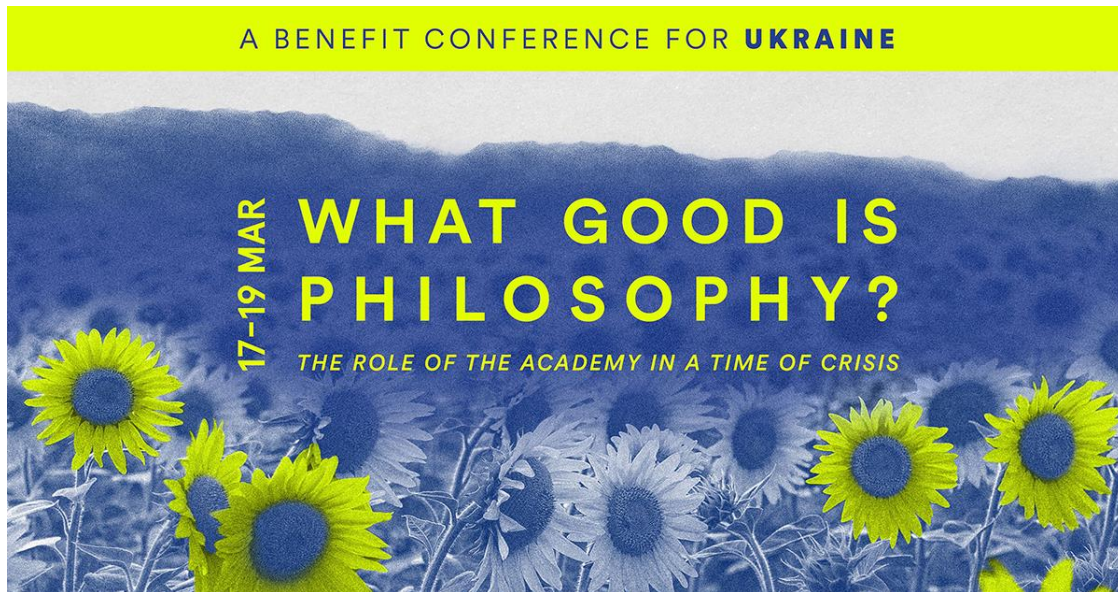# What Good is Philosophy? My Answer.

Robert Hanna

(Kyiv Mohyla Academy, 2023)

As an independent philosopher, resolute generalist, and a card-carrying *nemo*, *no-name*, or *nobody* (Hanna, 2023a), I follow the relentless daily cascade of announcements and other items of special interest to professional academic philosophers posted on the *Philosophy in Europe* list-serv, aka PHILOS-L, with a gaze somewhat akin to that of an alien anthropologist studying the intensely narrowly-focused and self-absorbed activities of humankind from an invisible orbiting spacecraft: it's an analytical, critical, and curious gaze—but also, and above all, detached. Even so, I was at the very least bemused and perhaps even as much as intrigued by these three, posted on 22 February 2023, 17 March 2023, and 24 March 2023 respectively:

> 22 February 2023
>
> Dear Colleagues,
>
> I hope this email finds you well. As Vision Fellow in Public Philosophy at King's College London, I am organizing a major online benefit event for the Ukrainian academy, entitled: 'What Good Is Philosophy? – A Benefit Conference for Ukraine'….
> Keynotes will be delivered by world-renowned author, Margaret Atwood, one of the most celebrated scholars of Ukrainian history, Timothy Snyder, and two of Ukraine's preeminent public intellectuals, Mychailo Wynnyckyj and Volodymyr Yermolenko.

Lectures will also be given by some of the most influential philosophers writing today, including Peter Adamson, Elizabeth Anderson, Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Agnes Callard, Quassim Cassam, Tim Crane, Simon Critchley, David Enoch, Peter Godfrey-Smith, Sally Haslanger, Angie Hobbs, Barry Lam, Melissa Lane, Dominic Lopes, Kate Manne, Jeff McMahan, Jennifer Nagel, Philip Pettit, Kieran Setiya, Jason Stanley, Timothy Williamson, and Jonathan Wolff.

The conference will be produced by the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto, and it will be broadcast on their YouTube channel on 17-19 March 2023. It can also be streamed here:

https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/kma-conference

'What Good Is Philosophy? – A Benefit Conference for Ukraine' aims to raise the funds required to establish a Centre for Civic Engagement at Kyiv Mohyla Academy. This Centre will provide support for academic and civic institutions in Ukraine to counteract the destabilizing impact that Russia's invasion has had on Ukrainian higher education and civilian life. By assisting Ukrainian students and scholars today, this Centre will also help pave the way for a vibrant and engaged post-war Ukraine.

This benefit conference is designed to provide individual academics, members of the public, colleges and universities, professional associations, charitable foundations, and private companies with a way to support students, scholars, and civic institutions in Ukraine. With that said, you can make a one-time tax-deductible donation here:

https://civic.ukma.edu.ua/donate/

You can also help assist the academy in Ukraine by sharing this post and/or posting the following link to your various social media accounts:

https://civic.ukma.edu.ua/benefit/

Finally, thank you for all your time and consideration. I certainly appreciate your support, and I'm sure my Ukrainian colleagues do, too! And most importantly, I hope all is well with you!

Sincerely,
….

17 March 2023

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As Vision Fellow in Public Philosophy at King's College, London and a Senior Research Fellow at Massey College, Toronto, I am writing to pass along the complete online schedule for 'What Good Is Philosophy? - A Benefit Conference for Ukraine'. Here is the link to the conference page:

https://civic.ukma.edu.ua/benefit/

And here is the schedule in its entirety:

Day 1 - 17 March 2023

Session 1 - 13:00-15:30 ET (Toronto)

A.J. Wendland - Introduction: On War and Philosophy
Jennifer Nagel - Philosophy, For Better, For Worse, and In Itself
Quassim Cassam - Liberation Philosophy
Volodymyr Yermolenko - Thinking in Dark Times
Session 2 - 17:00-19:30 ET (Toronto)

Sally Haslanger - Philosophy and Paradigm Shifts
Philip Pettit - From Philosophy to Politics
Elizabeth Anderson - Philosophy is for Everyone
Jeff McMahan - What Good Is Moral Philosophy?

Day 2 – 18 March 2023

Session 1 – 09:00-11:30 ET (Toronto)

Kieran Setiya - Public Philosophy, Amelioration, and Existential Value
Agnes Callard - The Paradise Paradox
Dominic Lopes - Beauty at the Barricades
Margaret Atwood - Crisis Literature

Session 2 - 13:00-15:30 ET (Toronto)

Timothy Snyder - Thinking About Freedom in Wartime Ukraine
Jonathan Wolff - Values and Public Policy
Jason Stanley - Discourses of Genocide
Seyla Benhabib - Philosopher's Dreams of Perpetual Peace
Session 3 - 17:00-19:30 ET (Toronto)

Kate Manne - Philosophy and Gaslighting: It's (Not) All in Your Mind
Barry Lam - Discretion: A Philosophical Analysis of the Power of Bureaucrats

David Enoch - What Good Is Political Philosophy in the Face of an Acute Political Crisis?
Peter Godfrey-Smith - Philosophy and the Events of the Day

Day 3 - 19 March 2023

Session 1 - 09:00-11:30 ET (Toronto)

Peter Adamson - What Good Is a History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps?
Angie Hobbs - Public Philosophy in an Age of Uncertainty
Melissa Lane - Philosophizing Our Way Out of the Cave
Timothy Williamson - Debating the Good

Session 2 – 13:00-15:30 ET (Toronto)

Simon Critchley - Question Everything
Tim Crane - Philosophy as Freedom of Thought
Mychailo Wynnyckyj - Grappling with Evil
Amb. Yulia Kovaliv - Conclusion: Defending Democracy

It is worth noting that there was recently a time change in North America, so London is currently 4 hours ahead of Toronto, Berlin is 5 hours ahead, and Kyiv is 6. In any event, I certainly encourage everyone to attend and to give what they can:

https://civic.ukma.edu.ua/benefit/

Finally, thanks again for all your time and consideration. I really appreciate it, and I'm sure my Ukrainian colleagues do, too!

Sincerely,
….
24 March 2023

Dear Colleagues,

In case you were unable to attend 'What Good Is Philosophy? - A Benefit Conference for Ukraine' on 17-19 March 2023, you can now watch all the talks at your convenience via the YouTube conference archive that has just been created:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLB0anhrBnRErZb1Xoh_BzrH4iaLw9Q6HX
We are still accepting donations to support students, scholars, and publicly engaged academics in Ukraine, and we encourage everyone who watches the conference online to contribute to this cause:

https://civic.ukma.edu.ua/donate/

With that said, here is the complete breakdown of the benefit conference along with links to the relevant individual recordings:

Session 1:

A.J. Wendland (KCL) - On War and Philosophy
Jennifer Nagel (Toronto) - Philosophy, For Better, For Worse, and In Itself
Quassim Cassam (Warwick) - Liberation Philosophy
Volodymyr Yermolenko (KMA) - Thinking in Dark Times

Recording: https://youtu.be/Vcr0fZ9zfuM

Session 2:

Sally Haslanger (MIT) - Philosophy and Paradigm Shifts
Philip Pettit (Princeton) - From Philosophy to Politics
Elizabeth Anderson (Michigan) - Philosophy is for Everyone
Jeff McMahan (Oxford) - What Good Is Moral Philosophy?

Recording: https://youtu.be/eqrpk0QqXL8

Session 3:

Kieran Setiya (MIT) - Public Philosophy, Amelioration, and Existential Value
Agnes Callard (Chicago) - The Paradise Paradox
Dominic Lopes (UBC) - Beauty at the Barricades
Margaret Atwood (Author) - Crisis Literature

Recording: https://youtu.be/By5ntK-DoNM

Session 4:

Timothy Snyder (Yale) - Thinking About Freedom in Wartime Ukraine
Jonathan Wolff (Oxford) - Values and Public Policy
Jason Stanley (Yale) - Discourses of Genocide
Seyla Benhabib (Columbia) - Philosophers' Dreams of Perpetual Peace
Recording: https://youtu.be/sc0kUs_3JsQ
Session 5:

Kate Manne (Cornell) - Philosophy and Gaslighting: It's (Not) All in Your Mind
Barry Lam (UCR) - Discretion: A Philosophical Analysis of the Power of Bureaucrats

David Enoch (HUJI) - What Good Is Political Philosophy in the Face of an Acute Political Crisis?
Peter Godfrey-Smith (Sydney) - Philosophy and the Events of the Day

Recording: https://youtu.be/6FXeGitYkuM

Session 6:

Peter Adamson (LMU) - What Good Is a History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps?
Angie Hobbs (Sheffield) - Public Philosophy in an Age of Uncertainty
Melissa Lane (Princeton) - Philosophizing Our Way Out of the Cave
Timothy Williamson (Oxford) - Debating the Good

Recording: https://youtu.be/VvEEpAQPoKI

Session 7:

Simon Critchley (New School) - Question Everything
Tim Crane (CEU) - Philosophy as Freedom of Thought
Mychailo Wynnyckyj (KMA) - Grappling with Evil
Yulia Kovaliv (Ambassador) - Defending Democracy

Recording: https://youtu.be/Qnz87ccNNC4

Again, this conference was designed to generate support for students, scholars, and publicly engaged academics in Ukraine, and we encourage everyone who watches the conference online to make a donation here:

https://civic.ukma.edu.ua/donate/

Finally, thank you very much for all your support. I certainly appreciate it, and I'm sure my colleagues in Ukraine do, too.

Sincerely,
…. (PLA, 2023)

Having read the first announcement through quickly once, I thought,

> "Hmm, this isn't *just* a benefit conference for endangered and beleaguered Ukrainian students and scholars, is it?, but also a veritable *Who's Who* in contemporary Anglo-American professional academic philosophy."

That thought was also confirmed by the second and third announcements. Then I read all three announcements a second time more carefully and thought, somewhat more incisively,

> "Hmm again, charitably granting that it's for a good cause, this benefit conference is *very* self-congratulatory, self-serving, and virtue-signalling-atory, even by contemporary professional academic standards, isn't it?"

And then finally I thought,

> "Hence the obvious comeback-quickie answer to the question posed, would be: *Philosophy is good for enabling people to think analytically and critically about the nature of conferences like these*."

Of course, no matter how bang-on-target that comeback-quickie is, it's also a bit cheeky, and probably wouldn't be greatly appreciated by the funders and organizers of the benefit conference or by its all-star cast, except perhaps by Simon Critchley, whose talk was entitled "Question Everything."

So at that point in my analytical-critical reflections, it also occurred to me that perhaps I should attempt to provide an answer to the conference's titular question *myself*, simply by way of presenting the point-of-view of a philosophically-minded alien anthropologist, forever circling the planet like Laika, the space-marooned dog repeatedly referred to by the child-protagonist Ingemar, in the excellent 1985 movie, *My Life as a Dog* (Wikipedia, 2024). What follows is that attempt.

Now, like most philosophical questions, the question, "what good is philosophy?" is in fact a *complex question* that should be decomposed and disentangled into several logically distinct sub-questions, for example: (i) what is the nature of philosophy?, (ii) what is the nature of "good"?, and (iii) in what way or ways could philosophy as so-defined, be good as so-defined, *in our contemporary real world*? Therefore, I'll provide Laika-style answers to each of those sub-questions in sequence.

First, what is the nature of philosophy? In "The Internal Structure of Reading and the Internal Structure of Philosophizing," I've proposed a crucial revision to the classical etymological definition of "philosophy" as "the love of wisdom":

> *Literacy* emerged in Sumeria roughly 5500 years ago, but the emergence of philosophy in ancient Greece roughly 2500 years ago seems to have been closely bound up with the emergence of the first *alphabetic writing-&-reading system* there in the 8th century BCE

(Rayner et al., 2012: ch. 2). Certainly, in the 6th century BCE, the emergence of *logic* with Parmenides, Zeno, Plato, and Aristotle, and the more less simultaneous emergence of *mathematics* with the Pythagoreans and Euclid, as formal sciences, both require not only literacy but also alphabetic writing-&-reading and its specific grammar or syntax and semantics. And logic and mathematics—alongside various forms of naturalistic investigation and speculation (principally cosmological/physical or biological), various forms of religion and spirituality (principally existential/mystical or theological), and various forms of rule-governed conduct and sociality (principally ethical, moral, or political)—are the core ingredients of the emergent discipline of philosophy. But neither logic, nor mathematics, nor philosophy would be possible without the act or process of reading; and since writing presupposes reading—in order to write something, you have to be able to read what you're writing—then *reading is really the condition of the possibility of all philosophy*, in the sense that reading is not only necessary but also essential to philosophy. Indeed, *the philosophy of reading is first philosophy* (Hanna, [2023b]). Therefore, philosophy isn't merely "the love of wisdom" (in Greek, *philo* + *sophia*), it's *fundamentally the love of wisdom that can be expressed in legible texts and read by oneself and others*.

That all being so, then one would naturally expect there to be important analogies or even isomorphisms between, on the one hand, the internal structure of the act or process of reading, and on the other, the internal structure of philosophizing. (Hanna, 2024a: 1-2)

Then I went on to propose an analysis of the internal structure of philosophizing in terms of an analogy or isomorphism with the internal structure of reading, the upshot of which is this:

(i) that *competent philosophizing*, just like *competent reading*, which displays equal competence in scanning + parsing (decoding) and comprehension alike, *should display equal competence in philosophical analysis and philosophical synthesis alike*, as complementary philosophical sub-activities,

(ii) that *good philosophizing*, just like *high-level performance in reading*, which displays equal high-level performance in scanning + parsing (decoding) and comprehension alike, should display *equal high-level performance in philosophical analysis and philosophical synthesis alike*, as complementary philosophical sub-activities, and

(iii) that *great philosophizing*, just like *highest-level performance in reading*, which displays equal highest-level performance in scanning + parsing (decoding) and comprehension alike, should display *equal highest-level performance in philosophical analysis and philosophical synthesis alike*, as complementary philosophical sub-activities.

If the preceding argument is sound, then competent philosophy, good philosophy, and great philosophy, alike, …. should all be *dual* or *duplex*—that is, they should all be in a dynamic, vital condition of *bottom-up-&-top-down complementarity*, coherently fusing

logico-mathematical reasoning and synoptic understanding, philosophical analysis and philosophical synthesis—just like the properly-functioning complex human capacity for reading. (Hanna, 2024a: p. 7)

Granting that analysis of the internal structure of philosophizing, then since 2001 I've been presenting, defending, and developing a broadly and radically Kantian philosophical alternative to Analytic philosophy and so-called "Continental philosophy" alike, that I call *rational anthropology* (Hanna, 2001: pp. 281-285, 2015, 2017a, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d, 2021a, 2022a, 2022b, 2023c; Hanna and Paans, 2020, 2021, 2022). Rational anthropology resolutely aims to create and practice philosophy in the dynamic, vital dual or duplex condition of bottom-up-&-top-down complementarity, coherently fusing logico-mathematical reasoning and synoptic understanding, philosophical analysis and philosophical synthesis—just like the properly-functioning complex human capacity for reading. Correspondingly, in 2013 and 2022 I've synonymously identified philosophy with *real philosophy* (as sharply opposed to professional academic philosophy) and *rational anthropology* as follows:

> By *real philosophy*, [I] mean authentic (i.e., wholehearted, and pursued and practiced as a full-time, lifetime calling), serious (i.e., neither job-oriented nor Scholastic and shallow), critical, synoptic, systematic reflection on the individual and collective rational human condition, and on the thoroughly nonideal natural and social world in which rational human animals and other conscious animals live, move, and have their being. Real philosophy fully includes the knowledge yielded by the natural and formal sciences; but, as [I] see it, real philosophy also goes significantly beneath and beyond the sciences, and non-reductively incorporates aesthetic/artistic, affective/emotional, ethical/moral, social/political, and, more generally, personal and practical insights that cannot be adequately captured or explained by the sciences. In a word, real philosophy is all about the nature, meaning, and value of individual and collective rational human existence in the world, and how it is possible to know the philosophical limits of science, without being *anti*-science, and indeed while also being resolutely *pro*-science. Finally, real philosophy is pursued by people working on individual or collective writing projects, or teaching projects, in the context of small, friendly circles of like-minded philosophers. Like-minded but not uncritical! Real philosophers read both intensively and also widely inside philosophy, and also widely outside of philosophy, critically discuss what they've read, write, mutually present and talk about their work, re-read, re-discuss, and then re-write, with the primary aim of producing work of originality and of the highest possible quality, given their own individual and collective abilities. They also seek to disseminate and universally freely share their work, through publication, teaching, or public conversation. (APP, 2013)

> For me, [real] philosophy is the broadly and radically Kantian enterprise I've called *rational anthropology*, by which I mean *authentic* (i.e., wholehearted, and pursued and

practiced as a full-time, lifetime calling), *serious* (i.e., neither careerist, nor conformist, nor dogmatic, nor esoteric, nor hyperspecialized), *critical, synoptic, systematic reflection on the individual and collective rational human condition, and on the thoroughly nonideal natural and social world in which rational human animals and other conscious animals live, move, and have their being.*

As such, rational anthropology fully includes the knowledge yielded by the formal and natural sciences; but, as I see it, the formal and natural sciences also all have *inherent limits*, and these limits are recognized by what I call *creative piety*: so rational anthropology also goes significantly *beneath and beyond* the sciences, and non-reductively incorporates aesthetic or artistic, affective or emotional, ethical or moral, sociopolitical, and, more generally, personal and practical insights that cannot be adequately captured or explained by the sciences.

Rational anthropology is all about the nature, meaning, and value of individual and collective rational human existence in the natural and social world, and how it is possible to know the philosophical limits of science, without being *anti*-science, and indeed while also being resolutely *pro*-science.

Finally, rational anthropology is *neither* Analytic philosophy *nor* so-called "Continental philosophy," and its other elaborations are *anarcho-* or *borderless* philosophy, *life-shaping* philosophy, *neo-organicist* philosophy, and above all, the philosophy *of the future.* (Hanna, 2022b: pp. 1-2)

I've also spelled out the principal differences between rational anthropology and Analytic philosophy, comparing-&-contrasting them point-by-point, by listing and briefly defining (i) eight basic commitments of Analytic philosophy and (ii) eight basic commitments of rational anthropology (Hanna, 2023b). Here's a schematic summary of that list, leaving out the definitions, using **AP** as an abbreviation for "Analytic philosophy" and **RA** as an abbreviation for "rational anthropology."

1. **AP**→the rejection of idealism *vs.* **RA**→weak transcendental idealism (Hanna, 2015: section 7.3, 2022b: section 4.4).

2. **AP**→logical empiricist modal monism *vs.* **RA**→synthetic apriorist modal dualism (Hanna, 2001: chs. 3-5, 2015: ch. 4).

3. **AP**→the mechanistic worldview vs. **RA**→the neo-organicist worldview (Torday, Miller Jr, and Hanna, 2020; Hanna and Paans, 2020, 2021, 2022; Hanna, 2024b).

4. **AP**→scientism *vs.* **RA**→anti-scientism but also robustly pro-science, via the unique meta-cognitive attitude of creative piety (Hanna and Paans, 2022; Hanna, 2022b).

5. **AP**→materialism or physicalism, reductive or non-reductive *vs.* **RA**→the rejection of materialism or physicalism, whether reductive or non-reductive, as well as the equal and opposite rejection of Cartesian dualism, whether ontological dualism or property dualism (Hanna and Maiese, 2009; Hanna, 2011).

6. **AP**→ethical or moral naturalism *vs.* **RA**→ ethical or moral anti-naturalism, but without platonism (Hanna, 2018c: esp. chs. 1-2, 2022c).

7. **AP**→conceptualism about representational content *vs.* **RA**→essentialist content non-conceptualism about representational content, together with the theory of thought-shapers (Hanna, 2015: ch. 2, 2021b; Hanna and Paans, 2021).

And finally, 8. **AP**→the computational-functionalist model of rational human thinking *vs.* **RA**→the epigenetic model of rational human thinking (Hanna, 2023c).

Obviously, this list of pairwise critical comparisons-&-contrasts is focused on presenting rational anthropology in direct dialectical and diametric opposition to Analytic philosophy. For this reason, it also naturally leaves out *other* core features of rational anthropology that don't fit neatly into this presentational format; and in particular, it leaves out rational anthropology's basic *moral* and *sociopolitical* commitments, which I've collectively called *radical enlightenment* (Hanna, 2016a, 2018d: part 2).

So, what is rational anthropology's doctrine of radical enlightenment? In his excellent—but also highly controversial—book, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Israel, 2001), and its two sequel volumes, the intellectual historian Jonathan Israel traced the origins of the very idea of a radical enlightenment project back to Spinoza, pantheism, and metaphysical monism. I certainly agree with Israel that Spinozism is at least *one* important *partial* source of the radical enlightenment tradition, but in my view, Kant's theory of enlightenment, as epitomized by this famous text,

> *Enlightenment is the human being's emergence from their own self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity* is the inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another. This immaturity is *self-incurred* when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. *Sapere aude!*

Have the courage to use your *own* understanding! is thus the motto of Enlightenment. (Kant, 1784/1996: p. 17, Ak 8: 35), italics in the original, translation modified slightly),

when it's correctly interpreted, is the *proper* source of the radical enlightenment tradition. Correspondingly, rational anthropology's doctrine of radical enlightenment is a *maximalist* version of enlightenment, that sharply contrasts with other everyday, familiar *minimalist* versions of enlightenment, whether Kantian[1] or non-Kantian,[2] epitomized by Frederick the Great's despotic liberalism: "Argue as much as you will and about whatever you will, *but obey!*" (Kant, 1784/1996: p. 18, Ak 8: 37). By sharp contrast, the motto of radical enlightenment would be: "Dare to think, feel, and act for yourself!"

Second, what is the nature of "good"? According to rational anthropology, the nature of "good" is essentially bound up with human *dignity* or human *worth*, or in Kant's terminology, human *Würde* (Hanna, 2023c). Human dignity or worth is innately possessed by all human *real persons*.[3] To say that human real persons have dignity or worth is to say that they're *absolutely, nondenumerably infinitely, intrinsically, and objectively valuable ends-in-themselves*. What, more precisely, do I mean by saying that? Objective values are whatever anyone can care about, that is, whatever anyone can aim her emotions (i.e., desires, feelings, or passions) at. Otherwise put, objective values are what Kant called "ends" (*Zwecke*). In turn, "absolute" means "unconditionally necessary." So to say that human real persons are *absolutely, nondenumerably infinitely, intrinsically, objectively valuable ends-in-themselves*, or that they have *dignity*, is to say that their value as ends-in-themelves is not only an unconditionally necessary, internal feature of the kind of manifestly real being they are, but also *the very highest kind of value*. Now many things are intrinsically objectively valuable, or ends-in-themselves—for example, pleasant bodily or sensory experiences, vivid emotional experiences, beautiful natural objects and environments, fine craftsmanship, skillfully-played sports, good science, good philosophy, good works of art, and any job well done. To say that human real persons are absolutely, nondenumerably infinitely, intrinsically, objectively valuable ends-in-

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[1] I borrow the helpful label "maximalist" from (Fleischacker, 2013: p. 7). Fleischacker himself defends a "minimalist" version of Kantian enlightenment (Fleischacker, 2013: pp. 169-193).

[2] To be sure, not only does "the Enlightenment" stand for an era whose historical interpretation is controversial, but also there are many distinct philosophical conceptions of enlightenment, some of them highly critical. See, e.g., the Frankfurt-school classic, Horkheimer's and Adorno's 1947 *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002). Others are pro-enlightenment, yet not only minimalist but also morally and sociopolitically stale, flat, and unprofitable, or what I call *enlightenment lite* ("argue, *but obey!*"): see, e.g., (Pinker, 2018). For a critique of enlightenment lite and a defense of what I call *heavy-duty enlightenment*, aka maximalist or radical enlightenment, see (Hanna, 2017b).

[3] By "real person," I mean *an essentially embodied rational minded human animal,* as opposed to either disembodied persons (e.g., souls, angels, or gods) or collective persons (e.g., business corporations). For full details and defenses of this view, see (Hanna and Maiese, 2009; Hanna, 2018b: chs. 6-7).

themselves—i.e., that they have dignity—however, is to say that each of us has a moral value that is a transfinite cardinal quantity in relation to all denumerable or countable, economic, or otherwise instrumental kinds of value, for example psychological pleasure or preference-satisfaction. It seems clear that however we measure such things, whether in terms of market value or monetary price, degrees of psychological pleasure, degrees of preference-satisfaction, or comparative rankings of such things, nevertheless every actual or possible economic or otherwise instrumental value is expressible as *some rational number quantity or another*, including denumerably infinite rational number quantities. Then, by essentially the same method that Georg Cantor used to show the existence of transfinite numbers (Cantor, 1891, 2019) at least in principle, we can create a vertical and denumerably infinite list of every actual or possible economic or otherwise instrumental value, then draw a diagonal across it, and discover another value *that's categorically higher than any economic or otherwise instrumental value*. So this value is the prime example of what—following Cantor's alternative term for transfinite numbers, *transcendental numbers*—I've called *transcendental normativity* (Hanna, 2015b). Correspondingly, it's what I'll call *transcendental value*, by which I mean either a *single* transcendental value or else a *unified system* of several distinct but essentially complementary or interlocking transcendental values. Kant called the unified system of all transcendental values *the highest good*. The dignity or worth of human real persons has transcendental value in *that* sense: thus each human real person, by virtue of their dignity, has transcendental value, and their human dignity or worth also inherently belongs to the unified system of all transcendental values, aka the highest good.

Third, in what way or ways could philosophy as so-defined, be good as so-defined, *in our contemporary real world*? Perhaps surprisingly, the initial version of my answer is:

> Philosophy—understood as *real* philosophy and not as *professional academic* philosophy—when construed as rational anthropology and as radical enlightenment, inherently aimed at the unified system of all transcendental values, i.e., the highest good, essentially bound up with human dignity or worth, is the same as a substantively extended version of what I call *dignitarian anarchism*.

Now, the term *anarchism*, as standing for a radical philosophical thesis and a correspondingly radical sociopolitical doctrine, didn't exist until 1840, when Pierre-Joseph Proudhon coined it (Proudhon, 2008); nevertheless, both the radical philosophical thesis and the radical sociopolitical doctrine were substantially anticipated by certain lines of thought in Kant's post-Critical writings (Hanna, 2016, 2017b, 2018c), as well as by similar lines of thought in the writings of Kant's contemporaries William Godwin, Thomas Paine, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (van der Weyde, 1910; Bertram, 2020: section

3.1; Philp, 2021). In any case, the term *anarchism* should be sharply contrasted with the term *anarchy*, standing for violent social-political chaos and moral nihilism, that's been in use since at least the middle of the 18th century.[4] Aside from the 18th and 19th century proto-dignitarian-anarchists I've mentioned above—Godwin, Paine, Rousseau, and (in footnote 3 below) Percy Shelley—other central figures in the dignitarian anarchist tradition after Kant include Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Bertrand Russell after World War I, Murray Bookchin, and Noam Chomsky. As its name clearly suggests, dignitarian anarchism is to be sharply contrasted with *egoistic* forms of anarchism, but it also significantly overlaps with *socialism*, especially *democratic* socialism.

More precisely, however, *what* is dignitarian anarchism, and *how* can it be rationally and morally justified? The State and other State-like social institutions are correctly characterized, as Max Weber pointed out, by their being social institutions that possess a territorial monopoly on the (putatively) legitimate means and use of coercion (Weber, 1994: p. 310)—but that's only a somewhat superficial gloss that doesn't really get at the essence of the State. The essence of the State is that it's a form of social organization, with territorial boundaries, that's both *authoritarian* and also *coercive* with respect to its *government*, i.e., its ruling class. The State is *coercive* insofar as it claims the right to compel the people living within its boundaries to heed and obey the commands and laws of the government, in order to realize the instrumental ends of the State, *whether or not* those commands and laws are rationally justified or morally right on independent ethical grounds. In turn, the State is *authoritarian* insofar as it claims that the commands and laws issued by its government are right *just because* the government says that they're right and possesses the power to coerce, and *not* because those commands or laws are rationally justified and morally right on independent ethical grounds.

Here we can easily see the the fundamental parallel between what can be called "Statist Command Ethics" and what's classically called "Divine Command Ethics," which says that the commands and laws issues by God are right *just because* God says that they're right and possesses the power to create and destroy the world, punish with eternal damnation, and more generally cause people to do whatever God wants them to do, and *not* because those commands or laws are are rationally justified and morally right on independent ethical grounds. Therefore, the basic objection to Statist Command Ethics is essentially the same as the basic objection to Divine Command Ethics, going back to

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[4] See, e.g., Percy Shelley's late 18th century radical poem, *The Masque of Anarchy*. Shelley's title—which means that authoritarian regimes disguise their true nature, namely, violent social chaos and moral nihilism, behind a facade of legitimacy—is, from my point of view, unintentionally highly ironic, since Shelley was a romantic follower of William Godwin's political philosophy, with special reference to autonomy and human dignity, and therefore also a proto-dignitarian-anarchist. So Shelley's poem is a perfect illustration of the apparent paradox *that dignitarian anarchists are sworn enemies of anarchy.*

Socrates's classical objection to Divine Command Ethics in the *Euthyphro*, which is that divine commands and laws, insofar as they're *not* grounded in independent ethical principles or reasons that are rationally justified and morally right, but are instead backed up by divine creative, destructive, and punitive power *alone,* are *inherently arbitrary*, and fully open to the possibility that those commands and laws are rationally unjustified, morally wrong, and even profoundly evil (Hanna, 2018c: section 2.4).

Now I'll cover the same moral and sociopolitical ground again, but even more carefully this time.

By *political authority*, I mean the existence of a special group of people (aka *government*), with the power to coerce, and the right to command other people and to force them to obey those commands as a duty, no matter what the content of these commands might be, and in particular, even if these commands and/or the forcing are rationally unjustified and morally impermissible. And by *coercion*, I mean either (i) using violence (for example, injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people according to certain purposes of the coercer (*primary coercion*), or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (for example, imprisonment, termination of employment, large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, even if these are not in themselves violent, in order to manipulate people according to certain purposes of the coercer (*secondary coercion*). Therefore, as I'm understanding it, *the general problem of political authority* is this: Is there an adequate rational justification for the existence of any special group of people (aka *government*) with the power to coerce, and the right to command other people and to force them to obey those commands as a duty, no matter what the content of these commands might be, and in particular, even if these commands and/or the forcing are rationally unjustified and morally impermissible? And by *the State or any other State-like institution*, as an essential characterization, I mean any social organization that not only claims political authority, but also actually possesses the power to coerce, in order to secure and sustain this authority. Of course, this is only the *essence* of a State or any other State-like social institution. It does certainly doesn't *exhaust* the very idea of a State in an anthropological, historical, or sociopolitical sense. For example, as per Weber, States normally also control geographical areas, or *territory*, over which they monopolize the application of coercive force to the people (and other animals) who inhabit that territory. Moreover, as James C. Scott points out:

> [T]he standard [Kantian and] Weberian criterion of a territorial unit that monopolizes the application of coercive force[5] [is not] entirely adequate, for it takes so many other features

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[5] See, e.g., Kant's neo-Hobbesian classical liberal Statist political treatise, *The Doctrine of Right*, the first part of his *Metaphysics of Morals* (Kant, 1797/1996: pp. 387-388 and 455-461 [Ak 6: 230-233 and 311-318]). *The*

of states for granted. [I] think of states as institutions that have strata of officials specialized in the assessment and collections of taxes—whether in grain, labor, or specie—and who are responsible to a ruler or rulers. [I] think of states as exercising executive power in a fairly complex, stratified, hierarchical society with an appreciable division of labor…. Some would apply more stringent criteria: a state should have an army, defensive walls, a monumental ritual center or palace, and perhaps a king or queen. (Scott, 2017: p. 118)

Therefore, also granting Scott's more fully specified and somewhat open-ended conception of a State as backdrop to the essential characterization I'm using, by *the specific problem of political authority*, I mean: Is there an adequate rational and/or moral justification for the existence of the State or any other State-like institution?

Now, the thesis of *dignitarian anarchism*, as such, says that all political authority, States, and any other State-like institutions are rationally unjustified and immoral, due to their inherent coercive authoritarianism—which directly violates our strict moral obligation always to treat everyone, everywhere with sufficient respect for their human dignity and never treat them as mere means or mere things, and always treat them with kindness, and that therefore we ought to *reject*, *devolve*, and ultimately *exit* the State and all State-like institutions, in order to *create, belong to*, and *sustain* a real-world universal *ethical community*, in a world in which there are no States or other State-like institutions, but instead a *cosmopolitan* or world-wide network of constructive, principled-authenticity-enabling, post-State, post-State-like social institutions, for the sake of universally sufficiently respecting human dignity and always treating everyone, everywhere, with kindness. But rational anthropology's doctrine of *radical enlightenment*, which not only *includes* dignitarian anarchism but also substantively *extends* it, is nothing more and nothing less than *existential Kantian dignitarian anarchist cosmopolitan ecosocialism*. Of course, I realize I fully realize that "existential Kantian dignitarian anarchist cosmopolitan ecosocialism" is rather a mouthful: so what, more precisely, do I mean by it?

(i) By *existential* (see also, e.g., Crowell, 2012), I mean the primitive motivational, or "internalist," normative ground of the moral and sociopolitical doctrine proposed by rational anthropology, which is the fundamental, innate need we have for a wholehearted, freely-willed life *not essentially based* on egoistic, hedonistic, or

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Doctrine of Right, in my opinion, is clearly an "exoteric" text in Leo Strauss's sense, in that it systematically disguises Kant's own "esoteric" dignitarian anarchist sociopolitical views, which were highly politically "dangerous" in the context of late 18th century Königsburg—as indeed they would also be now, in the context of contemporary 21st century Kaliningrad—and therefore highly apt to get Kant censored, sanctioned, stripped of his professorship, fired, arrested, and/or imprisoned. See (Hanna, 2017b, 2017c).

consequentialist (for example, utilitarian) interests, aka *the desire for self-transcendence*, while at the same time fully assuming the natural presence—aka the *facticity*—of all such instrumental interests in our "human, all too human" lives (Hanna, 2018b: ch. 3, 2018c; see also Crowell, 2012). In a word, the existential ideal of a rational human wholehearted autonomous life is the ideal of *authenticity*.

(ii) By *Kantian*, I mean the primitive objective, or "externalist," normative ground of the moral and sociopolitical doctrine proposed by rational anthropology, which is the recognition that the fundamental, innate need we have for a wholehearted, freely-willed, non-egoistic, non-hedonistic, non-consequentialist life, which we call *the desire for self-transcendence*, can be sufficiently rationally justified only in so far as it is also a life of *principled authenticity*, by which I mean *principled wholehearted autonomy*, or having *a good will* in Kant's sense, that's also a specifically *human, all-too-human* (i.e., essentially embodied, finite, and imperfect) good will, guided by sufficient respect for the human dignity of all rational human animals, i.e., human real persons, under the Categorical Imperative.

(iii) By *dignitarian anarchist* I mean, as per the above, the thesis that all political authority, States, and any other State-like institutions, are rationally unjustified and immoral, due to their inherent coercive authoritarianism, which directly violates our strict moral obligation always to treat everyone with sufficient respect for their human dignity and never treat them as mere means or mere things, and always with kindness, and that therefore we ought to reject, devolve, and ultimately exit the State and all State-like institutions, in order to create, belong to, and sustain a real-world universal ethical community, in a world in which there are no States or other State-like institutions, but instead a cosmopolitan or world-wide network of constructive, principled-authenticity-enabling, post-State, post-State-like social institutions, for the sake of universally sufficiently respecting human dignity and always treating everyone, everywhere, with kindness.

(iv) Notoriously, there's no comprehensive, analytic definition of the term *cosmopolitanism* as it's used in either ordinary or specialized (say, legal, political, or scholarly) language, covering all actual and possible cases. It's variously taken to refer to globe-trotting sophistication; to nihilistic, rootless, world-wandering libertinism; to the general idea of "world citizenship"; to a single world-state with coercive power; to a tight federation of all nation-states, again with coercive power; or to a loose, semi- coercive 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 (see, e.g., Kleingeld and Brown, 2019). Nevertheless, the term *cosmopolitanism* has an original, core meaning. As Kwame Anthony Appiah correctly and insightfully points out:

> Cosmopolitanism dates at least to the Cynics of the fourth century BC [and especially to Diogenes of Synope], who first coined the expression cosmopolitan, "citzen 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 covential view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities. (Appiah, 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 cosmos. By *cosmopolitan*, then, I mean the original, core meaning of that term.

(v) And by *ecosocialism* (see also Gare, 2022), I mean a universal *ethical community* that's constituted by a world-wide network of constructive, principled-authenticity-enabling, post-State, post-State-like, post-capitalist, post-technocratic, post-neoliberal-cum-neofascist, social institutions, created and sustained for the sake of universally sufficiently respecting human dignity, such that we sufficiently respect not only the human dignity of everyone everywhere, but also the *proto-dignity* of the cosmos, and therefore *we must cultivate our global garden* (Hanna and Paans, 2022)—a neo-utopian cosmopolitan moral and sociopolitical call-to-action that extends by one word the famous last line of Voltaire's *Candide*, "Il faut cultiver notre jardin," i.e., "we must cultivate our garden" (Voltaire, 1959: p. 120), hence: *Il faut cultiver notre jardin mondial.*

Correspondingly, another somewhat shorter and significantly zippier name for "existential Kantian dignitarian anarchist cosmopolitan ecosocialism" is *dignitarian post-capitalism* (Hanna, 2023d).

Now if existential Kantian dignitarian anarchist cosmopolitan ecosocialism, aka dignitarian post-capitalism, is true, then as radically enlightened philosophers we should reject, devolve, and ultimately exit all such States and State-like institutions—especially including capitalism, which is ultimately grounded in Statism—in order to create, belong to, and sustain a real-world universal community, in a world in which there are no States

or other State-like institutions, but instead a cosmopolitan or world-wide network of constructive, principled-authenticity-enabling, post-State, post-State-like, post-capitalist, post-technocratic, post-neoliberal-cum-neofascist social institutions, for the sake of universally sufficiently respecting human dignity, whereby we not only fully respect the human dignity of all people everywhere, and always treat them with kindness, but also fully respect the proto-dignity of the cosmos and thereby cultivate our global garden. And if so, then I think by now it's self-evident how such a philosophical program not only would *not include* benefit conferences like the one I described at the outset of this essay, but also, given that Russia and Ukraine *both* are States, and therefore *both* are authoritarian and coercive social institutions (even fully acknowledging that the former is significantly *more* authoritarian and coercive than the latter[6]), when taken together with the self-congratulatory, self-serving, and virtue-signalling-atory character of the benefit conference announced and described on PHILOS-L, would fully *reject* such benefit conferences, as being inherently *inimical* to the thought-, feeling- and action-guiding transcendental values of philosophy as rational anthropology. The role of philosophy in a time of crisis is *to think, feel, and act for oneself*, and then *to change the world in the right way*, not to run yet another self-serving conference under the rubric "the role of the academy in a time of crisis."

So, instead of running benefit conferences with all-star casts of professional academics, real philosophers should be *exiting* the professional academy, *doing* rational anthropology instead of Analytic philosophy or so-called "Continental philosophy," *mobilizing* all the nobodies, *pursuing* existential Kantian dignitarian anarchist cosmopolitan ecosocialism, aka dignitarian post-capitalism, *defending* human dignity or worth, and *cultivating* our global garden (Hanna and Paans, 2022; Hanna, 2023a, 2023c, 2023d, 2023e). That would be a good way to spend 2024, the 300th anniversary of Kant's birth.

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[6] By analogy, let's suppose that, as in the USA, a prison system is authoritarian and coercive, up to and including including capital punishment. Then one could fully acknowledge that a particular mass murderer is *more* coercive than the US prison system, while still holding that the US prison system *also* systematically violates human dignity.

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