophist!

5. So the Hard Determinist's belief in her/his own theory is cognitively self-undermining.

6. Therefore, Hard Determinism is rationally self-stultifying, hence self-refuting, and therefore false.

So I'd say that calls for another episode of **The Freedom Dance**.<sup>125</sup>

**§172. Is a priori knowledge really possible? Yes; here's proof.** The philosophical debate over the possibility of authentic a priori knowledge — that is, non-stipulative, non-trivial knowledge of the way the world necessarily is, obtained sufficiently independently of any and all sense-experiential episodes and/or contingent natural facts — is no less important today than it was when Plato posited in the *Meno* that we are able to have such knowledge owing to a pre-natal close encounter that our disembodied souls had with the Forms, and when Descartes posited in the *Meditations on First Philosophy* that such knowledge is infallible because guaranteed by a non-deceiving God.

Of course, neither the platonic story nor the Cartesian story about our purported a priori abilities has many adherents today.

Nevertheless, a large majority of philosophers (71.1%, according to a fairly recent PhilPapers survey<sup>126</sup>) do indeed believe that a priori knowledge is really possible.

But *how* can such knowledge be really possible?

The classical story, shared by Plato and Descartes, goes something like this:

Rational human animals have special non-empirical cognitive capacities — perhaps minimally analogous to sense-perceptual capacities — that connect them, rational human cognizers, directly to certain abstract and necessary features of the world.

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<sup>125</sup> And after you've done that, you can also read *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*. No, sadly, it's not going to be a best seller. But at least I'm rationally justified in believing what I wrote—and it's my own work, for better or worse, not the Big Bang's work. That's something.

<sup>126</sup> See D. Bourget and D. Chalmers, "Philosophical Papers Survey 2009," available online at URL=<http://philpapers.org/surveys/>.

These capacities yield what are called “rational intuitions,” and by consulting these rational intuitions, rational human cognizers are able to receive reliable information about the way the world necessarily is.

These rational intuitions, in turn, act as sufficient justifiers of rational human cognizers’ beliefs about certain kinds of propositions, namely, necessary truths, and because of these intuitional sufficient justifiers, authentic a priori knowledge is really possible.

I will call the thesis that a priori knowledge of necessary truth is really possible, via the human cognitive capacity for rational intuitions, *rationalism*.

The *old* rationalism, in addition, says

(i) that rational intuitions *always* deliver *absolutely infallible* information about the abstract truth-making objects of necessary propositions, and

(ii) that the abstract truth-making objects of rational human intuitional a priori knowledge are *non-spatiotemporal, causally irrelevant, and causally inert entities* (for example, Plato’s Forms, or Descartes’s “true and immutable natures”).

The *new* rationalism, or *neo-rationalism*, by an important contrast, says

(i\*) that rational intuitions *do at least sometimes, although not always, deliver reliable, but not absolutely infallible, information* about the abstract truth-making objects of necessary propositions.

And the contemporary Kantian neo-rationalism that I defend in *Cognition, Content, and the A Priori*, by another important contrast, also says

(ii\*) that the truth-making objects of rational human intuitional a priori knowledge are indeed abstract, *but neither non-spatiotemporal nor causally irrelevant, precisely because they are abstract in the non-platonic, Kantian sense only.*

(I won’t get into that doctrine for the purposes of *this* set of notes, but will indeed spell it out somewhat in the next set; and if you’re really a philosophical masochist, then you can take a look at *Cognition, Content and the A Priori*, ch. 8.)

**§173.** Opposed to this rationalist story, whether old or new, and whether non-Kantian or Kantian, is an equally prestigious tradition that is skeptical about our purported capacity to achieve a priori knowledge of necessary truth via rational-intuitional means.

Such intuition-skeptical attacks on rationalism come in many forms.

Some attacks attempt to show that rationalists can tell no satisfactory story about the connection between the mind and the world such that rational intuitions could reliably deliver a priori knowledge of necessary features of the world.

Other attacks attempt to show that rational intuitions are so inherently fallible that they can never satisfactorily justify purportedly a priori knowledge.

Further attacks attempt to show that we can gain all the knowledge we think we have (both a posteriori and purportedly a priori) via purely sense-experiential means, and that parsimony requires that we not posit other (perhaps metaphysically and epistemically dubious) epistemic capacities.

And still other attacks claim that, contrary to widely-held methodological and meta-philosophical beliefs, philosophers do not really rely on rational intuitions as evidence either for philosophical theories or for any other significant claims.

I will call the constellation of skeptical views just described, *intuition-skeptical empiricism*.

Whatever the plausibility of intuition-skeptical empiricist attacks on rationalism, at the same time many contemporary philosophers are reluctant to accept intuition-skeptical empiricist conclusions.

Indeed, since the late 1980s there has been a renewed and steadily growing interest in rationalism and the a priori; and gradually, what George Bealer has very aptly and rightly dubbed a *rationalist renaissance* has emerged onto the contemporary philosophical scene.<sup>127</sup>

At the same time, however, even despite this rationalist renaissance, the all-important neo-rationalist notion of rational intuition has not been either adequately defended or fully developed, especially as regards solving the two core problems about rational intuition:

**first**, how rational intuitions can sufficiently justify beliefs (the justification problem), and

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<sup>127</sup> See G. Bealer, "Modal Epistemology and the Rationalist Renaissance," in T. Gendler and J. Hawthorne (eds.), *Conceivability and Possibility* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), pp. 71-125.



**second**, how to explain the real possibility of rational intuitions (the explanation problem).

So here is where contemporary philosophers now find themselves, after these dialectical skirmishes: intuition-skeptical empiricism is arguably false; but intuition-skeptical attacks on rationalism are, as yet, not directly answered, or at least not decisively answered.

Given this fact, many contemporary philosophers will, as it were, talk out of both sides of their mouths, by (on the one side) declaring themselves neo-rationalists, while (on the other side) also ruefully admitting, at least implicitly in their work, that they have no direct or decisive responses to the most important intuition-skeptical empiricist attacks on rationalism, and correspondingly, no direct or decisive solutions to one or both of the two core problems about rational intuition—the justification problem, and the explanation problem.

In what follows in this set of notes, I'm going to spell out a contemporary Kantian conception of *apriority*, and also prove *that at least some a priori knowledge in this sense actually exists*.

That in turn will suffice for an initial demonstration of the truth of neo-rationalism.

#### §174. What is apriority?

In the first *Critique*, Kant says that

Although all our cognition commences **with** experience, yet it does not on that account all arise **from** experience.... It is therefore a question requiring closer investigation, and one not to be dismissed at first glance, whether there is any such cognition independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the senses. One calls such **cognitions a priori**, and distinguishes them from **empirical** ones, which have their sources *a posteriori*, namely in experience. (*CPR* B1-2)

Nevertheless, that text must also be juxtaposed with this one:

[W]e will understand by *a priori* cognitions not those that occur independently of this or that experience, but rather those that occur *absolutely* independently of all experience. Opposed to these are empirical cognitions, or those that are possible only *a posteriori*, i.e., through experience.... Experience teaches us, to be sure, that something is constituted thus and so, but not that it could not be otherwise. **First**,

then, if a proposition is thought along with its **necessity**, then it is an *a priori* judgment; .... **Second:** Experience never gives its judgments true or strict but only assumed and comparative **universality** (through induction), so properly it must be said: as far as we have perceived, there is no exception to this or that rule. Thus if a judgment is thought in strict universality, i.e., in such a way that no exception is allowed to be possible, then it is not derived from experience, but is rather valid absolutely *a priori*.... Necessity and strict universality are therefore secure indicators (*Kennzeichen*) of an *a priori* cognition, and also belong together inseparably. But since in their use it is sometimes easier to show the empirical limitation in judgments than contingency in them, or is often more plausible to show the unrestricted universality that we ascribe to a judgment than its necessity, it is advisable to employ separately these two criteria, each of which is infallible. (CPR B2-4)

I think that these two Kantian texts collectively express a deep twofold insight that explains how it can be true both that (1) "all our cognition commences **with** experience" and also that (2) there exist "*a priori* cognitions [which are] not those that occur independently of this or that experience, but rather those that occur *absolutely* independently of all experience."

Above all, we need to have a clear and precise account of what "absolute experience-independence" means, and, correspondingly, what "experience-dependence" means.

§175. In order to do this, I will need to rehearse some terminological definitions.

By *empirical facts* I mean inner or outer sensory experiences and/or contingent natural objects or facts.

And I am understanding the relation of *necessary determination* to be equivalent to *strong supervenience* in the following way:

X necessarily determines Y if and only if the Y-facts strongly supervene on the X-facts.

In turn,

Y-facts strongly supervene on X-facts if and only if X-facts necessitate Y-facts and there cannot be a change in anything's Y-facts without a corresponding change in its X-facts.

In other words, in the relation of necessary determination, both the existence of the Y-facts and also the specific character of the Y-facts are metaphysically controlled by the existence and specific character of the X-facts.

The necessary determination relation can also be strengthened to a *constitutive dependence relation* insofar as not only the existence and specific character of the Y-facts but also the essences or natures of the Y-facts are metaphysically controlled by the existence and specific character of the X-facts:

Y-facts constitutively depend on X-facts if and only if X-facts necessitate Y-facts and there cannot be a change in anything's Y-facts without a corresponding change in its X-facts, and the essence or nature of anything's Y-facts presuppose the essence or nature of its X-facts.

Then we can also say that the Y-facts are "grounded by" the X-facts.

§176. Now let us take it as a given that necessarily, all human cognition begins in sense perception of contingent natural objects or facts.

Then Kant's deep insight is this.

Apriority, or experience-independence, is the *underdetermination* of the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief by *any and all actual or possible empirical facts*.

Otherwise put, apriority is the *necessary and constitutive* underdetermination of the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief by any and all empirical facts.

Or still otherwise put, precisely to the extent that a belief is a priori, then its meaning, truth, and/or justification is neither strongly supervenient on nor grounded by any and all empirical facts.

So, to formulate this conception of apriority as a handy set of necessary equivalences that you can make into a meme and post on your Instagram site:

**apriority  $\leftrightarrow$  experience-independence  $\leftrightarrow$  the necessary and constitutive underdetermination of the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief S by any and all empirical facts  $\leftrightarrow$  the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief is neither strongly supervenient on nor grounded by any and all empirical facts.**

§176. Correspondingly, then, aposteriority is the necessary and constitutive determination of the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief by any or all actual or possible empirical facts.

Otherwise put, aposteriority is the necessary and constitutive determination of the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief by any or all empirical facts.

Or still otherwise put, precisely to the extent that a belief a posteriori, then its meaning, truth, and/or justification is either strongly supervenient on or grounded by any or all empirical facts.

So, to formulate this conception of aposteriority as another handy, Instagram-ready set of necessary equivalences:

**aposteriority  $\leftrightarrow$  experience-dependence  $\leftrightarrow$  the necessary and constitutive determination of the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief by any or all empirical facts  $\leftrightarrow$  the meaning, truth, and/or justification of a belief is either strongly supervenient on or grounded by any or all empirical facts.**

§177. There are two features of this Kantian conception of apriority that every historian of modern philosophy and every contemporary epistemologist should learn by heart—or at the very least, write out in longhand, carefully fold up, and keep under their pillows.

**First**, according to this Kantian conception of apriority, it is fully acknowledged that all human knowledge *begins in* our sense perception of contingent natural objects or facts.

**Second**, according to this Kantian conception of apriority, it is perfectly possible for a belief to be such that

(i) that belief's meaning *must bear some significant relation to empirical facts*,

(ii) that belief's truth or falsity *must be learned or confirmed by means of empirical facts, at least in part*, and

(iii) that belief's justification *must be supported by sense-experiential evidence about empirical facts and established by experimental methods, at least in part*,

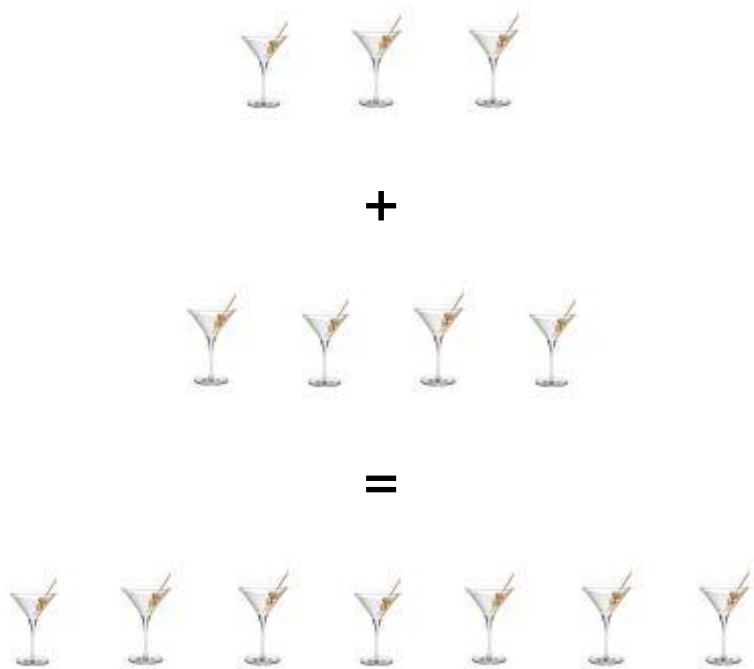
and *also* for that belief to a necessary and priori.

§178. Here, now, are three incontrovertible examples of a priori necessary statements that I and every other rational human animal under normal cognitive conditions believes, or at least *can* believe, such that their meaning must bear some significant relation to empirical facts, their truth must be learned or confirmed by means of empirical facts, at least in part, and their belief-justification must be supported by sense-experiential evidence about empirical facts and established by experimental methods, at least in part:

It is not always true that it is the case that Socrates is mortal and also not the case that Socrates is mortal.

If Socrates is a bachelor, then Socrates is an unmarried male.

3 martinis + 4 martinis = 7 martinis, i.e.,



§179. In this connection—leaving aside the seven thirst-quenching martinis represented by those seven little martini-pictures, that is—Kant’s two deep insights are these.

(i) There is no such thing as a priori belief that altogether *excludes* empirical facts, which yields a minimal Empiricism.

(ii) But the same time, it does *not* follow from the minimal Empiricism expressed in (i) that any version of *maximal Empiricism*—say, classical Lockean-Humean Empiricism, or Quine’s radical Empiricism—is true.

Maximal Empiricism says that the meaning, truth, and/or justification of all beliefs are necessarily or constitutively determined by, strongly supervenient on, grounded by, or, even more radically, reducible to empirical facts.

But this does *not* follow from (i) and its minimal Empiricism.

That would be clearly and simply be, in Peter Strawson's lovely phrase, "a *non sequitur* of numbing grossness."<sup>128</sup>

§180. Now what about a priori *knowledge*?

Well, consider this:

"3+4=7."

Very few statements, even necessarily true statements, are objectively<sup>129</sup> and authentically knowable in such a way that one's believing that statement is

- (i) completely convincing, intrinsically compelling, or *self-evident*,
- (ii) evidentially delivered to belief by a properly-functioning cognitive mechanism, aka *cognitively virtuous*, and also
- (iii) *essentially reliable*, that is, such that it includes a non-accidental or necessary tie to the necessary-truth-makers of belief.

But this is one of those statements.

And I think I can prove that to you in four short steps.

**First**, please look at this simple diagram carefully and thoughtfully:

| | | + | | | | = | | | | | | |

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<sup>128</sup> P. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 137. The allusion is ironic, since here Strawson is famously (and mistakenly, as it happens) accusing Kant of committing one of these non sequiturs.

<sup>129</sup> By something's being *objectively believable*, or its being *objectively knowable*, I mean simply that it can be believed or known by any rational human animal under normal cognitive conditions, and therefore that it isn't merely idiosyncratic.

**Second**, I will define some terminology.

By *clarity*, I mean that the meaning of your belief is directly present to your consciousness.

By *distinctness*, I mean that the meaning of your belief is consciously discriminable by you from the different meanings of different beliefs.

And by *indubitability*, I mean that it is epistemically impossible for you to sincerely believe the denial of a belief, once you've adequately understood that belief.

The main point I am making here is that the clarity, distinctness, and indubitability of a belief all add up to its being *self-evident*, by which I mean that it is completely convincing to you or *intrinsically compelling* for you .

**Third**, now having looked at the diagram once already, and also having understood what I mean by “clarity,” “distinctness,” “indubitability,” and “self-evident,” please look carefully and thoughtfully again at the simple stroke diagram, and at the same time read the symbol sequence “ $3+4=7$ ,” while assertorically saying to yourself, “Three plus four equals seven.”

**Fourth**, by virtue of doing all that, therefore—to use Descartes’s famous terminology—it is clearly, distinctly, indubitably, and self-evidently objectively known by you that necessarily,  $3+4=7$ .

Moreover, although your knowledge that  $3+4=7$ , via the stroke diagram (*spoiler alert*: here’s where specifically *mathematical* rational intuition happens),<sup>130</sup> obviously began in human sensory experience, nevertheless its specific meaning and evidential character were not derived from—that is, they were neither necessarily nor constitutively determined by, or otherwise put, they were necessarily and constitutively underdetermined by—any and all empirical facts.

So you also know it a priori.

Therefore,

*neo-rationalism is true and maximal Empiricism is false.*

Now wasn’t that fun?

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<sup>130</sup> R. Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 5—Cognition, Content, and the A Priori: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind and Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2015), [PREVIEW](#), chs. 6-8.

In the next set of notes, I'll sketch a general account of how not only mathematical a priori knowledge, but also the other important kinds of authentic a priori knowledge, are really possible.

**181. How a priori knowledge is really possible.** I believe that mathematics, logic, and philosophy all include and presuppose some basic—that is, primitive, starting-point-providing—and authoritative rational intuitions that constitute authentic a priori knowledge of objectively necessary truths, such that those rational intuitions are

- (i) intrinsically compelling or self-evident,
- (ii) cognitively virtuous, and also
- (iii) essentially reliable, or absolutely skepticism-resistant.

More precisely, however, the beliefs included in those rational intuitions are factive or *world-involving* and modally grounded.

That is, they are beliefs that are inherently connected to necessary-truth-makers for those beliefs.

Furthermore, the cognitive capacities or mechanisms yielding self-evidence for those beliefs track truth in the actual world and also counterfactually across all relevant nomologically possible and metaphysically possible worlds.

And any explicit or implicit denial or rejection of those beliefs would be self-stultifying in the strongly normative sense that human rationality itself would then be impossible, including also skeptical human rationality.

Hence we categorically ought not to reject them, insofar as we are rational human animals.

In short, these basic authoritative a priori rational intuitions—constituting self-evident, cognitively virtuous, and also essentially reliable, or absolutely skepticism-resistant, a priori knowledge of objectively necessary truths—are robustly normative conditions of the possibility of human rationality, and implicit even in every attempt to reject these rational intuitions for any intelligible or defensible reason whatsoever.

And that's not all.



I also believe that, starting with these basic authoritative a priori rational intuitions of objectively necessary truths, then mathematicians, logicians, and philosophers can also rationally construct non-basic, and non-authoritative a priori rational intuitions.

These intuitions are not completely convincing, not intrinsically compelling, and therefore not self-evident; and they are neither essentially reliable, nor absolutely skepticism-resistant.

But at the same time, they remain *fairly* convincing, *fairly* compelling, and therefore *fairly* evident; and they are also fairly reliable, and fairly skepticism-resistant.<sup>131</sup>

They thereby effectively extend their foundational corpus of basic authoritative a priori knowledge to a fairly secure non-foundational constructed corpus of a priori knowledge, thus making rational progress in mathematics, logic, and philosophy.

**§182.** Of course, a *postmodern anti-rational nihilist skeptic* could still choose to reject all of these intuitions, whether basic authoritative rational intuitions, or non-basic constructed rational intuitions, for no defensible or intelligible reason whatsoever — as it were, just for the hell of it.

So at least as a form of emotional self-expression, postmodern anti-rational nihilist skepticism is really possible.

And, to be sure, someone's striking an attitude, or acting-out some passion, is always psychologically or sociologically fascinating.

Nevertheless, for all its psychological or sociological interest, that sort of skepticism is philosophically perverse and pointless.

An attitude struck, or a passion acted-out, is not an argument made.

**§183.** The original *Benacerraf Dilemma*, as formulated by Paul Benacerraf in 1973, is about the apparent impossibility of reconciling a "standard, uniform" semantics of truth in natural language with a "reasonable" epistemology of cognizing true statements, when the relevant kind of true statement to be semantically explained is mathematical truth and the relevant kind of cognition to be epistemologically explained is mathematical knowledge:

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<sup>131</sup> I also believe that at least some non-basic rational intuitions are authoritative. But that refinement isn't necessary for the point I am making right here.

As an account of our knowledge about medium-sized objects, in the present, this is along the right lines. [A reasonable epistemology] will involve, causally, some direct reference to the facts known, and, through that, reference to those objects themselves.... [C]ombining *this* view of knowledge with the “standard” view of mathematical truth makes it difficult to see how mathematical knowledge is possible. If, for example, numbers are the kinds of entities they are normally taken to be [namely, platonically abstract objects], then the connection between the truth conditions for the statements of number theory and any relevant events connected with the people who are supposed to have knowledge cannot be made out.<sup>132</sup>

Clearly, the original Benacerraf Dilemma puts the real possibility of authentic mathematical a priori knowledge in jeopardy.

§184. But there is an even more fundamental problem about the real possibility of authentic a priori knowledge, that I call *The Generalized Benacerraf Dilemma*:

(1) All knowledge is factive, that is, all knowledge contains an objective truth-making component, so all a priori knowledge whatsoever is factive, especially including a priori knowledge in mathematics, logic, and philosophy.

(2) If all a priori knowledge is factive in that it contains an objective truth-making component, then what rules out the possibility that its factive component is nothing but the result of a cosmic accident or massive coincidence, in that its truth-maker is merely accidentally connected to rational human belief and justification in the actual world (which is the classical *Gettier problem*,<sup>133</sup> now extended to a priori knowledge), and also introspectively cognitively indistinguishable from connection with falsity-makers in relevantly similar possible worlds (which is the neo-classical *new evil demon global skepticism*,<sup>134</sup> now extended to a priori knowledge)? Let us call this “the possibility of cognitive-semantic luck.”

(3) If nothing rules out the possibility of cognitive-semantic luck, then a priori knowledge of any kind whatsoever is impossible.

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<sup>132</sup> P. Benacerraf, “Mathematical Truth,” *Journal of Philosophy* 70 (1973): 661-680, at pp. 672-673.

<sup>133</sup> See E. Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?” *Analysis* 23 (1963): 121-123.

<sup>134</sup> See S. Cohen, “Justification and Truth.” *Philosophical Studies* 46 (1984): 279-295.

(4) There are only two possible candidates for ruling out the possibility of cognitive-semantic luck:

either (i) non-naturalism about the objective truth-makers and their connection with rational human beliefs,

or else (ii) naturalism about the objective truth-makers and their connection with rational human beliefs.

(5) Consider non-naturalism about the objective truth-makers and their connection with rational human beliefs—for example, as per classical Rationalist platonism, Cartesian innate clear and distinct ideas of real essences, grounded in God's existence and non-deceitfulness, Leibnizian pre-established harmony, etc. This puts the truth-makers outside of space and time, and renders their connection with rational human beliefs a metaphysical mystery. Hence non-naturalism about the objective truth-makers and their connection with rational human beliefs does not explain how rational human a priori knowers can stand in a non-accidental, global-skepticism-resistant connection with the known truth-making objects of a priori knowledge.

(6) And now consider naturalism about the objective truth-makers and their connection with rational human beliefs. At least *prima facie*, naturalism can account for how rational human knowers can stand in a non-accidental, global-skepticism-resistant connection with the known truth-making objects—for example, via some or another causally reliable connection. But naturalism cannot explain how rational human beliefs can be either necessary or a priori. Indeed, on the contrary, what naturalism shows is that those rational human beliefs are contingent and a posteriori, as per either Lockean-Humean classical Empiricism or Quinean radical Empiricism. Hence naturalism about the objective truth-makers and their connection with rational human beliefs does not explain how rational human a priori knowers can stand in a non-accidental, global-skepticism-proof connection with the known truth-making objects of specifically a priori knowledge.

(7) So, since the possibility of cognitive-semantic luck cannot be ruled out, then a priori knowledge of any kind whatsoever is impossible, including a priori knowledge in mathematics, logic, philosophy, morality, axiology, linguistics, semantics, etc.

§185. The original Benacerraf Dilemma seems to entail that objective mathematical necessary truth on the one hand, and rational human a priori knowledge of objective mathematical necessary truth on the other hand, are mutually incompatible.

In order to solve this problem adequately, I think that we must adopt two contemporary Kantian doctrines.

**First**, we must reject the classical platonic conception of abstractness, which says that something is abstract if and only if it has a mind-independent, substantial existence in a separate, non-spatiotemporal, non-natural, non-sensory, causally irrelevant, and causally inert realm.

And in its place, we should put a non-platonic, Kantian conception of abstractness, which says:

X is abstract if and only if X is not uniquely located and realized in actual spacetime, and X is concrete otherwise.

By “X is uniquely located and realized in actual spacetime,” I mean that X is exclusively embodied or incarnated *at* and exclusively embodied or incarnated *in*, and thereby fully occupies, one and only one actual spacetime volume.

Then this conception of abstractness is saying that something is concrete if and only if it is uniquely located and realized in actual spacetime, and abstract otherwise.

More specifically, according to this conception, whatever is either multiply located, multiply realized, non-actual, or non-spatiotemporal will count as abstract.

What makes this conception of abstractness *non-platonic*, above all, is its comparatively liberal approach to what will count as abstract.

It in fact includes the platonic conception of abstractness—under the special constraint of radical agnosticism about platonically abstract objects in particular and *noumenal* objects more generally, whereby we know a priori that we cannot know whether they exist or do not exist.

But this conception of abstractness is also significantly less restrictive than the platonic conception, robustly non-dualistic, and fully compatible with causal relevance.

In addition to its highly problematic assumption that there are humanly knowable objects that are not only causally inert but also completely causally irrelevant, what the

platonic conception mistakenly assumes is that multiple location, non-actuality, and non-spatiotemporality are all necessarily equivalent with one another, so that platonic abstractness includes them all as necessarily conjoined features.

But in fact they are logically independent features of things: hence the correct, non-platonic conception of abstractness includes them disjunctively, not conjunctively.

What makes the conception of abstractness I favor not only *non-platonic*, but also specifically *Kantian*?

In Kantian terms, *X* is concrete if and only if *X* is

either (i) what Kant calls an “appearance,” which is the “undetermined object of an empirical intuition” (CPR A20/B34)—“undetermined” in that it is not fully specified as to its contingent or essential properties—

or else it is (ii) what he calls “a real object of experience” (CPR B289-291), the fully-determined and thus fully specified object of an objectively valid and true empirical judgment (the judgment of experience), and

(iii) *X* is abstract otherwise.

So *X* is abstract if and only if *X* is neither what I call a *veridical appearance*<sup>135</sup> nor a real object of experience in Kant’s sense.

**Second**, I think that we must also adopt contemporary Kantian versions of *Mathematical Structuralism* and mathematical authoritative rational intuition.

Mathematical Structuralism says that mathematical entities are not independent substances of some sort, but instead are nothing more and nothing less than relational positions or roles in a larger mathematical theory-structure.

Kantian mathematical structuralism, in turn, says that mathematical theory-structures are *mind-dependent*, or *ideal*, yet also *manifestly real*, entities that are *abstract in the non-*

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<sup>135</sup> There is an important distinction between (i) a *veridical appearance*, aka an *objective appearance*, or an *Erscheinung*, and (ii) a *mere appearance*, aka a *subjective appearance*, or a *Schein*. See §62 above; see also R. Hanna, “Kant, Radical Agnosticism, and Methodological Eliminativism about Things-in-Themselves,” *Contemporary Studies in Kantian Philosophy* 2 (2017), available online at URL = <https://www.cckp.space/single-post/2017/05/10/Kant-Radical-Agnosticism-and-Methodological-Eliminativism-about-Things-in-Themselves>.

*platonian, Kantian sense*, and are veridically represented in pure or a priori intuition (*Anschauung*) via the productive imagination (*produktive Einbildungskraft*).

§186. Correspondingly, mathematical authoritative rational intuitions, as I am understanding them, are self-evident, cognitively virtuous, and essentially reliable a priori conscious pattern-matching graspings of some proper parts of a larger mathematical theory-structure, via our direct conscious experience, in spatiotemporally-framed schematic sense perception, memory, or sensory imagination, of—in effect—David Hilbert’s basic objects of finitistic mathematical reasoning:

[A]s a condition for the use of logical inferences and the performance of logical operations, something must already be given to our faculty of representation, certain extralogical concrete objects that are intuitively present as immediate experience prior to all thought. If logical inference is to be reliable, it must be possible to survey these objects completely in all their parts, and the fact that they occur, that they differ from one another, and that they follow each other, or are concatenated, is immediately given intuitively, together with the objects, as something that can neither be reduced to anything else nor requires reduction. This is the basic philosophical position that I consider requisite for mathematics and, in general, for all scientific thinking, understanding, and communication.<sup>136</sup>

This kind of direct conscious experience is equivalent to what Kant calls the cognitive construction of a sensible form (*Gestalt*) in pure or a priori intuition (*Anschauung*) via the productive imagination (*produktive Einbildungskraft*):

Although these principles [of mathematics], and the representation of the object with which this science occupies itself are generated in the mind completely *a priori*, they would still not signify anything at all if we could not always exhibit their significance in appearances (empirical objects). Hence it is also requisite for one **to make** an abstract concept **sensible**, i.e., display the object that corresponds to it in intuition (*Anschauung*), since without this the concept would remain ... without **sense**, i.e., without significance. Mathematics fulfills this requirement by means of the construction of the sensible form (*Gestalt*), which is an appearance present to the senses (even though brought about *a priori*). In the same science, the concept of magnitude seeks its standing and sense in number, but seeks this in turn in the shapes, in the beads of an abacus, or in the strokes and points that are placed before the eyes. The concept is always generated *a priori*, together with the synthetic principles of formulas from such concepts; but their use and

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<sup>136</sup> D. Hilbert, “On the Infinite,” in J. van Heijenoort (ed.), *From Frege to Gödel: A Source Book in Mathematical Logic, 1897-1931* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 367-392.

reference to supposed objects can in the end be sought nowhere but in experience, the possibility of which (as far as its form is concerned) is contained in them *a priori*. (CPR A239-240/B299)

It is also equivalent to the cognitive construction of what the cognitive psychologist Philip Johnson-Laird calls *mental models*.<sup>137</sup>

We could also call it the cognitive construction of *mental diagrams, mental pictures, structural imagery, or schemata*.

Whatever we call it, the main claims I am making here are these:

- (1) Mathematical necessary truths directly express proper parts of larger mathematical theory-structures.
- (2) Mathematical rational intuitions are self-evident, cognitively virtuous, and essentially reliable a priori conscious pattern-matching graspings of some of those proper parts of those very structures, by means of the cognitive construction and manipulation of sensible forms given in Kantian pure or a priori intuition and constructed by the productive imagination.

So the imagination-based cognitive phenomenology of mathematical authoritative rational intuition is a perfect mirror of the structuralist ontology of the truth-makers of a priori mathematical beliefs.

§187. The simplest example of what I am talking about here is the one I used in §180 above, namely reading and adequately understanding the symbol sequence, “3+4=7,” while looking carefully and thoughtfully at this stroke diagram,

| | | + | | | | = | | | | | | |

and also assertorically saying “Three plus four equals seven” to yourself.

Here, the phenomenological structure of your conscious experience internally mirrors the content of the proposition you are thinking and asserting, and in turn there is also a non-accidental and indeed necessary conformity between the content of the proposition

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<sup>137</sup> See P. Johnson-Laird, *Mental Models* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983).

and the underlying mathematical structure of the manifest natural world, of which the stroke diagram is one highly salient instance.

The productive imagination is in play precisely to the extent that you are able consciously to scan the stroke diagram, then consciously reproduce it in short-term memory, and then consciously manipulate it in certain definite ways with the same epistemic force.

For example, the operations of the productive imagination would be phenomenologically manifest and salient if you now were now, self-consciously, to generate in your mind a corresponding diagram for “ $2+3=5$ ,” and then also come to know *this* truth objectively a priori via rational intuition.

The actual existence of the Kantian productive imagination in precisely this sense of a phenomenologically-robust image-generating, image-scanning, image-reproducing, and image-manipulating function of the conscious rational human mind, has been empirically well-confirmed in classic cognitive-psychological work by Roger Shepard and others.<sup>138</sup>

**§188.** In any case, the metaphysical ground of the necessary conformity between mathematical authoritative rational intuitions in the human mind on the one hand, and mathematical structures in the manifest natural world outside the human mind on the other hand—a necessary conformity which suffices to close the gap between justification and truth, and thereby guarantees essentially reliable a priori knowledge of objective necessity—is none other than the *realistic idealism* I spelled out in §63 above.

Assuming this metaphysical ground, this in turn means that I now also have in hand a general template for solving The Generalized Benacerraf Dilemma.

The Generalized Benacerraf Dilemma, you will recall, generalizes The Original Benacerraf Dilemma to any kind of a priori knowledge whatsoever.

It does so by pointing up, on the one hand, the logical, semantic, metaphysical, and epistemological clash between two basic authoritative philosophical rational intuitions

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<sup>138</sup> See, e.g., R. Shepard, “The Mental Image,” *American Psychologist* 33 (1978): 125-137; R. Shepard and S. Chipman, “Second Order Isomorphisms of Internal Representations: Shapes of States,” *Cognitive Psychology* 1 (1970): 1-17; R. Shepard and L. Cooper, *Mental Images and their Transformations* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982); and R. Shepard and J. Metzler, “Mental Rotation of Three-Dimensional Objects,” *Science* 171 (1971): 701-703.



about the need to rule out the possibility of cognitive-semantic luck, and, on the other hand, the fact that the truth-makers of knowledge are either non-natural or natural.

Having just sketched a basic solution to The Original Dilemma, I can now solve The General Benacerraf Dilemma by simply generalizing the basic solution in the following way:

**For a priori knowledge of any kind K whatsoever—**

- Postulate the ten basic theses of realistic idealism as a metaphysical backdrop.
- Adopt a Kantian version of Structuralism for K.
- Adopt a Kantian version of Intuitionism for K.
- Explain the sufficient justification (including, especially, the essential reliability) of K-type authoritative rational intuition in terms of Kantian Structuralism and Kantian Intuitionism, against the metaphysical backdrop of realistic idealism.
- Work out the cognitive phenomenology of self-evidence for K-type authoritative rational intuition.

To be sure, the specific details of carrying out this five-part theory for, say, logical a priori knowledge, moral a priori knowledge, axiological a priori knowledge, linguistic a priori knowledge, semantic a priori knowledge, etc., and finally *philosophical* a priori knowledge, are going to be somewhat complex.

But in each case, working out all those specific details really is just *a high-powered philosophical engineering problem*, for which the general template remains the same.

So I think we can reasonably conclude that The Generalized Benacerraf Dilemma has, in its essentials, been solved, and also that we now know how authentic a priori knowledge is really possible.<sup>139</sup>

### **189. The paradox of distributive social justice, and what is to be done?**

Here is a basic problem, indeed, a paradox, about distributive social justice in *any* social institution or State, but especially including contemporary big-capitalist (neo)liberal

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<sup>139</sup> For a fully elaborated version of this argument, see Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 5—Cognition, Content, and the A Priori*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. chs. 6-8.

democratic States—as enshrined philosophically, for example, in John Rawls’s highly influential and indeed, as regards Anglo-American political theory since the 1970s, hegemonic, *Theory of Justice*.<sup>140</sup>

In their *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on “Distributive Justice,” Julian Lamont and Christi Favor very correctly although somewhat tautologously note that

[p]rinciples of distributive justice are ... best thought of as providing moral guidance for the political processes and structures that affect the distribution of benefits and burdens in societies, and any principles which do offer this kind of moral guidance on distribution, regardless of the terminology they employ, should be considered principles of distributive justice.<sup>141</sup>

Correspondingly, the basic problem I will now present and briefly elaborate is what I call *The Paradox of Distributive Social Justice*.

Simply put, *The Paradox* is that insofar as principles of distributive social justice are applied to an oppressive social system, then even despite its ideological overlay of “justice-as-fairness,” this actually turns out to be the most effective way to perpetuate the oppressive system itself.

More explicitly, with the ideological overlay in shudder-quotes:

Suppose that an oppressive social system OSS exists in any State, such that there is an *oppressor class* who collectively and individually greatly benefit from OSS, and also an *oppressed class*, who collectively and individually greatly suffer under OSS. And further suppose that the leading members of the oppressor class in OSS recognize, at a given time, that OSS is in serious danger of collapsing if things go on in the same way. So the leading members of the oppressor class calculatingly and prudently create a “fair and therefore just” system of compensating a certain non-trivial but still strategically small number of *more-or-less randomly-selected* members of the oppressed class, by giving them access to some or all of the benefits enjoyed by the oppressor class. Then this “fair and therefore just” distribution of compensation for oppression not only does

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<sup>140</sup> J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).

<sup>141</sup> J. Lamont and C. Favor, “Distributive Justice,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition), E.N. Zalta (ed.), available online at URL =

<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/justice-distributive/>>.

nothing to fundamentally change or end OSS, it actually turns out to be the most effective way of perpetuating OSS.

In this formulation, the italicized phrase *more-or-less randomly-selected* is extremely important: inevitably, there are hidden criteria that pre-select prospective oppressed-class beneficiaries for conformity, docility and obedience—for example, their having secured proper legal immigration status; their having reached a certain level in the oppressors' education system; their having a “clean” drug record; their having a “clean” police record more generally; etc., etc.—hence the “fair and therefore just” selection process is itself already *carefully curated by the leading members of the oppressor class*.

**§190.** Another paradoxical feature of the oppressor-class-curated character of the compensation process under distributive social justice is that the oppressed groups selected for compensation are identified under *the very same labels*—race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, etc., etc.—that the oppressor-class originally picked out arbitrarily in order to target those people for rationally unjustified and immoral discrimination and oppression.

Hence the very “identities” that oppressed groups then adopt as special sources of moral virtue and social solidarity for the purposes of qualifying for distributive social justice, are in fact nothing but *mirror-reflected versions of the arbitrary discriminatory point-of-view of the oppressors*, that “internalize the oppressor,” and only produce further coercion and conflict via mirror-reflected discrimination and mirror-reflected oppression.

The currently popular concept of “intersectionality,” which emphasizes ways in which members of different identity-groups can suffer the same kinds of oppression and the same kinds of failures to respect their human dignity, and thereby find social solidarity in that way, is rationally and morally more cogent than identitarianism; but it remains, at best, an unstable halfway-house between internalizing-the-oppressor on the one hand, and a fully *universalist and dignitarian* approach to the problem of oppression on the other.

**§191.** An important corollary of *The Paradox* is that if the leading oppressors *fail* to act in this calculating and prudent “fair and therefore just” way, then their oppressive social system eventually collapses.

For example, let OSS be the enslavement of black people in the USA in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Then *The Paradox* guarantees that if, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the leading Southern American slave-masters had, contrary to actual fact, seen the writing on the wall, then calculatingly and prudently created a “fair and therefore just” system of admitting a certain non-trivial but still strategically small number of more-or-less randomly selected slaves either into the oppressor class of slave-masters, or into a complicit class of fairly well-paid, fairly high social-status bureaucrats, professionals, managers, or skilled laborers who served the class of slave-masters, the USA would never have experienced the Civil War of 1860-65, and would still be a slave State, at least throughout most of the South.

Of course in actual fact the slave-masters did *not* do this, so the oppressive system of slavery in the USA collapsed — although, to be sure, a new system of racist oppression soon arose to take its place, during the Jim Crow period.

§192. Now let OSS be big capitalism in Europe and North America.

[Important sidebar: by *big capitalism* I mean basically what Marx meant by “capitalism,” now extended to what the neo-Marxists called *advanced capitalism*, that is, *global corporate capitalism*.

Contrastively, by *small capitalism* I mean:

modest individual ownership of private property, sufficient to one’s true human needs and individual tastes; small-scale business enterprises for the production of goods and the provision of services that satisfy and sustain people’s true human needs and individual tastes; modest individual profit-making accumulation of wealth sufficient for the satisfaction of one’s own true human needs and individual tastes, and those of the members of one’s household or family; and modest collective profit-making and collective profit-sharing enterprises (aka cooperatives), sufficient for the satisfaction of every worker’s true human needs and individual tastes.

On my view, small capitalism is perfectly consistent with a social system in which human work is not only *not alienating*, but in fact *human-dignity-respecting and liberating*.

Hence my critical view of big capitalism, although obviously Marx-inspired, is equally obviously not a *classical* Marxist view, and in effect it’s *neo-neo-Marxist*.]

Then we can ask:

Why didn't big capitalism in Europe and North America collapse due to its internal dialectical social and economic contradictions by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Marx had fervently hoped and confidently predicted?

The answer, clearly and distinctly, is provided by *The Paradox*.

The leading late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century big-capitalist bosses, rightly worried about communism, calculatingly and prudently created a "fair and therefore just" system of admitting a certain non-trivial but still strategically small number of *more-or-less randomly-selected* members of the working class or below, aka the *proletariat* or *lumpen proletariat*, either into the oppressor class of capitalist bosses, or into the complicit class of fairly well-paid, fairly high social status bureaucrats, professionals, managers, or skilled laborers, who serve the class of big-capitalist bosses.

This is confirmed, at least for the USA, by empirical data about about the size and specific constitution of the American working class during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.<sup>142</sup>

They called it "upward social mobility" and then more recently, "equal opportunity."

As a consequence, distributive social justice not only did nothing to fundamentally change or end big-capitalist oppression, it actually turned out to be the most effective way of perpetuating it.

That's a paradigmatic example of *The Paradox of Distributive Social Justice* in action.

**§193.** Now I'll re-ask Chernyshevsky's-and-Lenin's amazingly hard social-political question: *what is to be done?*, and also offer an answer.

My answer is that in order to reverse big-capitalist economic oppression, what's needed is *not* a distributive social justice mechanism for most effectively perpetuating the system of big-capitalist economic oppression itself, under the ideological overlay of "justice-as-fairness," that *also* generates internalization of the oppressor and mirror-reflected discrimination and oppression by creating identity-driven social solidarity groups, but *instead a radical universalist, dignitarian solution that saliently advances the devolution and dismantling of big-capitalist (neo)liberal democratic Statism itself.*

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<sup>142</sup> See, e.g., A. Rowell, "What Everyone Should Know About America's Diverse Working Class," *Center for American Progress Action Fund* (11 december 2017), available online at URL = <https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/economy/reports/2017/12/11/169303/everyone-know-americas-diverse-working-class/>.

What kind of radical universalist, dignitarian solution am I talking about?

I've worked out a detailed existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist proposal in part 3 of *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*.

But bounded in a nutshell and for the purposes of this set of notes, my proposal is this:

*A truly generous* Universal Basic Income, together with universal free healthcare and universal free higher education, all of them funded by highly progressive taxation and radical reductions in military spending, etc., would not only end poverty and radically reduce income-disparity, but also make it really possible for people of *any* economic or social class, race, ethnicity, gender-identity, sexual-preference-identity, age-cohort, etc., to *exit* the system of big capitalism, by simply *refusing* to become "economically productive" good little do-bee workers within it. And instead, they could pursue what I call *lifework*.

What is lifework?

On my view, *human work* is

any form of creative, productive, or otherwise energy-expending rational human agency or performance (roughly, intentionally changing or moving oneself or other things, in the natural or social worlds), under the presupposition that every human worker is a human person, inherently possessing human dignity, and not a *mere* instrument or a mere thing, whether the work itself is undertaken freely or under some sort of coercive compulsion, and whether it is undertaken for purely instrumental or for non-instrumental purposes.

In turn, are two basic kinds of human work, namely *jobwork* and *lifework*.

*Jobwork* in general is whenever a human worker receives money in return for creation, production, the provision of services, or any other rational human agential/performative energy expenditure, especially including working for a salary or wages.

Of course, this covers all jobs under capitalism, whether big capitalism or small capitalism, and whether self-employed or employed by someone else.

*Lifework*, by contrast, is some creative, meaningful activity (aka a *project*), or a series of such activities (aka *projects*), pursued as a full-time, or almost full-time, lifetime calling.

Simply put, lifework is *whatever you would choose to do for the rest of your life if you were freed from financial worries*.

And *the basic function of jobwork is to enable and support lifework*, although, to be sure, one's jobwork could also be chosen as one's lifework.

Relatedly, it is absolutely crucial to note that lifework is an exceptionally broad category, including anything from raising children or otherwise caring for other people, to carpentry and all other sorts of craftsmanship, to nurturing or tending non-human natural processes or creatures—for example, bee-keeping, animal-husbandry, forestry, or gardening—to playing games or sports, to making or performing music, to painting or sculpting, to writing literature of any kind, to making movies, to studying and writing history, to philosophy.

What is essential to lifework is that it involves creative, meaningful activity.

Therefore, lifework substantially overlaps with the category of human *play*, which is often falsely opposed to human work.

On the contrary, insofar as play is creative and meaningful, it can *also* be lifework.

**§194.** So what I am saying is that a truly generous Universal Basic Income, together with the other social provisions I mentioned, all funded by highly progressive taxation and radical reductions in military spending, etc., would make it really possible for people to exit the big-capitalist system for the sake of their lifework, and at the same time radically devolve and transform big capitalism into a fundamentally different, non-oppressive, universal, and dignity-respecting social system.

Ironically and tragically, however, the hegemony of the theory and ideology of *distributive social justice*, much beloved and obsessively disseminated by contemporary classical liberals, communitarian Rawlsian liberals, identitarians, neoliberals, centrists, and Establishment power-elitists of all stripes, is doubtless the most *cognitively effective* way of preventing most people from *ever* recognizing this radical solution to the economic oppression of big capitalism.

**§195. The political aesthetics of outer space.** Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*,<sup>143</sup> a nowadays-neglected, minor philosophical classic of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, is a

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<sup>143</sup> [i] G. Bachelard, *Le poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1958); G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. M. Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

brilliant phenomenological-aesthetic investigation of *inner* or intimate space, focusing on the house and its interior, and related shapes.

What I'm interested in, for the purposes of this set of notes, however, is the philosophical *complement* of Bachelard's topic: namely, *outer* space.

And I'm interested not only in the phenomenological aesthetics, or *poetics*, of outer space, but also in its *radical political dimensions and implications*.

So just to give this line of inquiry a name, I'll call it *the political aesthetics of outer space*.

§196. Like most people who were children during the 1960s, and also had access to TV, movies, and print media, I was absolutely entranced by, even obsessed with, The Space Race in general and the U.S. Space Program in particular.

Indeed, if I remember correctly, my first publication, at age 5 or 6, in 1962 or 63, was this profound sentence in a self-published typed newsletter, distributed in carbon copies:

"A Canadian and American satellite rocket was launched today from Churchill, Manitoba. By Bobby Hanna."

In the interests of full disclosure: I seem to remember I misspelled 'satellite' as 'sattelite'.

A few years later, as my spelling improved but my entrancement by or obsession with The Space Race and the U.S. Space Program remained undiminished, I was greatly disappointed to me to learn that even though the Canadians and the Americans occasionally shared rockets and satellites, as a young Canadian of that era, I had a less-than-zero chance of becoming an astronaut.

Another few years later, however, this frustrated passion for outer space travel led to an equally passionate interest in science fiction, and, another few years after that, to a permanent passion for philosophy.

§197. In retrospect, however, it's clear that The Space Race and the U.S. Space Program were essentially *a militaristic, scientific-Statist boondoggle* jointly arranged by the USA and the Soviet Union, essentially jingoistic macho posturing, and a huge waste of money, on both sides.

The Space Race and the Space Program were also a massive, decades-long technocratic bread-&-circuses event staged *by the military-industrial-university (and now also -digital) complex*, aka *The Deep(er) State*, in order to deflect popular attention from real-world



problems, from worldwide big-capitalist exploitation and/or Leninist-Stalinist communist tyranny, and from coercive authoritarian Statist oppression of all kinds.

This began to dawn on me when I read Kurt Vonnegut's bitterly satirical short story, "The Big Space Fuck,"<sup>144</sup> in 1972, a story notable not only for its exceptional political edginess, but also for the further facts that it was,

(i) as Vonnegut later put it, "the dirtiest story I ever wrote," and,

(ii) as far as I can tell, the first fairly serious literary publication in English to have the word 'fuck' in its title.

But at the same time, as Vonnegut's short story and many of his most famous novels—for example, *Sirens of Titan* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*—and also the novels and short stories of Stanislaw Lem, and Frank Herbert's *Dune*, along with Fritz Lang's *Woman in the Moon*, Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (based on Lem's same-named novel), Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, George Lucas's *Star Wars*, , Douglas Trumbull's *Silent Running*, Ridley Scott's *Alien*, Ron Howard's *Apollo 13*, Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity*, Scott's *The Martian*, and Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*, all brilliantly demonstrate, some of the most politically radical and/or inventive literature and cinema in the past 120 years has been framed in science-fictional, futurist-fantastic, and utopian/dystopian terms, with strong emphases on outer space, off-world settings, and space travel.

Moreover, and here is what I am most interested in for the purposes of this set of notes,

not only (i) is there something *inherently philosophical* in synoptic, reflective thinking about outer space, space travel, cosmology, the origins and destruction of the universe, and so-on—see, for example, Aristotle's idea that all philosophy begins in *wonder* (*thaumazein*) and also Edgar Allan Poe's amazing *Essay on the Material and Spiritual Universe*,

but also (ii) the phenomenological aesthetics of outer space is *inherently sublime*, *deeply political*, and *ultimately spiritual in a fully humane and humanistic sense*.

And here's what I mean by all that.

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<sup>144</sup> K. Vonnegut, "The Big Space Fuck," in H. Ellison (ed.), *Again, Dangerous Visions* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), available online at URL = <<https://sensitiveskinmagazine.com/big-space-fuck-kurt-vonnegut/>>.

§198. Let's start with this highly *artistically* important painted image,



Vincent Van Gogh's "The Starry Night," and with these equally highly *philosophically* important texts written by Kant and Goethe:

[T]wo things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence (*Ehrfurcht*), the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me*. I do not need to search for them and merely conjecture them as though they were veiled in obscurity or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence. (*CPrR* 5: 161-162)

## II. THE HUMAN BEING OUGHT TO LEAVE THE ETHICAL STATE OF NATURE IN ORDER TO BECOME A MEMBER OF AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY

Just as the juridical state of nature is a state of war of every human being against every other, so too is the ethical state of nature one in which the good principle, which resides in each human being, is incessantly attacked by the evil which is found in him and in every other as well. Human beings (as we remarked above) mutually corrupt one another's moral predisposition and, even with the good

will of each individual, because of the lack of a principle which unites them, they deviate through their dissensions from the common goal of goodness, as though they were *instruments of evil*, and expose one another to the danger of falling once again under its dominion. Further, just as the state of a lawless external (brutish) freedom and independence from coercive laws is a state of injustice and of war, each against each, which a human being ought to leave behind in order to enter into a politico-civil state, so is the ethical state of nature 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.

Now, here we have a duty *sui generis*, not of human beings toward human beings but of the human species (*menschlichen Geschlechts*) toward itself. (*Rel 6: 96-97*)

The human being knows himself only inasmuch as he knows the world; he knows the world only within himself and he is aware of himself only within the world. Each new object truly recognized, opens up a new organ [of sensibility] within ourselves.<sup>145</sup>

With that image and those texts in front of us, what I want to do now is to present four arguments in support of what I call *Cosmopolitan Natural Piety*.

What I am both asserting and advocating is nothing more and nothing less than an absolutely universal Kantian “cosmopolitan *moral community*” (*Rel 6: 200*) that is beyond *all* States and State-like institutions, and encompasses not just the Earth but also, in a Greek Cynic-inspired way—and of course I’m thinking here about Diogenes’s profound remark that he was a citizen of no State, but instead a “citizen of the cosmos”—*the entire natural universe*.

The first three arguments are needed in order to set up the fourth argument, which is the most important one for my purposes here.

Bounded in a transcendental nutshell, what I want to argue by means of these four arguments is this:

Because it is as true to say that “the natural universe is inside me” as it is to say that “I am inside the natural universe,” and because I have *dignity*, then the natural universe has *proto-dignity*. But since all States and State-like institutions—and specifically, neoliberal nation-States and State-like institutions—violate my dignity and oppress me,

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<sup>145</sup> Goethe. Text translated and quoted by E. Fromm in *Marx’s Concept of Man* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1966), pp. 28-29, translation modified slightly.

and must be *resisted and exited*, therefore those States and State-like institutions must also oppress *the natural universe* via, for example, their *technocracy*. So the natural universe must also be *protected by me* from this oppression, precisely to the extent that I am resisting and exiting the State and other State-like institutions.

That's Cosmopolitan Natural Piety for you.

§199. Kant discovered the metaphysics of *transcendental idealism* between the publication of his seminal proto-Critical essay of 1768, "Concerning the Ground of the Ultimate Differentiation of Directions in Space," and 1772.

Indeed, the philosophical implications of the "Directions in Space" essay almost certainly triggered the major proto-Critical philosophical break though that Kant famously reports when he says in one of the *Reflexionen* that "the year '69 gave me great light" (R 5037, 18: 69).

More precisely, what Kant had discovered between 1768 and 1772 is what I have called *transcendental idealism for sensibility*.<sup>146</sup>

In 1772, Kant told Marcus Herz that if the human mind conformed to the world, whether phenomenal or noumenal, then a priori knowledge would be impossible (PC 10: 130-131); but by 1770 Kant already also held that a priori knowledge of the phenomenal world is actual and therefore really possible in mathematics, hence the phenomenal world must conform to the non-empirical sensible structure of the human mind, and more specifically must conform to our a priori representations of space and time, since that is what makes mathematics really possible (ID 2: 398-406).

So transcendental idealism for sensibility says that the apparent or phenomenal world fundamentally conforms to the essentially non-conceptual a priori forms of human sensibility, our representations of space and time.

Kant worked out explicit proofs for transcendental idealism for sensibility in the Inaugural Dissertation and again in the Transcendental Aesthetic in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

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<sup>146</sup> See, e.g., R. Hanna, "Directions in Space, Non-Conceptual Form, and the Foundations of Transcendental Idealism," in D. Schulting (ed.), *Kantian Nonconceptualism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 99-115.

The simplest version of the proof, provided in the Transcendental Aesthetic, is the following.

*ARGUMENT 1: Transcendental Idealism for Sensibility*

1. Space and time are
  - either (i) things in themselves,
  - or (ii) properties of/relations between things in themselves,
  - or (iii) transcendently ideal.
2. If space and time were either things in themselves or properties of/relations between things in themselves, then a priori mathematical knowledge would be impossible.
3. But mathematical knowledge is actual, via our pure intuitions of space and time, and therefore really possible.
4. Therefore, space and time are transcendently ideal. (*CPR* A23/B37-38, A38-41/B55-58).

Briefly put, Kant's thesis of transcendental idealism says that the basic structure of the apparent or phenomenal world necessarily conforms to the pure or non-empirical (hence a priori) structure of human cognition, and not the converse (*CPR* Bxvi-xviii).

Or in other words, Kant is saying that the phenomenal world fundamentally conforms to the a priori structure of the human mind, and it is also *not* the case that the human mind fundamentally conforms to the phenomenal world, or indeed to any non-apparent or *noumenal* world.

So if Kant is correct, then he is saying that the world in which we live, move, and have our being (by which I mean the phenomenal natural and social world of our ordinary human existence) is fundamentally dependent on *our* minded nature, and not the converse.

If transcendental idealism is true, then we cannot be inherently alienated from the world we are trying to know, as global epistemic skeptics claim, and human

knowledge—not only a priori knowledge, but also a posteriori knowledge—is therefore really possible.<sup>147</sup>

§200. Now I'll present an argument in Kant-inspired political philosophy for *philosophical social anarchism*.

*ARGUMENT 2: Philosophical Social Anarchism*

1. There is no adequate rational justification, according to the set of basic Kantian moral principles, for an individual real person's, or any group of real persons', immorally commanding other people and coercing them to obey those commands as a duty.
2. Nevertheless, 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 force them to obey those commands as a duty, even when the commands and forcing are immoral.
3. So there is no adequate rational justification for political authority, States, or any other State-like institutions—therefore, philosophical social anarchism is true.

Or in other and even fewer words:

Human *governments* have no moral right to do to other people what *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 social anarchism is true.

§201. Kantian transcendental idealism for sensibility, when taken together with some central claims of Kantian aesthetics and some self-evident Kantian phenomenology, jointly provide an argument for this thesis:

The natural universe is the metaphysical ground of all human persons and their autonomous dignity.

I will call this thesis *The Natural Universe is Our Spiritual Home*.

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<sup>147</sup> See also §§181-188 above; and Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 5—Cognition, Content, and the A Priori*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. chs. 3 and 6-8.

The seven-step argument for The Natural Universe is Our Spiritual Home thesis fuses the Transcendental Aesthetic of the first *Critique* with a Kantian aesthetics of the beautiful and the sublime in the natural environment in the third *Critique*, and a Kantian self-evident phenomenology of our experience of “reverence” (*Ehrfurcht*) for the manifestly real natural universe and human nature, at the very end of the second *Critique*.

*ARGUMENT 3: The Natural Universe is Our Spiritual Home*

1. Given the truth of transcendental idealism for sensibility, then we can take fully seriously the sensibility-grounded, essentially non-conceptual evidence provided by the aesthetic experience of beauty in the natural universe, as veridically tracking natural purposive form, without a purpose, in a way that is inherently *disinterested* and therefore *divorced from all possible self-interest* (CPJ 5: 204-211). In short, our experience of beauty in the natural universe shows us that the natural universe *cannot be and ought not to be regarded or treated purely instrumentally*, that is, merely as a means, or exploited.

2. Given the truth of transcendental idealism for sensibility, and our experience of beauty in the natural universe, then we can *also* take fully seriously the Romantic/natural-religious/natural-theological reverential experience of what Kant calls “the mathematically sublime in nature,” for example, “the starry heavens above me.” To make this kind of “Romantic/natural-religious/natural-theological reverential experience” phenomenologically vivid to yourself, either stand outside on a clear, moonless night at 2:00 am in a place without too many nearby city lights and then look straight up, or else consider, for example, the image I inserted above of Van Gogh’s 1889 masterpiece painting, “The Starry Night.”

3. Now since, according to Kant, via the human experience of the mathematically sublime in nature, the natural universe is thereby experienced as having a specific character and normative value that is expressible only as a *transcendently infinite, transfinite, or non-denumerably infinite*, quantity, it follows that the natural universe inherently cannot be reduced to any denumerable quantity, no matter how great (CPJ 5: 244-260).

4. Hence the natural universe, experienced as mathematically sublime, *cannot have a “market price” and is experienced as beyond price, or priceless*, since all “market prices,” or exchangeable economic values (say, monetary values) “related to general human interests and needs” (Kant, *GMM* 4: 434), are expressible only as

denumerable (natural number, rational number) quantities, even infinite ones. Otherwise put, the specific character and normative value of the natural universe, experienced as mathematically sublime, inherently transcends any economic calculus.

5. Steps 1 to 4 jointly entail what I call *the proto-dignity of the natural universe*. *Dignity* according to Kant, is the absolute, non-denumerably infinite, intrinsic, objective value of persons, or rational animal agents, especially human persons. The natural universe is *not* itself a person, and more specifically it is not itself a human person, and therefore it does not have dignity per se; nevertheless, the natural universe, as beautiful and sublime, *inherently cannot* (without eco-disaster) and *inherently ought not* (without moral scandal) be merely exploited, merely bought or sold, or otherwise treated as a mere capitalist resource or commodity (aka “commodified”).

6. But human nature itself belongs to the natural universe.

7. Therefore transcendental idealism for sensibility, plus the self-evident phenomenology of our reverential experience of beauty/sublimity in the natural universe (“the starry heavens above me”), plus our equally reverential experience of respect for the autonomous dignity of human nature (“the moral law within me”), *transcendentally prove* that the natural universe is the metaphysical ground of all human persons and their autonomous dignity. That is: the natural universe is our spiritual home.

§202. The fourth and final argument, the argument for Cosmopolitan Natural Piety, employs a Kantian logical distinction between two sharply different types of universal sets or totalities:

(i) *absolutely universal sets* and

(ii) *restrictedly universal sets*.

Absolutely universal sets include, for example, Kant’s *omnitudo realitatis* (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A576/B604), Bertrand Russell’s set *w* of all sets that are not members of



themselves,<sup>148</sup> and Georg Cantor's universal set  $C$ , corresponding to the greatest cardinal number.<sup>149</sup>

The logical technical term "impredicativity" means, roughly, "constructibility or definability by means of self-reference or iterative self-inclusion."

Absolutely universal sets are then what I call *vicious impredicative totalities*, because they are impredicative and paradoxical.

Above all, however, vicious impredicative totalities are transcendent, noumenal, and ungrounded in empirical intuition.

By sharp contrast, restrictedly universal sets include Kant's transcendently ideal/empirically space and time as *infinite given magnitudes*, and Cantor's *transfinite* sets—for example, the set of real numbers—as constructed by the power set operation on denumerably infinite sets.

All such sets are what I call *benign impredicative totalities*, because although they are impredicatively constructed by virtue of *including everything in some infinite class of things, including themselves*, they are logically consistent and *not* paradoxical.

Above all, however, benign impredicative totalities are transcendental, a priori forms of the phenomenal, and grounded in empirical intuition.

In turn, ARGUMENT 4 exploits the notion of a benign impredicative totality.

*ARGUMENT 4: Cosmopolitan Natural Piety*

1. We have reverence for nature and its proto-dignity (as mathematically sublime): the starry heavens above me.
2. The starry-heavens-above-me experience perfectly exemplifies what I call *transcendental normativity*, by which I mean *the unconditional and strictly universal highest ends, goals, ideals, standards, and values of the several different kinds of rational*

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<sup>148</sup> See B. Russell, "Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types," in B. Russell, *Logic and Knowledge* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1956), pp. 59-102, at p. 59.

<sup>149</sup> See, for example, Wikipedia, "Cantor's Paradox," available online at URL = [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantor%27s\\_paradox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantor%27s_paradox).

*human activity, aka categorical normativity.*<sup>150</sup> This shown by the following sub-argument.

2.1 When experiencing the starry heavens above me as having proto-dignity, it is every bit as true to say *that I am in space* (empirical realism) as it is to say *that space is in me* (pure intuition of space as an infinite given whole + the transcendental ideality of space).

This metaphysically unique relation of subjective-objective, enantiomorphic, symmetrical containment is beautifully and crisply captured by Goethe's remark that the human being "knows the world only within himself and he is aware of himself only within the world." And as a deliciously evocative pictorial analogue of this metaphysically unique relation as also occurring in a non-denumerably infinite structure, consider, for example, placing a person between two mirrors facing each other, as in this both literally and figuratively iconic scene in Orson Welles's 1941 masterpiece movie, *Citizen Kane*, Kane/Hearst/Welles in the hall of mirrors at Kane's castle:




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<sup>150</sup> See also R. Hanna, "Transcendental Normativity and the Avatars of Psychology," in A. Stati (ed.), *Husserl's Ideas I: New Commentaries and Interpretations* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), also available online at URL =

<[https://www.academia.edu/10682733/Transcendental\\_Normativity\\_and\\_the\\_Avatars\\_of\\_Psychology](https://www.academia.edu/10682733/Transcendental_Normativity_and_the_Avatars_of_Psychology)>

In the context of this set of notes, this is also a deliciously *ironic* pictorial analogue, since the Orson Welles character, Charles Foster Kane [= William Randolph Hearst], a highly politically ambitious, ruthless, and xenophobic newspaper tycoon, both *is* in the movie [Welles/Kane] and also *was* in reality [Hearst], the very *antithesis* of a citizen of the cosmos.

2.2 Therefore, the totality with proto-dignity that is constituted by the starry-heavens-above-me experience is *an impredicative totality*: a non-denumerably infinite totality constituted by including (a complete representation of) the totality itself as a member of the totality.

2.3 But this totality with proto-dignity is also a *benign* impredicative totality, since it is both well-grounded in human experience and also includes a (complete representation of a) universal set that is also a member of itself, *without* entailing a contradiction.

2.4 There is no contradiction in the constitution of this totality, precisely because not only is manifest realism generally consistent with transcendental idealism, but also manifest realism and transcendental idealism mutually synthetically a priori entail each other under the weak or counterfactual interpretation of transcendental idealism: necessarily, if the manifestly real world exists, then were we also to exist, we would be able to cognize the manifest real world veridically, to some salient extent.<sup>151</sup>

3. But, by virtue of the ethical demands of existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchism,<sup>152</sup> we must also exit the State (as a coercive and therefore oppressive social system) and all State-like institutions (as also coercive and therefore oppressive) in order to create and belong to an absolutely universal *moral community*.

4. Therefore, we must simultaneously protect the natural world and also systematically deconstruct/dismantle and constructively replace all State and Statelike institutional mechanisms that are damaging or destroying the natural universe, especially big-capitalist ones, *insofar as those mechanisms oppress people, of whom it is every bit as true to say that they are in space as it is to say that space is in*

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<sup>151</sup> See Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 5—Cognition, Content, and the A Priori*, [PREVIEW](#), section 7.3.

<sup>152</sup> See Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 4—Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. parts 2-3.

*them, and therefore perfectly exemplify transcendental normativity in the special form of human dignity.*

In other words, as citizens of the cosmos, we have a *transcendental political and spiritual obligation* to protect the natural universe against damage or destruction by big capitalism, States, and State-like institutions.

Thus Cosmopolitan Natural Piety constitutes *a new kind of radical environmentalism*, insofar as it is robustly grounded on manifest realism/weak or counterfactual transcendental idealism, Kantian aesthetics, Kantian ethics, transcendental normativity, existential Kantian moral theology, and existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchism.

**§203. Fear, denial, and loathing in the philosophy of mind.** Recent and contemporary philosophy of mind is filled with existential fear, denial, and loathing:

fear and denial of *consciousness*;<sup>153</sup>

fear and denial of *conscious intentionality*, especially including *conscious thought*;<sup>154</sup>

fear and denial of *free agency* (which presupposes consciousness and conscious intentionality);<sup>155</sup> and above all,

loathing directed at any philosopher (or anyone else, for that matter) who has existentially faced up to the irreducible manifest reality of all these facts or phenomena, while still insisting on their *naturalness*, and therefore refusing *either* to reduce these facts or phenomena to mere things, *or* to inflate them by appealing to something mysterious, ghostly, or inherently hidden from human experience (aka “things-in-themselves,” “noumena,” “immortal souls,” etc.).

In short, recent and contemporary philosophy of mind is filled with existential *inauthenticity*, since philosophers of mind are talking about “*human, all too human*”

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<sup>153</sup> See, e.g., G. Strawson, “The Consciousness Deniers,” *New York Review of Books* (13 March 2018), available online at URL = <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2018/03/13/the-consciousness-deniers/>.

<sup>154</sup> See, e.g., S. Ayan, “There Is No Such Thing as Conscious Thought,” *Scientific American* (20 December 2018), available online at URL = <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/there-is-no-such-thing-as-conscious-thought/>.

<sup>155</sup> Ironically, Strawson himself is one of the better-known free-agency-deniers; see G. Strawson, “The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility,” in G. Watson (ed.), *Free Will* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003). See also D. Pereboom, *Living Without Free Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001); and S. Harris, *Free Will* (New York: Free Press, 2012).

*creatures like us, especially including themselves, you, I, and the folks living next door, and not about some mere things or some mysterious ghosts.*



Lucy McKenzie: *Untitled*, 2002

§204. For clarity's sake—

by “consciousness” I mean *immanently-reflexive, egocentrically-centered (in orientable space and unidirectional time) experience, aka subjective experience;*

by “experience,” I mean *mental acts, states, or processes of any kind;*

by “intentionality” I mean *mental “directedness” and mental representation;*

by “thought” I mean *logically-guided conceptualization and judging or inferring; and*

by “free agency” I mean *natural libertarian freedom of the will and the practical agency of real human persons.*<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> See §§166-171 above; see also Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2—Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, PREVIEW.

§205. Simply but also synoptically put, the philosophy of mind is philosophical inquiry and theorizing that is focused on any or all of four basic problems:

*The Mind–Body Problem:* What explains the existence and specific character of conscious, intentional minds like ours in a physical world?

*The Problem of Mental Causation:* What explains the causal relevance and causal efficacy of conscious, intentional minds like ours in a physical world?

*The Problem of Intentional Action:* What explains the categorical difference between the things we consciously and intentionally do, and the things that just happen to us?

*The Problem of Mental Representation:* What explains our mind’s capacity to represent the world and ourselves, and what is the nature of the mental content of our mental representations?

In view of these problems, for me, *the methodology* of the philosophy of mind is a systematic triangulation that simultaneously draws on and synthesizes the results of three distinct sub-methods:

*phenomenology*, that is, the first-person introspective descriptions of conscious, intentional human experience, including intersubjective experience,

*cognitive or affective neuroscience*, that is, the empirical scientific study of cognitive or affective states, acts, and processes in human or non-human animals, and

*classical philosophical reasoning about the mind*, that is, either conceptual analysis and/or real, substantive metaphysics, directed to exploring the nature of minds like ours.

§206. Needless to say, philosophy of mind in any or all of these senses has a long history, especially including Plato’s *Phaedo*, Aristotle’s *De Anima*, and Descartes’s *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

It also encompasses a standard array of recent doctrines, fast-forwarding from Descartes to the mid-20th century, which I will now very briefly gloss.

*Classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism* in the philosophy of mind holds that the human mind and the human body are essentially distinct substances, one of them

fundamentally non-material or non-physical, and the other one fundamentally material or physical, hence fundamentally non-mental.

These distinct substances are held together by metaphysically mysterious contingent causal relations, including both mind-to-body or mind-to-mind causal relations (aka “mental causation”) and body-to-mind causal relations.

By sharp contrast, philosophy of mind in the mainstream Anglo-American tradition, running from roughly 1950 up to the beginning of the 21st century can be doubly characterized by

- (i) its official rejection of classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism, and
- (ii) its central, ongoing commitment to *brain-bounded materialism* (aka “brain-bounded physicalism”) as regards the nature of the mind-body relation and the nature of cognition.

At the same time, however, even despite its official anti-Cartesianism, this tradition remains implicitly committed to a three-part metaphysical presupposition that I call *Cartesian Fundamentalism*, according to which

- (i) the mental is *fundamentally* (that is, inherently, necessarily, and exclusively) *non-physical*,
- (ii) the physical is *fundamentally* (that is, inherently, necessarily, and exclusively) *non-mental*, and
- (iii) no substance can have a *complementary dual* essence that is inherently and necessarily *both mental and physical*.

All classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualists and all materialists or physicalists, alike, are committed to Cartesian Fundamentalism.

They differ only as to whether, on the one hand, the mental and the physical possess equal but opposite ontological status, which is classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism, or, on the other, the mental asymmetrically ontologically depends on the physical, which is materialism or physicalism.

Hence all materialists or physicalists, at bottom, are *Cartesian* materialists or physicalists.

Now *materialism* or *physicalism*, as such, says that properties of or facts about the human mind are constitutively determined by fundamentally physical facts.

But there are two different types of materialism or physicalism:

*reductive* materialism or physicalism, and

*non-reductive* materialism or physicalism.

Reductive materialism or physicalism says that all properties of or facts about the human mind are wholly constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts; that is: the human mind is nothing over and above the fundamentally physical world.

Non-reductive materialism or physicalism, by contrast, says that some but not all properties of or facts about the human mind are wholly constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts; that is: certain causally inert properties or facts about the human mind—for example, about the normative character of rational intentionality, or about the qualitative specific character of consciousness—vary independently of fundamentally physical properties or facts, even though all of the human mind’s causally efficacious properties or facts are still wholly constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts.

*Brain-bounded* materialism or physicalism, whether reductive or non-reductive, says that properties or facts about the human mind are constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts about the human brain.

For example, a very popular mainstream view first articulated in the 1950s, the *Materialist or Physicalist Mind-Brain Identity Theory*, holds that all mental properties and facts are asymmetrically or “downwardly” identical to, hence “nothing over and above,” brain-properties and brain-facts.

§207. Over the first two decades of the 21st century, philosophy of mind in the mainstream Anglo-American tradition, has been significantly influenced by *the extended mind thesis*,<sup>157</sup> which challenges the specifically brain-bounded component of brain-

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<sup>157</sup> See, e.g., A. Clark and D. Chalmers, “The Extended Mind,” *Analysis* 58 (1998): 7-19.



bounded materialism or physicalism, and also by *panpsychism*,<sup>158</sup> which challenges both materialism or physicalism and Cartesian dualism alike.

The extended mind thesis says that *the fundamentally physical constitutive ground of mental properties or facts extends into the natural and/or social environment beyond the human body*, either by means of external vehicles of mental content or by means of external vehicles of consciousness; that is: the human mind is essentially spread out into the natural and social world, although *not* throughout the *entire* natural world.

Panpsychism goes one giant step further than the extended mind thesis, however, and says that if we posit the existence of consciousness (or experience) *in everything, everywhere in nature, at the basic level*,

either (i) as an irreducible intrinsic, nonrelational property of a neutral cosmic stuff that's as much mental as it is physical, but can appear as mind-like or as matter-like in different natural contexts (aka "neutral monism"),

or (ii) as an intrinsic nonrelational feature of all basic physical particles (which may also be atomic events),

then we don't have to explain how causally efficacious conscious mind mysteriously *emerges* or "pops out" from the basic level of nature—because consciousness (or experience) is *already literally installed in everything, everwhere in nature, right from the metaphysical get-go*.

**§208.** By sharp contrast to philosophy of mind in the mainstream Anglo-American tradition, however, I reject materialism or physicalism (whether reductive or non-reductive), the brain-bounded thesis, the extended mind thesis, and panpsychism *alike*, not only for strictly theoretical reasons, but also because I believe that they all express, in different ways, an intense (if often unselfconscious or self-deceived) existential fear, denial, and loathing about consciousness, conscious intentionality, and free agency.

And at the same time, I *also* reject classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism.

My double rejection of materialism or physicalism (whether reductive or non-reductive) on the one hand, and classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism on the other, is

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<sup>158</sup> See, e.g., P. Goff, W. Seager, and S. Allen-Hermanson, "Panpsychism," in E.N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2017 Edition), available online at URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/panpsychism/>.

rationally motivated and entailed by my thoroughgoing rejection of Cartesian Fundamentalism.

Hence for me, the mental is not fundamentally non-physical; the physical is not fundamentally non-mental; and it is also really possible for a substance to have a complementary dual essence that is inherently and necessarily both mental and physical.

Indeed, according to my view, it is actually the case that some substances have a complementary dual essence that is inherently and necessarily both mental and physical, since creatures like us are those very substances.

Very simply put, according to my view, creatures like us are nothing more and nothing less than *minded human animals*.

(I don't in any way mean to deny that there are also *non-human* or *non-rational* minded animals: contrariwise.

It's just that the philosophy of mind, insofar as it looks towards free agency, is *particularly* focused on *rational* minded *human* animals.)

**§209.** Correspondingly, my metaphysics of the mind-body relation, as worked out and defended in *Embodied Minds in Action*,<sup>159</sup> is *the essential embodiment theory*.

This theory centers on the following six core theses.

1. *The Essential Embodiment Thesis:*

Creatures with conscious, intentional minds are necessarily and completely neurobiologically embodied.

2. *The Essentially Embodied Agency Thesis:*

Basic acts (for example, raising one's arm) are intentional body movements caused by an essentially embodied mind's synchronous trying to make those very movements and its active guidance of them.

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<sup>159</sup> See note 2 above.

### 3. *The Emotive Causation Thesis:*

Trying and its active guidance, as the cause of basic intentional actions, is primarily a pre-reflective, desire-based emotive mental activity and only derivatively a self-conscious or self-reflective, deliberative intellectual mental activity.

### 4. *The Mind-Body Animalism Thesis:*

The fundamental mental properties of conscious, intentional minds are:

(i) non-logically or strongly metaphysically (that is, synthetically) a priori necessarily reciprocally intrinsically connected to corresponding fundamental physical properties in a living animal's body (aka *mental-physical property fusion*), and

(ii) irreducible truly global or inherently dominating intrinsic structures of motile, suitably neurobiologically complex, egocentrically-centered and spatially- oriented, thermodynamically irreversible living organisms (aka, *neo-Aristotelian hylomorphism*).

### 5. *The Dynamic Emergence Thesis:*

The natural world itself is neither fundamentally physical nor fundamentally mental; instead, it is essentially a causal-dynamic totality of forces, processes, and patterned movements and changes in real space and real time, all of which exemplify fundamental physical properties (for example, molecular, atomic, and quantum properties). Some but not all of those physical events also exemplify irreducible biological properties (for example, being a living organism), and some but not all of those biological events also exemplify irreducible fundamental mental properties (for example, consciousness or intentionality). And both biological properties and fundamental mental properties are dynamically emergent properties of those events.

### 6. *The Intentional Causation Thesis:*

A mental cause is an event or process involving both consciousness and intentionality, such that it is a necessary proper part of a nomologically jointly sufficient essentially mental-and-physical cause of intentional body movements. In so doing, it is a dynamically emergent structuring cause of those movements. Then, under the appropriate endogenous and exogenous conditions, by virtue of

synchronous trying and its active guidance, conscious, intentional essentially embodied minds are mental causes of basic acts from their inception in neurobiological processes to their completion in overt intentional body movements.

In this way, the essential embodiment theory says

that our dynamically emergent, irreducible, sentient and sapient minds are also necessarily interdependent with our own living organismic animal bodies and not essentially distinct from them;

that we are far-from- equilibrium, asymmetric, complex, self-organizing thermodynamic systems;

that we act by intentionally moving our bodies by means of our desire-based emotions and trying; and

that our conscious, intentional, caring, and rational minds are basically causally efficacious precisely because they are metaphysically continuous with our biological lives, and life is basically causally efficacious in physical nature.

The simple upshots of the essential embodiment theory, then, are these two synoptic claims:

1. In thinking about the mind-body problem, we should decisively replace the early modern Cartesian and Newtonian *ghost-in-the-machine* metaphysics with a post- Cartesian and post-Newtonian but also at the same time neo-Aristotelian *immanent-structure-in-the-non-equilibrium-thermodynamics* metaphysics.
2. The irreducible conscious, intentional, caring minds of cognizers and agents *grow naturally in suitably complex living organisms*, as irreducible, non-dualistic, non- supervenient, asymmetric thermodynamic immanent structures of those organisms.

Correspondingly, I am committed to a *body-bounded* constitutive ground of mindedness, and neither to a *brain-bounded ground*, nor to an *extended ground beyond the living human body*, nor to a *panpsychic ground in everything, everywhere in nature*.

**§210.** Here, very briefly, are four arguments showing why human mindedness extends out beyond the human brain to the limits of the living human body, *but no further*.

*ARGUMENT 1: The Organismic Nature of the Human Mind*

1. Human minds are essentially embodied in living human organisms.
2. So human minds are essentially alive and organismic.
3. But extended vehicles for human minds are either (i) *not living human organisms* or else (ii) *not the same living human organisms* in which those minds are essentially embodied.
4. Therefore, human minds cannot be extended beyond the living human body.

*ARGUMENT 2: The Promiscuity of the Extended Mind*

Without a sufficient rationale for *limiting* mind-extension, then in principle, *anything in nature or society* could count as a constitutive vehicle for the human mind, which is metaphysically absurd.

*ARGUMENT 3: The Systematic Diminishment of Human Practical Agency and Agential Autonomy Under the Extended Mind Thesis*

1. Purported facts about the extension of human mind into the environment diminish human practical agency and agential autonomy in direct proportion to their distance from the individual minded human animal, the natural and moral source of practical agency.
2. But any theory of the mind that systematically diminishes human practical agency and agential autonomy is a false theory.
3. Therefore the extended mind thesis is false.

*ARGUMENT 4: Know Thyself, Or, The Finitude of Minded Human Animals*

1. As the-Delphic-Oracle-inspired Socrates pointed out, we must know ourselves and our own limits.
2. To say that human minds are essentially embodied in living organisms, is to say that we are minded human animals.
3. We are not reducible to brains, as per brain-bounded reductive materialism or physicalism. We are not Cartesian ghosts, as per classical Cartesian interactionist

substance dualism. And we are not indefinitely extensible into the natural or social environment, as per the extended mind thesis.

4. Only the knowledge that we are minded human animals, nothing *less* than that and nothing *more* than that, satisfies the Delphic/Socratic dictum.

§211. Now what about panpsychism?

It should already be clear enough that panpsychism is immediately subject to a version of Argument IV above: if minds like ours are not indefinitely extensible into the natural or social environment, then obviously minds like ours are also not *literally installed in everything, everywhere in nature*.

But more precisely, my view is that panpsychism is *half-right* and *half-wrong*.

It's right to posit the existence of consciousness (or experience) at the basic level of nature, necessarily bound up with physical properties, insofar as consciousness (or experience) occurs in living organisms of a suitable degree of complexity, i.e., minded animals; but it's wrong to go metaphysically overboard and literally install consciousness (or experience) in everything, everywhere in nature.

For in that case, then even (for example) shoes, ships, sealing wax, cabbages, beer, bourbon, beer bottles, and bourbon bottles are all literally conscious (or having experiences)—which, as much as I do like beer and bourbon, is clearly an excessively strong metaphysical hypothesis.

Moreover, since consciousness (or experience) is supposed by the panpsychist to be an intrinsic, nonrelational feature of basic stuff or basic particles, then it follows that mind and mindedness *cannot be directly known from outside the stuff or beings that have those properties intrinsically and nonrelationally*, and that therefore mind and mindedness are never manifestly real in the spatiotemporal world of human experience.

By contrast, I think it's self-evidently obvious that not only are minded animals *reflexively conscious*, but also that they directly consciously perceive the mindedness of *other* minded animals.

§212. In short, *all* of the basic theoretical problems encountered by materialism or physicalism (whether reductive or non-reductive), Cartesian dualism, brain-bounded theories, extended mind theories, and panpsychism, are fully avoided by the essential embodiment theory.

But at the end of the philosophical day, the *most* important virtue of the essential embodiment theory is *existential*, since it fully avoids the fear, denial, and loathing expressed by all of the other theories.

The hardest things of all for us, not only as philosophers of mind specifically but also as philosophers full stop, and as human free agents, are these:

to be able to locate ourselves correctly, to know our own powers and their scope, to know our own inner and outer limits, neither to reduce ourselves to mere things nor to inflate ourselves into mysterious ghosts, and therefore, finally, to refuse self-deception and face up to ourselves *as we manifestly really are*.

Of all the theories I've surveyed, *only* the essential embodiment theory meets this existential standard of authenticity.

**§213. A new argument against capital punishment.** In early-ish August and early-ish December 2018 I read two very good *New York Times* opinion pieces by Margaret Renkl, "American Has Stopped Being a Civilized Nation,"<sup>160</sup> and "There's a Lot of Killing in Thou-Shalt-Not-Kill States,"<sup>161</sup> in which she compellingly argues against capital punishment from a dignitarian point of view.



Anti-death penalty protesters outside of the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution before the execution of Billy Ray Irick in Nashville on Aug. 9.

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<sup>160</sup> M. Renkl, "American Has Stopped Being a Civilized Nation," *The New York Times* (12 August 2018), available online at URL = <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/12/opinion/death-penalty-billy-ray-irick.html>>.

<sup>161</sup> M. Renkl, "There's a Lot of Killing in Thou-Shalt-Not-Kill States," *The New York Times* (10 December 2018), available online at URL = <<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/10/opinion/death-row-bible-belt.html>>.



A roadside billboard in Alabama.

As she so aptly and crisply puts it at the end of “There a Lot of Killing...”:

There are numerous pragmatic reasons to abolish the death penalty. It doesn’t deter crime. It doesn’t save the state money. It risks ending an innocent life. (The Death Penalty Information Center lists the names of 164 innocent people who have been exonerated after serving years on death row. The most recent, Clemente Javier Aguirre, was released from a Florida prison just last month.) It is applied in a haphazard and irrational manner that disproportionately targets people of color. It puts prison staff in the untenable position of executing a human being they know personally and often truly care for.

But the real problem with the death penalty can’t be summed up by setting pros and cons on different sides of a balance to see which carries more weight. The real problem of the death penalty is its human face.

A person on death row is a person. No matter how ungrieved he may be once he is gone, he is still a human being. And it is not our right to take his life any more than it was his right to take another’s.

I absolutely agree with Renkl’s basic line of reasoning and conclusions.

My only objection to her pair of articles concerns the first one’s *title*—no doubt not chosen by Renkl herself, but instead by her *NYT* editor.



It should have been “*America Has Never Been a Civilized Nation*,” since the USA as a nation-State has always had the death penalty and has also always had the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, both of which are rationally unjustified and immoral.

§214. This titular objection, in turn, also set me to thinking about formulating a new argument against capital punishment, from a specifically *existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist* point of view.<sup>162</sup>

It’s a fourteen-step argument, and here’s how it goes.

**First**, according to Kantians and other dignitarians, all rational human animals are *human persons*, aka *people*.

**Second**, according to Kantians and other dignitarians, all people are

(i) absolutely intrinsically, non-denumerably infinitely valuable, beyond all possible economics, which means they have *dignity*, and

(ii) autonomous rational animals, which means they can act freely for good reasons, and above all they are

(iii) morally obligated to respect each other and to be actively concerned for each other’s well-being and happiness, aka kindness, as well as their own well-being and happiness.

**Third**, therefore, according to Kantians and other dignitarians, it is rationally unjustified and immoral to undermine or violate people’s dignity *under any circumstances*.

More specifically, people have dignity as an innate endowment of their rational humanity.

So dignity is neither a politically-created right, nor an achievement of any sort.

Nor, correspondingly, can anyone *lose their dignity* by thinking, choosing, or acting in a morally or legally *very bad* way.

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<sup>162</sup> See Hanna, THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 4—*Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. Parts 2 and 3.

**Fourth**, *existential* Kantians specifically, hold that the meaning of rational human life is the pursuit of *principled authenticity*, that people's lives are never defined by the worst things they've ever done, and that they always and innately possess the ability freely to change their lives radically for the better.

**Fifth**, if you're dead, then you *cannot* pursue principled authenticity, and you *no longer possess* the ability freely to change your life radically for the better.

**Sixth**, at any time, all the bad things you've done, and especially *the worst thing* you've ever done, *have already happened* and they cannot be changed or undone by any other act, especially including *by your being punished after the fact*.

**Seventh**, if it's rationally unjustified and immoral for *ordinary people* to do X, then it's rationally unjustified and immoral for *the State* to do X.

**Eighth**, *coercion* is when some people force other people to heed or do what they command, by means of violence or the threat of violence, in order to satisfy the coercer's self-interested or Utilitarian ends.<sup>163</sup>

**Ninth**, according to Kantians and other dignitarians, since using people as mere instruments or means to satisfy self-interested or Utilitarian ends is always rationally unjustified and immoral, and coercion is an *aggravated form* of using people as mere instruments or means, then all coercion is rationally unjustified and immoral.

**Tenth**, because all States claim the right to coerce people just because they possess the power and the means to do so, but the coercion of people by other ordinary people is rationally unjustified and immoral, and the mere institutionalized, governmental, State possession of power and the means to coerce does not convert what is rationally unjustified and immoral into something rationally justified and moral, *it follows that all States are rationally unjustified and immoral*.

**Eleventh**, *the death penalty* is when the State legally kills someone in order to coerce them by punishment after the fact of some (actual or supposed) wrongdoing.

**Twelfth**, it's a violation of human dignity, hence rationally unjustified and immoral, on existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist grounds, for *ordinary people* to kill other

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<sup>163</sup> In other places, I distinguish between *primary* coercion (the kind of coercion defined in these notes), and *secondary* coercion, which is someone's forcing other people to heed or do the their bidding by using harms or the threat of them *short of violence* (e.g., getting you fired from your job). But that distinction isn't important for my purposes here.

people in order to coerce them by punishment after the fact of some (actual or supposed) wrongdoing, since if someone is dead then they cannot pursue principled authenticity and freely change their lives for the better, and all the bad things they've done, especially including the worst thing they've ever done, have *already* happened and cannot be changed or undone by any act, especially including any act of punishment after the fact.

**Thirteenth**, therefore at the very least *it's equally a violation of human dignity*, hence rationally unjustified and immoral, on existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist grounds, for *the State* to do this; and arguably *it's an even worse violation of human dignity* for the State to do this, since the State, which is a coercive authoritarian social institution on a grand scale, is *itself* rationally unjustified and immoral.

**Fourteenth**, therefore *the death penalty is rationally unjustified and immoral*, on existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist grounds.

The one big philosophical advantage of my longer argument over Renkl's short one, I think, is that mine explicitly displays how capital punishment isn't simply the rationally unjustified and immoral killing of a human being with dignity, *it's also in direct violation of fundamental existential and political principles*.

**§215. The incoherence and impossibility of personal immortality.** According to *The Minded Animalist* theory of the nature and identity of persons, as I spell it out and defend it in *Deep Freedom and Real Persons*,

(i) human persons are *essentially embodied minds and rational minded animals*, and

(ii) they're identical with each and all parts of their "human, all-too-human" rational lives, that is, they're identical with the individual dynamic, forward-directed, spatiotemporal processes of their lives, from the inception of conscious experience in the third trimester of pregnancy through (if they're lucky) infancy, childhood, youth, and rational adulthood, all the way to their inevitable deaths.<sup>164</sup>

All such persons are what I also call *real human persons*.

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<sup>164</sup> Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 2 – Deep Freedom and Real Persons*, [PREVIEW](#), esp. chs. 6-7.

Many people, including many philosophers, are under the serious conceptual illusion that *personal immortality* is a coherent notion, representing something that is metaphysically possible.



Fountain of Eternal Life, Cleveland OH, USA

But in fact, *we do not have the slightest idea* how the concept of “immortality,” understood as the concept of a *sempiternal temporal extension*, applies to the concept of the life of a real human person.

(As I’m using the term “sempiternal,” something  $X$  is sempiternal if and only if  $X$  begins to exist at a certain time  $T$  and has an endless or everlasting and therefore infinite existence in time after  $T$ .)

So it also turns out that immortality is a priori impossible for real human persons.

I will establish these points by briefly unpacking and then criticizing two of the most influential and important discussions of the nature and value of immortality, Bernard

Williams's "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality"<sup>165</sup> and John Martin Fischer's reply to Williams, "Why Immortality is Not So Bad."<sup>166</sup>

§216. (1) *Williams on the Tedium of Immortality*

In his justly-famous paper, Williams wants to argue for two theses:

- (i) other things being equal, death is a bad thing for the real human person who dies, and
- (ii) immortality would be, where conceivable at all, intolerable.

The argument for thesis (i) has three steps.

**First**, there are certain desires, that Williams calls "categorical desires," which are desires that are unconditional with respect to rational human life, in that we want them to be satisfied whether or not we are alive to experience them.

For example, rational suicide, understood as the reasonable desire to be dead, is such that the rationally suicidal subject wants this desire to be satisfied even though he will not be alive to experience that state.

Although Williams does not use this term specifically, let us call any similar inherently death-related or rationally suicidal desire—for example, the desire that event *X* happens *N* days after one's own suicide—a *negative categorical desire*.

**Second**, correspondingly, a real human person, who is therefore also a conscious rational subject, can categorically desire things in a *positive* way, beyond his own death.

For example, I could intensely desire to be the Nobel Prize winner for Literature in 2057, exactly 100 years after Albert Camus won his prize in 1957, the year of my own birth, and, assuming that no other philosopher wins it in the meantime, thereby become the first *philosopher* to win the Prize since Jean-Paul Sartre in 1964—even though the likelihood of my actually living beyond my 80s is fairly small.

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<sup>165</sup> B. Williams, "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality," in B. Williams, *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 82-100.

<sup>166</sup> J.M. Fischer, "Why Immortality is Not So Bad," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 2 (1994): 257-270.

More generally, positive categorical desires can include the desire to go on living after one's own actual death, so that many future desires will come into existence and be satisfied.

**Third**, therefore, as long as the conscious rational subject has positive categorical desires, then it is a bad thing for that real human person to die.

Importantly, according to Williams, categorical desires are inherently contingent in that we do not *have* to have them, or at least we do not *always* have to have them.

Indeed, on the supposition that as a matter of contingent fact someone has no positive categorical desires, or that any positive categorical desires that real human person previously had have now been extinguished, then death could be a good thing, and one could have a good reason to die, in that it satisfies a negative categorical desire.

For example, Elina Makropulos, the fictional protagonist of *The Makropulos Case*, has been granted immortality, but within the first three centuries of her immortal, sempiternal life, starting at age 42, she has also lost all her positive categorical desires.

So then, at age 342, she negatively categorically desires to be dead, and therefore has a good reason to die.

This provides the conceptual segue to Williams's argument for his thesis (ii), which has four steps.

**First**, it is a necessary condition of my being immortal that the very same person—namely, I myself, as I am now, with a certain set of memories, and a certain character—goes on living, and does not change identities over time.

The idea that I myself am continually being reborn as a new person, as opposed to merely being reincarnated in a new body, is incoherent.

**Second**, as time passes, all of the experiences it would be possible for me to have, are eventually had.

Then after that time, necessarily, a state of boredom, indifference, and coldness—in Williams's nice phrase, "joylessness"—sets in.

Presumably, joylessness consists in having *no* desires that must be satisfied

either (i) as actually experienced by me with joy, hence conditional on my being alive to experience them (joyful-life-conditional desires),

or (ii) as would be experienced by me with joy, if, contrary to highly probable fact, I continued to live (positive categorical desires per se).

**Third**, for this reason, living forever would be infinitely joyless, and, in particular, infinitely boring.

**Fourth**, therefore immortality would be intolerable.

### §217. (2) *Fischer on How Immortality Could Be a Good Thing*

According to Fischer, by virtue of his argument for the intolerability of immortality, Williams's account negatively implies two necessary conditions on the tolerability of immortality:

(i) *the identity condition*, which says that the subject who lives on must remain the same person over time, and

(ii) *the attractiveness condition*, which says that the person's future life must be appealing, that is, not filled with pain and/or suffering, and not joyless—in particular, and perhaps most importantly, not boring.

In view of those necessary conditions, Fischer then claims that Williams's argument makes three questionable assumptions, and fails to recognize one crucial distinction, hence it is an unsound argument.

The first questionable assumption that Williams makes is that in order for immortality to preserve identity over time, future activities cannot be completely absorbing, since then the subject would lose herself, and therefore *her self*, in them, and could not preserve her personal identity over time.

But as Fischer correctly points out, it is one thing for the *content* of an experience to be completely absorbing, and quite another for an experience to be *unowned* by a distinctive, synchronically and diachronically identical self.

More generally, completely absorbing experiences in the content-sense can also be owned by the very same self at any given time and over time.

Williams's second questionable assumption is that in order for immortality to be attractive, it must consist in one single activity that in turn would eventually become joyless and boring.

But on the contrary, Fischer plausibly argues, immortality could consist in a plurality of activities, and it is not at all clear that this plurality would itself ever be joy-exhaustible or become boring in the way that a single activity could.

And Williams's third questionable assumption is that in order for immortality to be attractive, all experiences in the subject's future immortal or sempiternal life have to be pleasurable, even though they all would eventually become joyless and boring.

But on the contrary, according to Fischer, since *finite* or terminating lives can be overall very good even if there is a certain amount of pain/suffering, joylessness, and boredom in them, then there is no good reason to think that an immortal or sempiternal life could not be similarly composed.

In addition to these three questionable assumptions, according to Fischer, Williams fails to recognize a crucial distinction between

(i) *self-exhausting pleasures*, which aesthetically and/or hedonically terminate themselves and are inherently non-renewable for the subject,

either (ia) because they turn out, in the event, to be disappointing (for example, the prospectively amazing New Year's party that is not so very amazing after all, indeed quite the contrary),

or (ib) because they are complete in themselves (for example, the intense thrill of climbing Mount Everest, that one never needs or wants to repeat, having "been-there, done-that"),

and

(ii) *repeatable pleasures*, that do not exhaust themselves and are inherently worth experiencing again and again.

Self-exhausting and repeatable pleasures can, to some important extent, be relativized to individuals and contexts: what counts as self-exhausting or repeatable for one individual or in one context, need not count as self-exhausting or repeatable for another individual or in another context.



Moreover, repeatable pleasures should not, in general, be obsessively or mechanically repeated, but instead require appropriate distribution or patterning over time.

Now Williams seems to assume that all pleasures will ultimately be self-exhausting in the condition of immortal or sempiternal life.

But, on the contrary says Fischer, there is no good reason to believe that there cannot be endlessly or infinitely repeatable pleasures in an immortal or sempiternal life, provided that these pleasures are appropriately distributed or patterned over time.

So, taking Williams's three questionable assumptions together with his failure to recognize the category of repeatable pleasures, his conclusion does not follow.

On the contrary, Fischer concludes, immortality or sempiternal life *could* be a good thing.

**§218.** (3) *Some Worries About Williams's Account and Fischer's Account Alike*

For the purposes of my criticism of Williams and Fischer alike, by "a finite or terminating real human personal life" I will mean a real human personal life *with permanent death at the end of it*.

Then, correspondingly, by "immortality," as per the above, I will mean *a sempiternal real human personal life*.

Granting that, then we need to distinguish between

- (i) a finite or terminating real human personal life that is relatively short, say, lasting up 120 years in duration as an absolute maximum, but no longer than that,
- (ii) a finite or terminating real human personal life that is super-long, say, any finite number of years greater than 120 in duration, including of course Elina Makropulos's 342 years, and
- (iii) a real human personal life that is immortal.

The deep issue raised by this threefold distinction is how precisely we are to understand the concept of *endlessness*, *everlastingness*, or *infinity* when it is applied to the concept of a real human personal life.

Now a real human personal life like ours, simply by virtue of its being human and therefore having a necessary connection with organismic life, occurs in rather limited portions of space, and also has a certain temporally definite biological sequencing related to growth, maturation, aging, eating, sleeping, breathing, blood circulation, heart activity, neuronal activity, hormonal activity, ranges of body temperature, and so on.

In other words, a real human personal life is inherently filled with spatial and biotemporal parameters of various kinds.

By sharp contrast, the only well-defined concept of endlessness, everlastingness, or infinity we have is fundamentally mathematical, and here there is an important distinction between

- (i) *denumerable* infinities, involving one-to-one correspondence with the set of natural numbers/positive integers), and
- (ii) *non-denumerable infinities*, which systematically outrun one-to-one correspondence with the natural numbers/positive integers, for example, the power set of the set of natural numbers.

We can meaningfully add this dual mathematical concept of endlessness, everlastingness, or infinity to the concept of a sempiternal successive temporal extension, and then understand the idea of a sempiternal successive temporal extension that is either denumerable or non-denumerable.

But, supposing that we do have some conceptually competent grasp of the temporal-mathematical concept of sempiternal endlessness, everlastingness, or infinity, nevertheless I do not think we have the slightest idea of *how this concept meaningfully applies to the concept of a real human personal life*, given the necessary connection between such a life and an inherently spatially-limited and temporally definite biologically-sequenced organismic life of a specifically human sort.

For example, in an endless, everlasting, or infinite amount of time, since every denumerably infinite series has the same cardinality, the very same real human person could visit every single point in any denumerably infinite space.

And even though, necessarily, every real human person, by virtue of their specifically human organismic lives, grows, matures, and ages throughout those lives, that very same real human person would also somehow exist for an endlessly, everlastingly, or infinitely long time without growing, maturing, or aging, like Elina Makropolus.

But none of this makes any sense.

How could the constitutive moments of a single real human person's life map one-to-one to *all* the points of any denumerably infinite space?

Does Elina Makropulos need to eat, or not?

If so, what are her digestive processes like?

Does she need to sleep, and if so, why?

Is she constantly exchanging heat, energy, and matter with the environment, like every other complex dynamic system that is an animal?

Is she subject to entropy?

And so-on.

Hence I do not think we have the slightest idea of what the concept of "real human personal immortality" really means.

**§219.** Correspondingly, on the charitable assumption that they are *actually* making sense, I think that Williams and Fischer are *actually* talking about a finite or terminating real human personal life *that is super-long*, and not about real human personal *immortality*, which is in fact an incoherent notion.

On the one hand, then, Williams is absolutely right that there is something deeply questionable about the very idea of immortality for real human persons like us; but also Williams is quite wrong that a finite or terminating real human personal life that is super-long would be intolerable, for all the reasons that Fischer gives.

And on the other hand, Fischer is absolutely right that Williams's argument for the intolerability of immortality is unsound; but also Fischer is quite wrong that he has shown *anything* about how real human personal immortality could be good, since the very idea of such a thing is incoherent.

**§220.** In fact, immortality for real human persons like us is a priori impossible because its very idea is incoherent, and more precisely because its possibility is ruled out a priori by the very idea of a real human personal life.

Our conscious, intentional, caring, free agential lives as specifically *real human* persons are finite but unbounded, like the surface of a sphere.

Or to make the same point slightly differently, since every such conscious, intentional, caring, free agential real human personal life necessarily has egocentric centering, it is like the shape of the visual field, which is the interior of a finite sphere projected perspectively outwards from a single oriented region on that interior surface.

Our subjective experience of the finite unboundedness of the interior of this orientable, thermodynamically irreversible, egocentrically centered, complete, unique perspectively-projected life-sphere—a sphere that is completely filled with intentional contents, intentional objects, and ourselves, fully embedded in a thoroughly nonideal natural and social world and along with other conscious subjects and other living organisms—is as close to immortality as we will ever get because it is as close to immortality as it is a priori possible for creatures like us to get.

Since, according to The Minded Animalism Theory of the nature and identity of persons, every real human person is literally identical to each and all parts of her own complete, finite, and unique essentially embodied life-process, and since each real human person's life-process thereby has both a definite unique beginning and also a definite unique ending, their own permanent death,<sup>167</sup> then the very idea of immortality or sempiternal life for real human persons like us is a priori impossible.

Furthermore, and perhaps most poignantly, to hope for personal immortality, or to desire and long for personal immortality, is a tragic conceptual and metaphysical mistake, a serious cognitive illusion.

§221. This existentially profound point can be vividly brought out by way of these two famous texts from Nietzsche's *Gay Science* and early Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*:

*The greatest stress.* How, if some day or night a demon were to sneak into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything immeasurably small or great in your life must return to you—all in the same succession and sequence..." Would you throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or did you once experience a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You

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<sup>167</sup> See Hanna, *THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION, VOLUME 3—Kantian Ethics and Human Existence*, [PREVIEW](#), ch. 6.

are a god, and never have I heard anything more godly." If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you, as you are, or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, "Do you want this once more and innumerable times more?" would weigh upon your actions as the greatest stress. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life to *crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?<sup>168</sup>

6.431 [I]n death ... the world does not change, but ceases.

6.4311 Death is not an event of life. Death is not lived through. If by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present. Our life is endless in the way that the visual field is without limit.<sup>169</sup>

As the Tractarian Wittgenstein clearly saw—his attention having been duly concentrated by the horrors of front line action on the Eastern Front in the Great War—this hope, desiring, or longing for a sempiternally endless or infinite life in effect just endlessly or infinitely puts off till tomorrow what you can, really necessarily, only ever feel, choose, or do right here and right now, today, over and over and over again, until, inevitably, you die: "[h]e lives eternally who lives in the present."

To hope, desire, or long for immortality is therefore a fundamental denial of your own innately-specified capacity for principled authenticity, and in this way it constitutes a special form of nihilism that Simon Critchley aptly calls *passive nihilism*.<sup>170</sup>

So here is where my Existential Kantian Ethics and early Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* meet up with Nietzsche's later philosophy.

Indeed, in my opinion, Wittgenstein's thought about living eternally in the present is essentially the same as the one Nietzsche had about "the greatest stress" and eternal recurrence.

Both of these thoughts express a profound dual insight about the nature of principled authenticity and about the self-undermining passive nihilism that constantly tempts us

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<sup>168</sup> F. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. W. Kaufmann (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1983), pp. 101-102 (*Gay Science*, #341), italics in the original.

<sup>169</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C.K. Ogden (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 185.

<sup>170</sup> S. Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. 3-6.

in the form of the seemingly benign and natural desire for an endless, everlasting, or infinite real human personal life.<sup>171</sup>

Correspondingly, it's an essential feature of a principled and *authentic* life that we fully face up to the metaphysically necessary a priori truth that when our real human personal lives end, *that's it*—and the rest is literally nothing.<sup>172</sup>



Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu's gravestone,  
bearing only the Chinese Zen character "mu," meaning *nothingness*.

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<sup>171</sup> See note 167 above.

<sup>172</sup> See §§95-125 above.