Constructing Ethical Patterns in Times of Globalization
Hans Küng’s Global Ethic Project and Beyond

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by due permission of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Helsinki in Auditorium XII on the 17th of September 2010 at 12 o’clock.
The purpose of this study is to evaluate contemporary philosophical models for global ethics in light of the Catholic theologian Hans Küng’s Global Ethic Project (Projekt Weltethos). Küng’s project starts with the motto, “No survival without world ethos. No global peace without peace between religions.” I will use the philosophically multidimensional potential of Projekt Weltethos in terms of its possible philosophical interpretations to evaluate the general discussion of global ethics within political philosophy today. This is important in its own right, but also because through it, opportunities will emerge to articulate Küng’s relatively general argument in a way that leaves less room for mutually contradictory concretizations of what global ethics ultimately should be like. The most important question in this study is the problem of religious and ideological exclusivism and its relation to the ethically consistent articulation of global ethics. I will first explore the question of the role of religion as the basis for ethics in general and what Küng may mean by his claim that only the unconditional can oblige unconditionally. I will reconstruct two different overall philosophical interpretations of the relationship between religious faith and human rationality, each having two different sub-divisions: a liberal interpretation amounts to either a Kantian-Scheiermacherian or a Jaspersian view, whereas what I call postliberal interpretation amounts to either an Aristotelian-Thomistic or an Augustinian view. Thereafter, I will further clarify how Küng views the nature of ethics beyond the question of its principal foundation in religious faith: Küng searches for a middle way between consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethics, a way in which the latter dimension has the final stake. I will then set out to concretize further this more or less general notion of the theoretical potential of Projekt Weltethos in terms of certain precise philosophico-political models. I categorize these models according to their liberal or postliberal orientation. The liberal concretization leads me to consider a wide spectrum of post-Kantian and post-Hegelian models from Rawls to Derrida, while the alternative concretization opens up my ultimate argument in favor of a postliberal type of modus vivendi. I will suggest that the only theoretically and practically plausible way to promote global ethics, in itself a major imperative today, is the recognition of a fundamental and necessary contest between mutually exclusive ideologies in the public sphere. On this basis I will proceed to my postliberal proposal, namely, that a constructive and peaceful encountering of “exclusive difference” as an ethical vantage point for an inter-cultural and inter-religious peace dialogue is the most acute challenge for global ethics today.
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I Introduction

1. Background

1.1. Declaration of Global Ethic in Chicago

In September of 1993 a conference took place in Chicago, Illinois, that would have both political and theological ramifications. That September the Parliament of the World’s Religions had gathered in Chicago. The history of the parliament is itself significant. Its opening conference in 1893 is seen to have launched the modern inter-religious dialogue.¹

On the centennial a parliament formed of representatives of different religions published a document called Declaration Toward a Global Ethic.² Its starting point was that the world is going through a fundamental crisis with multiple negative complications. This crisis will lead to destruction if the ethical ground-consensus of humanity is not clearly expressed and implemented. The aim of the common ethics is above all to offer a necessary basis for a new up-to-date world order and for world peace. Already the necessary basic ethical consensus can be found among the religions of the world. A proposal for such a consensus is expressed in the Declaration, when it addresses a general ethical principle: every human being should be treated humanely, as the golden rule and corresponding principles in other religions teach. Thus, the religions play a central ethical role in securing the world order.³ The Declaration in general and its authors individually appealed especially to attitudes of individuals.⁴

Furthermore, the Declaration expresses the common ethical basic-consensus of the religions in the form of four commandments. The first commandment considers a commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for all life. This is related to the general religious com-

¹ Saarinen 1993, 538; Gebhardt 2002, 197, 198.
² Hereafter the italicized word Declaration is used to refer to this charter.
³ Erklärung zum Weltethos, 15–24, 35, 36. A common global ethos appears to be an ambitious goal, considering the relatively weak coverage of the religious representatives from a theological perspective. Indeed, there have been doubts concerning the representativeness of the gathering. (Saarinen 1993, 545, 546. Cf. O’Connor 1994, 162.) On the other hand, Karl-Josef Kuschel, for example, sees the issue more positively. He notes that the parliament was not planned to be an official collection of representatives, but a sort of movement on a grass-roots level; this has been its strength before. In this light the range and number of representatives in 1993 was relatively high (Kuschel 1993b, 93–95; 1994, 221. Risto Saarinen too sees the charter as showing a path for the future. (Saarinen 1993, 545, 546. Cf. Janowski 1993.). For more on the Parliament of Religions, see Erklärung zum Weltethos, 43–45; Küng and Kuschel 1993a, 127–138; Kuschel 1993b; Abe 1993b; Kuschel 1999b, 159; Casanova 1999, 30–33; Gebhardt 2002, 198–201. On other related institutions and projects, see Küng and Kuschel 1993a, 139; WR, 25, 26; Hummel 1993; Probst 1994, 87, 89; von der Groeben 1995; Moawad 1996, 178, 191–193; 1996; UNESCO and a culture of peace: promoting a global movement, Frühbauer 1997; GEE; GEWP, 15–18; Casanova 1999, 24, 27, 28; Falk 1999, 72–75; Krysmanski 1999; GOV, 64, 65; The Need for a Global Ethic; Robra 2000; Hasselmann 2001; Ruether 2001; Gebhardt 2000; 2002, 201–224; Sch lensog 2002. On the historical development of the general project leading to the Declaration, see Janowski 1993.
⁴Erklärung zum Weltethos, 42. See also for example GSM, 67; VD, 14, 239–250.
mand, “Thou shalt not kill!” This commandment is applied not only to the demand for the world peace but also it is interpreted to eliminate all kinds of activities against life, such as dictatorships, drug marketing, destroying nature and so on. The second commandment in the Declaration considers a commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order: “Thou shalt not steal!” This commandment is also to be broadly understood to concern all kinds of exploitation, from extreme capitalism to imprudent power politics. Instead, the Declaration calls upon the world to concentrate on increasing global economic equality, modesty, and respect for individuals. The third commandment is a commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness: “Thou shalt not lie!” This responsibility is seen as being especially in the hands of the media, politics, and religions. The last commandment in the Declaration is related to equality in general and between men and women especially: “Thou shalt not commit sexual immorality!” The starting point of the Declaration is that equality in families is a condition for its broader realization. Conspicuously, the Declaration does not restrict itself to general statements but also has a substantially normative weight in the form of separate and clear commandments.5

1.2. Hans Küng

The person behind the Declaration is a Swiss Roman Catholic theologian, Hans Küng (b. 1928).6 Küng’s radical attitude toward ecumenism has been a problem for the Catholic Church from the beginning. The Vatican Congregation for Doctrinal Matters ordered Küng to withdraw from his teaching office in 1979, especially because of his opinions concerning ecclesiology.7 This however, was only a remarkable point in a long process that had gone on for several decades, beginning with the publication of Küng’s dissertation dealing with justification from an ecumenical perspective in 1957.8 From the 1960s on Küng has developed innovative ideas meant first and foremost for uniting a divided Christianity. After this intra-religious period Küng has gradually begun to concentrate on religious dialogue and the theology of religions. Already in 1967 Küng had initiated this period by taking a stand on the fundamental question in the theology of religions. In a conference in India entitled Christian revelation and non-Christian religions he presented his standpoint on the question in a way that was to become a benchmark for his later widely known proposal concerning inter-religious dialogue. Making use of the ideas of Karl Rahner and H. R. Schlette, Küng identified two paths to salvation. The religions in general, he said, are the ordinary ways of salvation, be-

6 Saarinen 1993, 543.
8 EF, 188–195. See also for example WW, 168, 169.
cause they relate to the universal divine history of salvation. Christianity instead relates to a specific or particular history of salvation. That is why it represents the extraordinary way of salvation, a way which is neither universal nor general. According to this view, the grace of God works not only in extraordinary but also in the ordinary ways of salvation.9

Hans Küng began to concentrate on the theology of religions more programmatically in the 1980s. In 1987 he published *Theologie im Aufbruch.*10 In his third chapter Küng broadened the scope of traditionally understood ecumenics. In this chapter he proceeded to reflect upon the world religions with a new ecumenical paradigm in view as the mature fruit of a long process of profound research.11 Finally, in *Projekt Weltethos*12 Küng not only coined the concrete term for his new orientation – a term that is expressed by the very title and was later translated in English as Global Ethic Project – but also explicated the content of the global ethics he was increasingly to promote. For the immediate purposes suffice it to restate that the content of Küng’s global ethics is well reflected in the above presented Declaration.

What is worth emphasizing here is rather the emerging terminological ambivalence related to *Projekt Weltethos*. On the one hand it refers to the very book authored by Küng. On the other hand it well captures Küng’s new paradigm for inter-religious ecumenics as a whole. So, let me now hasten to make clear one general rule in this study in terms of methodology. First of all, Küng’s general global ethics termed as Global Ethic Project (*Projekt Weltethos*) will be my fundamental stepping stone in what will follow. For this reason, I will use abbreviation to refer to it throughout this study. But to distinguish between the mentioned two terminological aspects the two letters PW will be used to refer to the single book as the source of what is said in the corpus text;13 the three letters PWE, in turn, will be used to refer to Küng’s general project as a whole, including several books and other texts of Küng, *Projekt Weltethos* being only one of them.14

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11 PW, 13. For instance, broadening the meaning of ecumenics was already expressed in Küng’s book *Christentum und Weltreligionen* (1984), 621. According to Küng, the roots of his contemporary global ethical project in his fundamental theology are to be traced to the year 1960; EF, 286. On the process through which Küng moved to the theology of religions, see also WW, 17–19.


13 This applies to all source material respectively: I have abbreviated references that pertain to Küng’s writings to one or few (capital) letters.

14 By implication, when I use PWE there is no need for a particular source of reference because I merely refer to Küng’s global ethics as one rough model.


2. About This Study

2.1. The Main Task

There is nothing new in the idea that the world needs a common ethic and that religions will have a considerable role in achieving that goal. Indeed, it is an idea that is widely discussed today – thanks in part to Küng himself. Thus, it is not a great challenge to argue for the general motive behind PWE. What is more challenging is to ask how this general motive is to be realized consistently, acceptably and justly in our concrete world. This book is about how to do this and it will use philosophy as its primary tool. In other words, what follows will be ultimately about evaluating as broadly as possible the rough main alternatives for global ethics within the ethical and politico-philosophical discourse of our times and about my own contribution to that discourse on the basis of this evaluation. In this task I will be highly dependent on the ambitious project of Küng, although it is not, restrictedly or even directly, about PWE.

It is essential to keep the context in mind in our contemporary world, a world in which global ethics is supposed to emerge. In this respect, such terms as “pluralistic” and “conflicts,” constantly lurking behind the issues of this study, are highly meaningful. In the comprehensive theories of global ethics there is always a danger that theories remain at the ideal level despite the creative suggestions they bring forth. This is also true of the recent efforts in the field. The reason for this handicap is usually their formal nature, by which I mean, that a theory, be it theoretical or practical in nature, does not include any substantial solutions to the ethical conflicts arising in concrete situations around the world. This seems to me to be the ultimate need in global ethics: in a time of globalization the world’s religious and ethical plurality is creating an inescapable puzzle launched by painful conflicts of different, often incompatible, views of life. It is precisely those conflicts that global ethics, in my view, is supposed to solve. Naturally, there are also other tasks for a comprehensive theory, such as fighting moral cynicism in general, but even then the self-evident test for a theory will always be its proven ability to solve concrete dilemmas of ethical controversies – this is after all the ultimate aim of moral anti-cynicism.

On the other hand, it is extremely hard to find any substantial solutions for global disagreements from an ethical point of view. Most of all, this is because to be global, a theory has to take into account all the competing ethical conceptions. But their radical differences force us to refrain from serious ethical claims. Is there still, even in the most fragile sense, a path to ethical victory on a global scale? Is there at least something substantial that would guide us through and away from ethical conflicts, away from violence and war? In our post-modern era of pluralism it is painfully difficult to answer this question. Nevertheless, the global yearning for ethical solutions to peace is so deep that it is worthwhile, indeed necessary, to make sure that every means has been explored before giving up.
2.2. On Methodology

As for my use of Küng’s writings, I would like to identify four sub-parts relevant to this study. The “preliminary part” includes the works of Küng, in which he gives the general basis for a paradigm later to be called Global Ethic Project. The most important source for this part is *Theologie im Aufbruch* (TA). The next part, the “fundamental part,” begins with *Projekt Weltethos* (PW), published in 1990. In this book Küng’s project attains explicit form. In later works belonging to this fundamental part his vision is worked out with more and more extensive arguments and justification. These include *Weltethos für Weltpolitik und Weltwirtschaft* (WWW)\(^{15}\) and *Wozu Weltethos?* (WW).\(^{16}\) The literature of the “supportive” or “applied part” is made up of such major books in which Küng applies PWE to particular religions. This part includes such books as *Christentum und Weltreligionen* (CW)\(^{17}\), *Christentum und Chinesische Religion* (CC)\(^{18}\), *Das Judentum* (J)\(^{19}\), *Das Christentum* (C)\(^{20}\) and *Der Islam*,\(^{21}\) although the first two may also belong to the preliminary literature owing to their time of publication.

Küng’s literary production is extensive, and it belongs to the nature of PWE that he seeks to make an active contribution to the discourse in several different forums. The books and writings outside those mentioned present the “supplementary part” among the sources. And, finally, there are books of Küng that I have not included in any of these sub-parts. I have not aimed at exhaustiveness, but rather sought to achieve sufficient extensiveness to be able to determine the foundational structure of PWE for its further application.

To be sure, it would be too narrow to say that my purpose here is to analyze Hans Küng’s Global Ethic Project (PWE); the objectives of my analysis are, for some readers at least, independent of Küng studies. Neither do I see Küng as an author who would primarily attract systematic analysis of his work, particularly when it comes to PWE which is highly practical and focuses perhaps more on existing religious and philosophical traditions than on Küng’s own theoretical position. What then is the precise methodological role of PWE in this study? Because PWE in any case will be the general horizon of reflection, against which different, more specific, ethical constructions will be more or less juxtaposed, one could speak


\(^{16}\) *Wozu Weltethos? Religion und Ethik in Zeiten der Globalisierung. Im Gespräch mit Jürgen Hoeren*. (Freiburg: Herder, 2002.)


here of a *reconstructive* method. The aim is to propose an independent model for global ethics on the basis of certain key ideas laid down in PWE, but further to reconstruct and clearly extend them beyond Küng’s discussion.

The reason for using PWE as a basis for analysis is, first, that it may be viewed, to a significant extent and at a rough level, as representing an endorsement of the mainstream hegemony in today’s ethical discussion. Second, owing to Küng’s ambition to encompass widely quite differing types of ethical approaches within one general model, PWE provides a useful springboard to assess the promises and pitfalls of different types of global ethics in general. Thus, an ambivalent relation to PWE will be found in this study. On the one hand, I will attempt to trace what is promising in the many different philosophical tracks to which PWE alludes and to proceed further along those tracks. On the other hand, this extension requires significantly transcending the explicit intentions of PWE. In the final analysis, Küng should not be held responsible for the development taken by this study on the basis of his project.

PWE may be considered a significant contribution to the popular societal discourse on globalization. For the last two decades Küng’s steadfast aim has been to justify the necessity for PWE from the perspective of different societal sectors. Moreover, Küng’s tendency is to devote himself to a discourse with several different theories. Along with that, he tries to determine a synthesis between theoretical extremes, while consciously leaving his own position quite loose. Küng’s practical motives and generalized style make it difficult to interpret his project in more detail, but I think the effort is necessary. I will try to identify the ideas in PWE with the help of full-fledged ethico- and politico-philosophical positions in contemporary discourse. On the one hand, my aim is simply to make more sense of the theories and concepts to which Küng relates his own position in a quite general level; in a way this is to serve the interests of PWE and its readers as I set out to flesh out the different ways in which PWE could be more explicitly articulated. On the other hand the mere fact that Küng relates his position to so many different theoretical positions at one and the same time makes it poss-

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22 A term I have borrowed from Per Sundman (1996, 11–27), who uses it to describe his methodological approach to the different types of philosophical interpretations and justifications of human rights from a Christian perspective.

23 Vidich 1999, 3; Casanova 1999, 38.

24 Huovinen 1978a, 12. Eero Huovinen’s methodology resembles more the system-immanent style, although it is also to be noted that it is based on much earlier literary material. (Cf. Albert 1979, 9).

25 Huovinen 1978b, 21. Cf. for example EF, 85; Albert 1979, 81, 82; Bechmann 1992, 301. Both the radically ecumenical orientation, in which theology is seen as changing according to the historical situation and context (Collins 2001, 191. Cf. D, 95–123; KWR, 39–42; H; Jens 1996, 43–53.), and Küng’s restless aspiration to synthesize opposite poles may reflect his sympathy with Hegelian thought, see EF, 203–205.

26 Küng himself admits the importance of a conceptual analysis in the case of global ethics: “Es muss alles von Empirie her durchdacht sein, es muss klar sein, welche Begriffe wir gebrauchen, warum wir andere nicht gebrauchen. Das ist harte Arbeit, und die kann man sich nicht sparen, indem man sie durch Parolen, Slogans und Plakate ersetzt.” (WW, 17.)
ible to systematize the contemporary philosophical discourse on global ethics in general with the help of and on the basis of PWE. I reiterate that this second point is my ultimate goal.

Together with the reconstructive method, there is the idea that rational reconstruction of PWE, is prior to the historical one. Rational reconstruction refers not so much to disclosing the original idea of PWE, but to emphasizing its most characteristic features from the point of view of the respective reconstruction. The need for rational reconstruction arises from the material’s own “selective” nature. Küng both escapes the possibility of system-immanent analysis, on the one hand, and opens up paths for a balanced synthesis on the other by always giving attention to every relevant view. Küng’s way of arguing for global ethics is appealing; it would seem to address every major problem that might occur when developing a comprehensive ethical theory of a global nature. Yet it also leaves a great deal open in questions of how to cope with these problems concretely, that is, how to really eliminate them in order to attain a global ethical model of high practical worth. Thus, the present study takes the necessary step and continues into territory in which the scope of PWE was not designed to reach – a step toward outlining the institutional structure of (global) society, albeit in a loose sense of the term. In all this, PWE is a particularly fruitful model with which to begin.

There are two further points on methodology. First, Küng’s strength is his refusal to go deep into highly specialized scholarly discourse. This is not only his advantage but also an advantage used by several authors cited independently in this study as the argument proceeds. This applies to my overall intention as well. One of my guiding ideas is to cover a great deal of ground without loosing the focus into too specialized disciplinary discourse. The justification for this is derived, first, from the principle of complying with methods found in Küng as my main source. Second, sometimes broad-mindedness is a strength in its own right in philosophy and theology. It is useful to discern the forest from the trees. In other words, in practice the argument in itself has to be convincing independent of methodological considerations.

Second, why is there such a clear philosophical perspective in the first place, given that Küng is first and foremost a theologian and deals with religion more than Western philosophy? No doubt, an alternative way to deal with PWE would have been more theological, for instance, evaluating Küng’s – and other authors’ – renderings of the moral content found in different religious traditions. It is my contention, however, that the philosophical task is more fundamental in the case of PWE just because in the final analysis, as the model for global ethics, it does not subscribe to any particular tradition as such. The other side of the coin is that it is a misunderstanding to suppose that Western philosophy – to which I refer here with the term “philosophy” – downplays the question of the role of particular religions on the agenda. Indeed, the philosophical positions on which I will elaborate in this study have in common with PWE precisely the ultimate motive to incorporate particular religious views as well as other ideological views into their ethical and societal proposals. This being the van-

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27 On rational vs. historical reconstruction, see for example Pihlström (1997, 332).
tage point of PWE as well, one should first make sense of consistent philosophical articulation and justification for global ethics before proceeding to religious studies.

2.3. Structure and Content
The study will be divided into two main parts, each devoted to a different approach to ethical and political issues. Both approaches can be gleaned from PWE’s general outline. Indeed, one interpretation of PWE would no doubt be that Küng’s ultimate aim is to combine the two. Yet my claim is that this is precisely the most problematic interpretation or application of PWE or of any form of global ethics as I will show by identifying the fundamental differences between the two approaches. The first approach, a liberal one, is more or less a continuation of Enlightenment ideals while the second, the postliberalist approach, marks a radical break with Enlightenment. My intention will be to identify the fundamental difference between the two major approaches with the help of one particularly important benchmark, namely exclusivism. The term is here defined quite broadly, but it connotes the exclusive nature of different cultural, ideological and religious traditions. However, as mentioned earlier, I will not set out to take on the historical or theological task of researching these particular traditions, but will dwell on the consistent stance toward exclusivity of traditions in general. This approach is what makes my study thoroughly philosophical. At the same time, the terms liberalism and postliberalism are laden with both theological and philosophical connotations here. Thus, in the first substantial part of the study I will pull together in one rough concept tendencies that are theologically liberal, on the one hand, and those that reflect political liberalism, on the other.

In the second substantial part of the study, the views invoked are either related to a critique of liberal theology (roughly defined) or political liberalism (perhaps a more restricted definition, but one that still remains somewhat open). One should not hasten to make too many historical identifications here either, because the conceptual separation between liberalism and postliberalism is of secondary order; the terms derive their meaning first and foremost from their different stances vis-à-vis ideological exclusivism. This last question is the ultimate object of this study. Perhaps the most illuminating example of the secondary status of the concepts of liberalism vis-à-vis postliberalism is deconstructionism, which is presented as the last model in the liberalist portion of the study. It is after all salient that poststructuralism and deconstructionism embody one of the most explosive critiques of liberalism. It is, however, precisely the attitude towards exclusivism that brings deconstructionism more in line with Enlightenment ideals than with postliberalism. All the same, deconstructionism marks a great turning point in the sense that, in its radical criticism of Enlightenment ideals and liberalism, it prepares the way for postliberalism in a quite peculiar way, as will be seen.

That the portion of the study dealing with postliberalism is shorter than the portion devoted to the liberal potential of global ethics, in general, and of PWE, in particular, derives partly from the fact that the basic foundations of PWE will appear in the first portion and then are merely referred to in the second. Thus, whereas in the first part the general literature is
more or less analyzed along with Küng’s theses, in the second part only the general literature remains the focus with Küng’s theses brought up only as points of comparison in order to avoid repetition. The imbalance in length also reflects the fact that the second part is after all sketchier than the first. I have intended to make my point more conclusively with liberalism than with postliberalism. This is because I see postliberalism as providing a kind of alternative opening toward consistent global ethics in general, while the deadlock of Enlightenment thinking can be traced relatively accurately. My aim is to argue for a “paradigm shift” rather than for a precise new model. Of course, the shift is not my own invention; but postliberalist tendencies have been developing a long time alongside liberalist hegemony. This study is meant to extend and thus consolidate the postliberal argument and also to engage in its internal tensions and thus flesh out the new paradigm with new precision.

As an aid to the analysis I will resort to one rough methodological division throughout the study: the two theoretical extremes, between which Küng struggles for resolution, what I call the “rational” and the “positive method.” What is more, I will show that these general approaches are substantially the two major opposing poles in the contemporary global ethical discourse. The question here is also about opposite perspectives or methods, by which Küng attempts to justify PWE. The rational method focuses on the invisible theoretical reality. The guiding idea is rational reliability, certainty, categorical principles, and faithfulness to absolute truth. The rational method is deductive by its nature. In turn, the positive method is reality oriented. The underlying idea is realism, by which is meant that one does justice to the surrounding reality as it is. The opponents of the positive method are typically accused of being unrealistic. Sociology and history are the disciplines favored by the positive method, which is inductive by nature.28

I will attempt to identify these opposing methodological approaches within the larger ideological contexts to which they are indebted in each case under consideration. The point will be that they penetrate not only PWE’s arguments, but also the overall discussion on contemporary ethical and political theory in general. It is my suggestion that the acknowledgment of the dynamics between the rational and positive methods will decisively help understanding the inconclusiveness and inconsistencies within Enlightenment-oriented political philosophy as well as the consequential philosophical superiority of postliberalist project.

Moreover, my aim is to show that the rational and positive methods may be identified with two different particular lines of thought in the case of both the liberal and the postliberal approaches. Defined very broadly, the basic tension between the Kantian and Hegelian traditions undergirds the liberalist approach. In the postliberal part of the study, these opposing

28 I have taken the two terms connoting the opposite methods from Schelling’s classical division of rational and positive philosophy: “Whereas rational philosophy is aprioristic and deductive, positive philosophy is aposterioristic and empirical. Experience is the only means of proof in positive philosophy.” (Tillich 1974, 65.) What I hope for is that Schelling’s division will serve to advance the understanding of the methodological dichotomy of contemporary global ethics more generally. I will discuss Schelling in the second part of the study.
poles will be shown to be the Aristotelian-Thomistic moral tradition as against the Augustinian tradition, the former representing the rationalist enterprise of natural theology, while the latter takes the more fideist path of the positive method. It is still important to bear in mind that this study is not about scrutinizing classical figures such as Aristotle and Augustine, Kant and Hegel or, for that matter, any other related historical positions as such. Instead, my focus is on contemporary discussion; classical figures function as tools for fleshing out the different traditions of thought appearing in that discussion.

I have divided the liberalism portion into three sub-sections. (1) The role of a religious type of faith in the formation of ethics; (2) the nature of ethics at a general level, particularly the question between ethics and politics; (3) the more concrete content of global ethics, that is, how the co-existence of different religions and ideologies in one pluralistic (global) society should be designed at the institutional level. The point is that I will first consider the question of what kind of global ethics is worth pursuing at two principal and preliminary levels (the “vertical level,” in chapter one; and the “horizontal level,” in chapter two), while chapter three pulls together the conclusions of both chapters – in practice the question of exclusivism and the question of humanum – to work out more detailed alternative accounts of what global ethics should look like in the final analysis. Because Küng consciously leaves the philosophical articulation of PWE open, it is the last of the three chapters that, while drawing on the spirit of PWE all along the line, will most emphatically have to proceed further from the explicit formulations of PWE to the general philosophical discussion.

In the context of these three themes I will further articulate the general proposals of PWE in one direction or another according to either the rational or the positive method and with the help of particular classical philosophical figures and their thought. In case of each figure, there will also be evaluation of how far PWE would be applicable according to their respective thinking, a procedure found throughout the study. Scholars will be divided according to their emphasis on either the rational or the positive method. It is, however, to be noted that none of them exclusively advocates one or the other method. Rather the idea will be to locate different global ethical models on a continuum on one end of which is the most rational point, and on the other is the most positive point. It is indeed an ambition, although not always spoken or even consciously articulated, of all the authors presented primarily to display a coherent synthesis of the two methods. The point here will be to evaluate the consistency of these syntheses with the help of the mutual criticism directed by the authors themselves to each other.

This method will be especially evident in the third and final chapter of the first portion. I will bring out three prominent figures in today’s political philosophy who, in my constellation, endorse the rational method, namely, John Rawls, Thomas Pogge and Jürgen Habermas, together with three who endorse the positive method, namely, Martha Nussbaum, Michael Walzer, and John Gray. Additionally, there are two figures, who represent ambivalent or transitory positions: Charles Taylor, in his earlier communitarianism and Jacques Derrida in post-
structuralism. My intention in the third chapter is to flesh out the internal tensions within the liberal approach that originally derive from the more general formulations of liberalism dealt with in the first two chapters and then revisited in the third.

As for the contemporary figures dealt with in the third chapter of the first part, I have attempted to present a more or less representative collection of different types of major philosophical positions in today’s debate on global ethics. Each figure is located in the sequence so that a gradual continuation emerges from the most rational emphasis (Rawls) to the most experiential one (Derrida). It is important that the location of each position consists of argumentative relations. Pogge, for instance, may criticize Rawls for experiential reasons, but Pogge himself may be criticized for rational reasons by Rawls on the one hand and experiential reasons by Habermas and even more by, say, Nussbaum who herself is susceptible to both Pogge’s (and Habermas’s) more rationally oriented criticism as well as Walzer’s more experientially oriented one. Showing the dynamics of mutual criticism is an essential ingredient not only in systematizing the contemporary discussion but also in enabling my ultimate point to be clarified, namely, that the internal debate within liberalism is inconclusive and necessarily unsettled, and in this sense liberalism itself has become a crucially self-refuting paradigm.

In part II, it is worth stating my ultimate motive for the study which is fully articulated in that part: to elaborate on an alternative to liberalism that would provide answers to problems that left unresolved in liberalism’s internal controversies. First and foremost, this elaboration will be enabled by a different, more plausible type of combination of the rational and positive methods than is currently the case in liberalism. The corollary of this synthesis does not, however, draw on the ethical and philosophical discoveries of the Enlightenment so much as it draws on pre-Enlightenment thought. What makes it still post-liberalism – instead of, say, anti-liberalism or pre-liberalism – is rather its simultaneous, albeit radically critical, preoccupation with the Enlightenment project; it does not escape, but addresses the questions that liberalism addresses, but it does so more successfully. The basic difference between liberalism and postliberalism is that while for the former, basic ethics consists more or less of aspiring primarily to societal harmony and mitigation of ideological conflicts “from above,” the latter sees the role of particular ideologies and religions in the formation of societal ethics, even elementary ethics, as more radically inviolable, the ideological conflicts involved notwithstanding. An important heuristic element underlying this issue, and worth noting as a latent point of reference throughout this study, is what I call exclusive difference. Indeed, around this concept I will form my final contribution to what I call the postliberal paradigm.

While Taylor may be seen as the transitory figure between the rational and positive methods in liberalism, Derrida serves the same function between the liberal approach as a whole – in a way a culmination of both the rational and positive methods – and the postliberal approach. Moreover, while Taylor may be seen as openly alluding to the next stage in his context (that is, with the positive liberal method) – although remaining at a quite general level in his early phase which I refer to here – it is more fatally Derrida who, occupying the final peak of the liberal approach, ultimately does not manage to break through from the liberalist paradigm as a whole to the postliberal paradigm to which he nevertheless alludes.
but the reader hopefully will have the patience to follow the phases leading up to it in order to recognize both its necessity and its absence in today’s discussion.
II The Liberal Potential of Global Ethics

1. Ethics and Religious Faith

1.1. Küng’s Basic Argument

The motive behind PWE is, in a way, historical and crisis-oriented. Küng refers to the beginning of the twentieth century, when considerable confidence in modern society as the fruit of Enlightenment could still be found. With World War I, the situation changed. From that point on the modern world order was destined to give way to a globalizing postmodern order. The great ideologies such as German fascism, Japanese militarism and Russian communism, meanwhile gradually collapsed. The Enlightenment faith in progress and trust in moral capacities of autonomous reason came in for harsh criticism when it was recognized that science also has inhumane consequences. Through these historical processes we have reached, according to Küng, a condition in which neo-capitalist Western society finds itself in crisis.

Many people no longer know, according to which basic options they should handle the large or small decisions in their lives, which preferences they should follow, which priorities they should set for themselves, which models they should choose. For the earlier instances of orientation and traditions of orientation no longer prevail.

According to Küng, the question is first and foremost about a “moral crisis,” which in its magnitude has the power of “self-destruction.” Küng sees that not only secular world, but also religions are facing the same moral crisis. The moral crisis depicted by Küng does not in itself include a positive model about the grounds on which ethics should rest. After all, it seems that he believes the crisis in itself implies a demand for a rapid solution. What is

35 PW, 33: “Es droht die Selbstzerstörung der gegenwärtigen Fortschrittsgesellschaft.”
needed is “crisis reflection,” “prognoses,” and a “preventive ethic.” The rhetoric used in PWE is reminiscent of that used in pessimistic reports within futurology, such as the Roman Club, to which Küng also refers. PWE’s preliminary pattern of the argument is that, first, the crisis and its striking magnitude are shown; then the conclusions are drawn by searching for sustainable solutions for preventing and mitigating the crisis.

Herein lies the motive for global ethics. In this regard it is important to take the Declaration as a political continuation of PWE. But as with the background of the Declaration, so it is also with PWE: it is primarily about inter-religious ethics. Consequently, one may ask why secular moral institutions are in a secondary position. In order to respond to this question Küng endeavors to justify the necessity of theonomous ethics. His thesis is that it is first and foremost confidence in reason as the justifier of ethics that is in crisis. It has become hard to trust in autonomous human capacity to decide what is right and what is wrong after the evidence of the destructive effects on the nature and humanity of the Third Reich, atomic power, or genetic technology. When Küng is pessimistic about autonomous, religion-independent capacities of reason, he means secularized Western morality. His argument runs as follows:

When speaking of the ideal of moral autonomy, Küng uses a concept he calls “dialectics of Enlightenment.” By religion, in turn, he means all those views of life that foster faith in some higher power. According to Küng, history has shown de facto, that the paradigm of the

37 PW, 35: “Bisher kam auch die Ethik, insofern die Reflektion über das sittliche Verhalten des Menschen ist, meist zu spät: Zu oft fragte man, was erst nachdem wir es konnten. . . . Ethik, wiewohl immer zeit- und gesellschaftsbedingt Krisenreflektion sein. . . . Ethik sollte-mittels Krisenprognose, die mit der schlimmeren Möglichkeit rechnet . . . – die Krisenprophylaxe dienen. . . . Wir brauchen eine Präventivethik.”


39 See also D, 291–296; WWd; Rehm 1994, 7, 8; Kopelew 1995; Our Global Neighbourhood; H. Schmidt 1997b; Pietikäinen 1998; Woit 1999a; 1999b; Bialas 1999b.

40 PW, 58: “. . . durch alle Jahrtausende hindurch waren die Religionen jene Orientierungssysteme, welche die Grundlage für eine bestimmte Moral bildeten, sie legitimierten, motivierten und oft auch mit Strafen sanktionierten. Aber – muss das auch heute noch, in unserer weitgehend säkularisierten Gesellschaft, so sein?” See also e.g. TA, 278, 279; WWR, 538, 539; ZÖT, 76; WTR, 233. On theonomic vis-à-vis secular ethics, see also e.g. Hofmeister 1978; Ricoeur 1996. Cf. Hauerwas 1983.

41 PW, 33: “Die Krise des Fortschrittsdenkens aber ist im Kern die Krise des modernen Vernunftverständnisses.”

42 PW, 76. Cf. TA, 158, 229; PW, 76.

43 See for example PW, 58: “. . . durch alle Jahrtausende hindurch waren die Religionen jene Orientierungssysteme, welche die Grundlage für eine bestimmte Moral bildeten . . . Aber – muss das auch heute noch, in unserer weitgehend säkularisierten Gesellschaft, so sein?” See also PW, 63–66. Cf. TA, 244, 245.

44 See PW, 63: “Dialektik der Aufklärung.”

45 PW, 77.
Enlightenment has led to societal problems. Second, if the authority of reason has not managed to achieve satisfactory results from an ethical perspective, then religion is simply the only alternative. This may also be seen in people’s behavior: they are seeking religious alternatives. Third, religion is for Küng more than the only alternative left. It has sociologically proved itself to be the power that upholds morality. By this Küng means that religion “influences indirectly” motivating and evaluating individuals’ moral life; in religion the question is about power directing action. In the course of history religion has contributed “to human liberation . . . psychic-psychotherapeutically, but also politico-socially.”

Here Küng conjectures, as it were, as an objective observation of history, that as religions in reality have managed to show remarkably more positive moral results than any principle resorting to autonomous authority of reason, it is realistic to look for solutions precisely


48 WWW, 183: “Wer die Religion verbannt oder ignoriert, schafft ein Vakuum; er muss jedenfalls sagen, welche Angebote er statt dessen in dieser Zeit wachsender Desorientiertheit und Pseudoreligiosität bereit hält gerade für die vielen Jugendlichen, die auf der Suche nach Sinn und Wertorientierung sind.” See also CW, 381; CC, 276; J, 541; W, 167; C, 836–840. Cf. e.g. Höhn 1994; Kuschel 1999b, 157.

49 See for example C, 71; WW, 14, 128–130. Cf. Welker 1993a and 1993b; Ng.

50 WWW, 365, 366: “Führungskraft aus ethisch-religiöser Grundhaltung . . . Religion wirkt indirekt, gleichsam vom Grund her über die einzelnen Menschen, freilich auch in die aktuelle Tagesfragen und technischen Detailfragen hinein: indem sie nämlich Grundüberzeugungen, Grundhaltungen, Grundwerte ins Spiel bringt, indem sie für konkretes Verhalten und Entscheiden letzte Begründungen, Motivationen, Normen liefert.” See also e.g. WWW, 196: “Am ehesten kann eine Religion überzeugen, die Menschen auf ein humane Ethos verpflichtet, und ein Ethos, das offen ist für die Dimension der Transzendenz, des Religiösen, ja, das von der Religion her letztlich getragen, motiviert und konkretisiert ist” (italics added); D, 303: “Und doch können sie [Religionen], wo sie wollen, überzeugende sittliche Motivationen bieten . . . überzeugende Motive des Handelns bieten . . .”; ZWR, 15; WR, 23, 24.

within religions. Religions also offer the best psychological, sociological, and cultural context for the realization of morality. In effect, experience has taught that there is no basis for ethics within humans as such, as autonomous individuals. The method Küng uses here may be called pragmatist inasmuch as it is tantamount to William James’s pragmatist treatment of religion. On the other hand, it resembles such continental emphasis found in the hermeneutics of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Peter Winch.

Here it is worth noting Küng’s rigorous thinking. It appears that Küng sees only two possibilities for morality, one deriving from autonomous reason and one deriving from religion. This becomes obvious in those places where he bases his proposals for one of the two on the demonstrated deficiency of the other. Küng claims it to be a historical fact that the project of the autonomous reason the Enlightenment has lost its battle for the status of justifier of ethics to religion. A new, postmodern paradigm must be found to replace the Enlightenment ideals; a paradigm that Küng believes offers the most authentic possibility for acknowledging a religious dimension.

It should be noted, however, that, according to Küng, religion has ultimately not proved to be the only force that motivates moral action. Autonomous reason has also sometimes proved to have as good or often even better moral results. This proposal appears to contradict the argument for religion presented above. PWE thus also includes a clear reference to


53 Tiles sketches the central thoughts of James’s work in James’s The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life as follows: “Even unbelievers have to recognize how belief in God inclines a person to adopt a ‘strenuous mood’ towards the realization of ideals; ‘in a merely human world without a God, the appeal to our moral energy falls short of its maximal stimulating power . . .’” (Tiles 1998, 640, italics added). Cf. also e.g. SGW, 156–158

54 See for example Puolimatka 2002, 175, 176.


57 PW, 59: “Auch gläubige Menschen müssten zugeben, dass ohne Religion ein moralisches Leben möglich ist . . . . Es lässt sich empirisch nicht bestreiten, dass nichtreligiöse Menschen faktisch auch ohne Religion über eine ethische Grundorientierung verfügen und ein moralisches Leben führen, ja, dass es in der Geschichte nicht selten Religiöß Nichtgläubige waren, die einen neuen Sinn für Menschenwürde vorgelebt . . . sich oft mehr als religiöß Gebundene für Mündigkeit . . . und die übrigen Menschenrechte eingesetzt haben” (italics added). See also e.g. SGW, 157.
the credibility of non-religious ethics. In a way Küng does not seem to be too pessimistic about the ability of autonomous reason to justify ethics. This notion will be elaborated on in due course.

After all, Küng does not restrict himself to history and experiential evidence in arguing on behalf of religion. If possible, he resorts even more to a categorical justification of theonomous morality, although he himself does not distinguish between the two perspectives. In the following pages, my aim is to dwell on this latter aspect of PWE in its argument for the role of religion in forming global ethics.

The development outlined in the previous chapter is not to be considered a coincidence, according to Küng. “It lies in the nature of the rational Enlightenment itself that reason is easily distorted into irrationality.”58 The history of Immanuel Kant, the Enlightenment, and modern secularism shows that autonomous reason cannot create a basis for ethics, even in the theoretical sense. This is because there is no purely rationally-based absolute principle that would give certain categorical frames for moral action. Therefore, as far as ethics is concerned, rationalism inevitably leads to subjectivism and, through that, to arbitrariness.59 Autonomous reason is naturally directed by selfish and self-centered motives. Here Küng subscribes to a claim of the Frankfurt school: “reason is subordinated to interests.”60 The selfishness that he means here is not, however, derived primarily from human immorality as such, as in the theological idea of original sin. At stake are more theoretical reasons, as it were, and the problem behind it is more philosophical than theological in its nature.

In its appeal to reason, philosophy is quickly at an end when the ethical self-duty is existentially seen as unpleasant. How can it be required from me? Yes, there is a question to which even Sigmund Freud, being committed to reason in his ethics, did not find an answer: “When I ask myself why have I always endeavored to be honest, compassionate, and, when possible, benevolent, and why have I not given up when I have noted that one will be hurt by that, end up in trouble, because others are brutal and untrustworthy, then I do not, after all, find any answer.”61


60 WWW, 324, 325: “Es hängt ganz und gar von unserer ethischen Motivation ab . . . Hier mit der reinen, der theoretischen Vernunft allein zu argumentieren, wäre kurzschlüssig. Denn diese Erkenntnis hat sich – das ist ein Verdienst von Jürgen Habermas – auch in der Philosophie durchgesetzt: Die Vernunft ist Interessen unterworfen” (italics added). See also for example SGW, 158, 159; The same issue is present in the tension between democracy and selfish reasonableness; see for example Puolimatka 1995, 255–258, 263.

The problem of morality could be considered through human nature: although a person knows the reason why one should behave correctly, one does not do so purely out of wickedness. Küng’s approach appears to be different. It is more reminiscent of philosophical egoism: there is simply no rational justification for non-egoistic action. Roughly stated, there is no reason for me to act morally, my moral nature, good or bad, notwithstanding; moral action cannot be required of me. In this the way the philosophical egoist considers his position rationally justified. Küng seems to view this attitude, and not the immorality of human character, as the hard question of ethics. Hence, it is important that although Küng looks for solutions to the ethical and moral problems in religions, he mainly focuses on an essentially philosophical problem. As a result he concentrates more on philosophy than on theology in his arguments. In this light it appears natural that the theological question of sin, for instance, is not elaborated on very deeply.

Küng’s rationally-based argument for theonomous ethics proceeds similarly to what has been previously noted in his more sociological argument: rigorously and ex negativa, to which he poses his own substantial alternative. The argument is as follows: Küng criticizes Kant for assuming that humans have an innate ability to evaluate morally right action. By this Küng means autonomous reason. The ethics of autonomous reason is human-centered. Man, however, is a finite being and conditioned by contingency. On this basis it is not possible to justify factors that are absolute and unconditional. Consequently, in addition to being incapable of motivating ethics in practice, autonomous reason also proves to be incapable of justifying universal ethics in theory. Religion is the only alternative left. As Küng puts it, the authority that ultimately justifies ethics must be man’s counterpoint instead of man himself. Moreover, this authority situated vis-à-vis the human being must be absolute in its nature for it to be possible to justify any absolute morality. The motto of PWE is that “only the unconditional can oblige unconditionally.”

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62 It has been claimed that modern Western ethics in general is almost entirely focused on rational argumentation of ethics instead of, for instance, character of moral person along the lines of Aristotelian ethics. (McDowell 1997; Foot 1997; Slote 1997.) Not only egoism but even sadism is sometimes proposed to flow from modern societal view, see Hartwig 1996, 808. More on philosophical sadism, see Airaksinen 1995.

63 Cf. J, 494.

In addition, for Küng, now bound to transcendence, ethics here is duty-laden. Reason is incapable of justifying ethics above all as duty. Küng believes that the right duty must consist of some kind of super-rational trust, experience, and decision in favor of the source of duty (das Gegenüber) that is beyond the subject. The essential concept in Küng’s theology is rational or reasonable trust. By this he means, however, something other than logical rationality:

The categorical in the ethical demand . . . can be . . . established only through the unconditional . . . . This can only be the ultimate, the highest reality itself, that which indeed is not to be rationally proven, but which can be adopted in reasonable trust.

Küng’s position is related to his suspicion of reaching God through rationality, for instance, by way of God-proofs. God is ultimately something other than reason. Thus, objective morality can only be based on something other than reason. The only alternative is religion, which breaks the limits of logic. At the same time trust must be something that is not against reason.

In any case, precisely because of his critique of reason, religion for Küng is a fundamental precondition of plausible ethics. At the same time, of course, religion is also a guarantee of moral behavior. Again, Küng’s philosophical approach is to be noted. In his thinking, that one is endowed with philosophical, more precisely existential, grounds for categorical ethical obligation is essential in order that one can live up to one’s potential. In PWE Küng does not deal very much with another question, namely, that a person equipped with such existential grounds could nevertheless fail to act in a morally right way. Küng is actually against pessimistic anthropology in this sense.

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68 See also for example J, 545.
Truthfully, realistically considered, the world is an ambiguous reality, and in man as well both good and evil are mixed. People are neither angels nor devils. . . . But man is a complicated, ambivalent being between rationality and irrationality, good and evil, a mixture of egoism and virtue . . .

This quotation reflects Küng’s belief that humans can act morally independent of whether the subject has grounds for morality – grounds that Küng earlier has claimed to be derived only from religions. Man is naturally capable of goodness. In line with this thinking Küng has a clear tendency to denounce the Christian doctrine of original sin on the basis of Bultmann’s ‘demythologization’ (Entmythologisierung). Thus the centrality of religion does not mean that a non-religious person could not or would not want to act virtuously as hinted earlier. Now this statement begins to be expressed in a more systematic form.

Küng distinguishes between implementation of moral duty, on the one hand, and the principle on which the moral duty is founded, that is, the philosophical rationale for ethics, on the other. The former is possible regardless of whether a person has religious conviction or not. “Man without religion can also lead an authentically human and, in that sense, moral life; exactly this is an expression of man’s inner autonomy.”


PWE appears to be penetrated with the anthropological view whereby every human being has a certain degree of basic trust in reality. This trust largely takes the form of value-experience, experience of life as valuable and value-laden. On this very basis there is in fact only a quantitative difference, instead of a qualitative difference, between the religious and the non-religious person. It is thus understandable that, to a certain extent, Küng acknowledges the existence of individual autonomy when it comes to experiencing and obeying a moral obligation. At the same time, one may note how the very conception of basic trust has an essential role in enabling and motivating the universal scope of PWE.

The quantitative difference between the religious and the non-religious person is reflected in the inability of the latter to justify moral behavior. According to the existential emphasis in Küng’s earlier fundamental theology, in the context of religion a person obtains a more explicit definition for the value-experience that is acquired as a non-religious person. The corresponding idea in the context of PWE seems to be the opportunity to justify ethics. “However, man is incapable of one thing without religion, in the event he would actually have to apply the unconditional moral norms to himself: to lay the foundation for the unconditionality and universality of ethical obligation.”

In addition to what I have mentioned earlier, the above quotation also reflects PWE’s duty-based ethical view. In this it is akin to Kantian ethics. The two aspects – duty-based and theonomous ethics – are thus related in Küng’s argument. In contrast to Kant, Küng insists that without religion it is not possible to determine any foundation for fulfilling ethical duties. This is because “only the unconditional can oblige unconditionally.” A human-transcending source of obligation is needed in order to be valid. In practice, for Küng this means that religion is needed in order for ethics to be reckoned with. In this way deontology and theonomy are intriguingly intertwined in Küng’s thinking.

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73 GW, 31–33.

74 Huovinen 1978b, 136–142.


76 Of course, Küng has a great deal of company in attempting to connect deontological ethics with theism (see Schneewind 1984). G. E. M. Anscombe thinks similarly, but she draws opposite conclusions: instead of non-theistic ethics, she maintains that what is negligible is deontological ethics (Anscombe 1997). Anscombe herself
This is the two-fold character of PWE with regard to Kantian ethics. On the one hand, Küng implicitly subscribes to deontology, while on the other, through the arguments based on philosophical credibility of ethics in general, he opposes the Kantian idea of moral autonomy. The purpose of the remaining part of this chapter is to show that PWE’s relation to Kant in this respect is still more complicated.

As will become clear, Küng’s conviction is that religions have an extraordinary role in rescuing the world from the moral predicament depicted earlier. Therefore, religion should be taken as a vantage point of global ethics. This may thus be seen as PWE’s positive answer to the contemporary moral crisis. With a deeper analysis it is possible to discern two ways in which Küng’s argument for the necessity of religion could be interpreted within a broader philosophical framework, namely the rational and positive methods. The two overlap in the sense that they are not distinguished separately in PWE, but are invoked as a whole. My intention, however, is to develop these alternative ways of interpretation further in order to say something substantial, not only about PWE, but also about more philosophically laden models that endorse the necessity of religion in roughly the same way. I will ultimately take up the question of exclusivism within the framework of these models, but preliminary analysis is needed first in order for this question to be sufficiently meaningful and significant in the first place.

1.2. The Rational Method: From Kant to Schleiermacher
It is necessary to examine Küng’s critique of the project of Enlightenment more carefully. Does Kant’s rational moral autonomy in reality imply moral arbitrariness, as Küng seems to suggest? Is it possible that the immoralities evident in twentieth-century Europe reflect the deficiencies of Kantian ethics? These questions lead us to consider further what Kant actually meant by moral autonomy. The following section is largely based on the critique of PWE by Gerd Neuhaus, in which Kant is the focal point of the analysis.

According to Neuhaus, Kant assumes that human reason, ethically seen, can be either autonomous or heteronomous in each individual. By autonomous Kant means complete independence of reason from any of its external surroundings as the source of ethics. Heteronomous, in turn, means that reason is under the influence of external factors, above all, the emotional influences of empirical reality. Kant considers the condition of heteronomy to be a morally bad situation, and he calls reason used under this condition “pathologically affected” (pathologisch affiziert). Such a condition manifests itself as an effort to pursue one’s own interests and preferences instead of always acting according to what is universally ethically rational, that is, impartial. Conversely, using autonomous reason, a human being acts according to objective moral law.77

Küng understands Kant to endorse the innateness of moral law. Neuhaus maintains this understanding to be mistaken, precisely on the basis of the Kantian principle of objectivity. In the event that moral law somehow relates to the heredity of man, such a law would no doubt be human-centered. For Kant man is always dependent on his surroundings. In other words, the innateness of moral law would open the door to criticism of subjectivism by Küng: ethics would lack a human-independent objective criterion. After all, the Kantian insistence that the existence of moral law is universal does not in any sense connote the assumption that it would be innate and thus vulnerable to subjectivism.\footnote{Neuhaus 1999, 38.}

Neuhaus makes an additional important point related to the philosophical concept of Enlightenment. In contrast to Küng’s understanding, Kant does not consider the project of Enlightenment a rational condition or temporal phase of history that is free or during which people are free of any external influence such as religion. Rather Kant considers the Enlightenment project more as a mission or task given to reason for the purpose of exposing all kinds of heteronomy in moral behavior. Enlightenment is, in effect, an internal controlling system in man imprinted by moral law, which prevents “pathological affection.” Thus, its task, according to Kant, is to preserve the objectivity of ethics by its nature; after all, heteronomous ethics is no more objective. Hence, arbitrary ethics is related to the heteronomous use of reason, whereas autonomous reasoning would be the right application of rationality. In other words, Neuhaus wants to interpret Kant’s autonomous reason to mean a human condition that, in its objectivity, is free from selfish desires and Kant’s understanding of Enlightenment to mean a mission to protect this absolute foundation of ethics.\footnote{Neuhaus 1999, 31–34. Cf. Kant 1784.}

When Kant’s moral rationality is understood in this way, Küng’s rendering of Kant and the Enlightenment is, according to Neuhaus, called into question. Furthermore, this misunderstanding has some serious consequences with regard to PWE. Above all, Küng’s historical argument for the deadlock of the Enlightenment and its ideal of moral autonomy is seen in a new light: by the time of the Enlightenment Kant himself does not mean a historical condition, in which people believe in the capacities of autonomous reason, as Küng seems to assume,\footnote{Cf. C, 780–783.} but rather a mission that is timeless and ever relevant. Moreover, there is no phase in history that could complete the task of Enlightenment. Man is constantly in danger of falling into the condition of heteronomy. This threat is no different whether one has a religious or a non-religious conviction. Hence, the atrocities of modern society do not refute the appeal to moral autonomy, but rather confirm it. In other words, they demonstrate that at any time man may descend into morally heteronomous action, the religious or non-religious rationale notwithstanding. Absurdities like the Holocaust therefore, according to Neuhaus’s interpretation of Kant, are not cardinal examples of the time of the Enlightenment, as Küng assumes. On the
contrary, they are examples of forgetting the Enlightenment, that is, the self-corrective ethical task of reason.⁸¹

Moreover, the Frankfurt School that Küng refers to in support of his Enlightenment critique is in fact not so very critical of the Enlightenment ideal of rationality. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School may indeed be used to claim that the predicament of postmodernity is precisely the abandonment of Enlightenment values; those values have been turned on their heads. For instance, the disconnection between man and other aspects of nature has, through mass-production, meant blurring the difference between man and machine; the need to control the environment has, in technocratic neo-capitalism, meant that the human subject cannot control himself; humanism has been transformed into anti-humanism, and so on.⁸² Neuhaus’s Küng-criticism is therefore in line with fundamental ideas of the Frankfurt School, the ideas that PWE would seem to misinterpret insofar as it resorts to them in support of its critique of Kantian ethics. Moreover, the basic idea in the postmodern alternative to which Küng appeals is in fact significantly akin to the aim of Enlightenment in the sense given it by both Kant and the Frankfurt School.⁸³ It is thus natural to ask whether religion proper is needed at all as a substantial vantage point when constructing global ethics in the spirit of PWE.⁸⁴

Here it is essential to determine in what respect Küng correctly understands Kant and in what respect he misinterprets Kant. Küng is at least partially correct in that Kant indeed justifies ethics by resorting to autonomous reason. Although my aim is to consider deficiencies in Küng’s interpretation of Kant vis-à-vis moral autonomy, one cannot entirely deny that Küng is right in assuming that Kant justifies ethics independently (autonomously) with regard to all external factors of a human person, including religion and God.⁸⁵ Küng’s misunderstanding of Kant would appear in turn to be related to Neuhaus’s earlier claim, namely, that this kind of autonomy does not lead to such arbitrary and immoral consequences at all, as Küng seems to insist.

Neuhaus’s criticism becomes still more comprehensible when considering how Küng, on the one hand, and Kant, on the other, define the concept of reason when dealing with ethics. Can ethics be rational or reasonable? If yes, then how and in what sense? The content of universal ethics is, according to Kant, expressed in the categorical imperative: “always act

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⁸¹ Neuhaus 1999, 33, 34. Of course, it is problematic to deal with Enlightenment in purely philosophical terms in the first place. For instance, medical development may be seen as the face of Enlightenment that has not embodied failure, but is an indisputable success of Enlightenment. On the difficulties in the concept of Enlightenment, see also for example Heiskala 1994, 19–21.

⁸² On critical theory, see for example How 2003.

⁸³ See for example CC, 150.

⁸⁴ Fahrenbach 1998.

according to that maxim which you could hope to be a universal law." For Kant it is essentially reasonable to act according to the categorical imperative. In other words, it is reason that justifies ethics contra the interpretation of Küng. Nor does the fact that people act immorally refute this assertion. Neuhaus uses lying as an example. A person who lies implicitly confirms that she has correctly understood the moral law expressed in the categorical imperative and accepts it as reasonable and right; she merely does not want to subscribe to it personally. She would hardly subscribe to a suggestion that lying ought to be universally allowed. Thus, both the moral and the immoral actions of a person inevitably confirm the reasonability of moral law as such. In that sense one may say that, for Kant, the autonomous rationality of ethics means internal realism: it is impossible for a human being to detach substantially from the sphere of ethics. Consequently, while Küng does not appear to believe in the existence of objective autonomous reason in the Kantian sense in the first place, for a Kantian PWE itself is an expression of moral demand established by autonomous reason.

As for the concept of reason, what is more openly in line with Kant is that Küng neglects the plausibility of God-proofs. According to Kant, God’s existence cannot be proven rationally; it is a matter of faith. Of course, Kant did not want to deny God’s existence with this contention, but he insisted on the impossibility of acquiring certain knowledge of transcendent reality through reason and experience. Thus, it seems that in Küng there is pessimism concerning reason’s metaphysical capacities similar to Kant’s. By reason, however, Kant means theoretical reason in the context of God-proofs. The reason to which Kant refers in the context of ethics – the reason that Küng somewhat mistakenly opposes – is in turn practical reason.

The Kantian concept of (practical) reason in an ethical context has noteworthy affinities to Küng’s concept of “reasonable trust” mentioned in the previous chapter. Significantly, in Kantian thinking practical rationality or the reasonability of ethics cannot be assessed by human measures alone. The rationality of ethics rather connotes objectivity and universality. For ethics to be rational, it is not so much a result of its capacity to fulfill some external criteria.

86 Neuhaus 1999, 38.
87 See, however, for example MacIntyre 1985, 46.
90 Siitonen 2001; see also e.g. Greene 1960, liii–lxxv. Cf. KGK, 194.
91 Aspelin 1958, 404.
Instead, for Kant, the unconditionality of ethics is grounded precisely in the fact that ethics is its own measure, universally and individually; in this sense “man’s own conscience is the highest moral tribunal.” Strikingly, Kant ignores a more elaborate speculation on the source of morality. Ethics and its rationality ultimately belong to a transcendental dimension, which is not up to human beings to explore or question as such. In other words, it is not possible to evaluate or justify the moral law itself; the law merely presents itself universally and thereby it obliges all humans. Thus, for Kant ethics is ultimately not a result of speculation, but a human condition; moral obligation, in turn, is not to be derived from a human subject as such, but is instead a kind of transcendental precondition of human existence. Hence, ethics as moral law is analogous to God in that neither may be critically investigated by rational enquiry.

Kant’s ethical thinking is even more akin to Küng’s existentially laden concept of fundamental trust. In Kant as in Küng the transcendent God is experienced through value-experience. Religion is thus reduced to ethics in the phenomenological world of human beings. In this sense there is an interesting link between Küng’s existentialist emphasis and Kant. Indeed, one interpretation of PWE is that Kant and Küng are allies in many ways; they speak of the same thing by different names. Kant speaks of moral law over and above the human subject within the transcendental sphere, with rationality defined by the law and not by the subject. Küng in turn speaks of “reasonable trust” in the ultimate reality recognized as the “counterpoint” of the subject – a reality that nonetheless cannot be “rationally proven.”

In this light it is surprising that, in criticizing Kantian ethics, Küng seems to take into account only the heteronomous reason in Kantian terms. Küng appears to treat autonomous reason as a kind of self-centered, purely logical calculation. Calculative Zweckrationalität has been a prevailing idea in the West since Max Weber; it is, however, very one-sided and

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93 Greene 1960, liii.
95 Kant 1793a, 225–232; see also Greene 1960, li: “In view of his virtual reduction of religion to morality . . . it will be necessary to note the salient features of his ethical theory. The basis of this theory is man’s moral experience. Kant describes this experience as an immediate intuition of the value and importance of moral goodness . . .” (italics added). See also C, 768, 769.
96 See also Huovinen 1978b, 127. On the relationship between Kant, dialectical theology and existentialism, see, for example, Bailey 1998.
97 PW, 77; TA, 244: “dass dieses Grundvertrauen im Vollzug selbst eine ursprüngliche Vernünftigkeit, eine innere rationalität offenbart . . . ein rational verantwortbares, also nicht unvernünftiges, sondern durchaus vernünftiges Wagnis, das aber so immer ein letztlich überrationales Wagnis bleibt” (italics added); CA, 21.
98 See also C, 871–873. For another kind of anti-individualistic and anti-calculative understanding of rationality, see for example Bernstein 1983. On different paradigms of rationality related to different world views as a whole, see Gloy 2001.
even practically difficult to implement. Küng may indeed understand Kantian reason in too individualistic a sense. For this reason, Küng disentangles theology from philosophy more radically than Kant actually does in a way. The questions of selfishness, altruism, morality, and immorality are in Kant tightly intertwined with moral reasonability. Morally laudable autonomy of reason relates to objective reason, whereas heteronomous self-centeredness relates to a kind of subjective reason. The question is thus more about egocentrism vis-à-vis morality rather than about irrationality vis-à-vis rationality. Küng does not seem to differentiate sufficiently between these Kantian alternative concepts of reason, autonomy and heteronomy. Consequently, whereas Küng, in his criticism of the Enlightenment, would speak of autonomous reason, Kant would obviously speak of heteronomous reason. We can ask whether the difference between Kant and Küng is more terminological than content-based.

The more nuanced differentiation between the forms of rationality made by Kant enables one to contend that only upon reason can ethics be founded – and this means, of course, autonomous reason. Another question is that this interpretation shows how difficult it is for reason to motivate moral behavior. Although I might understand by reasoning that the categorical imperative is right in principle, this by no means necessarily leads me to act accordingly. This problem of moral motivation takes the question back to Küng’s argument for religion. In terms of the question of motivation for moral action, Küng may indeed be right in his criticism of Kantian ethics. After all, Küng ignores the distinction between the two: the rational justification of ethics on the one hand and the motivation of ethics and its realization in practice on the other. Hence, the contention that only religion is capable of motivating ethics is for Küng an indication that religion is also the only thing capable of justifying and establishing criteria for moral evaluation. But, as has now become clear, Kant distinguishes emphatically between motivation and justification. Because one knows what is right does not mean that one has the motivation to act accordingly. Similarly, previously presented question of Freud does not concern how to lay the foundation for morally right action. Küng views the question of Freud as illuminating the impossibility of justifying ethics through reason. In reality, however, the example of Freud only shows how hard it is to motivate ethics by reason. Only this interpretation does justice to the real question posed by Freud. Here the crux of the matter is not why such things as honesty and altruism are morally right, but rather why am I


100 See for example Stocker 1997. Note, however, that according to Kant motivation of moral action is related to the deontological essence of ethics. Therefore, the very fact that moral law is always an obligation is an incentive for moral action. Thus ethics, in a way automatically, includes an intrinsic motivator. (Kant 1797a, 17–19.) Despite this motivator, heteronomic action is always factually possible. It remains somewhat open how extensively the obligation can in fact evoke corresponding action.

101 Neuhaus 1999, 80.
the one to act in a morally right way, such as by being honest. It is again evident that Kant and Küng would agree on the real issue, but they interpret the issue in different ways. In case Küng would differentiate the justification of ethics from its practical motivation in a way that would do justice to Kantianism proper, then there would not be such strong disagreement.

The fact that there is a universal rationale behind what is argued to be morally right does not imply morally right action within the Kantian pattern. Küng’s inference, presented in the previous section, proceeds conversely: although people no doubt are capable of acting in a morally right way universally, they do not necessarily have the ultimate rationale that would justify these actions. This difference between Kant and Küng alludes to an additional point concerning the relation between Kantian ethics and Küng’s ethics, namely, that Kant appears actually to be more pessimistic with respect to the problem of human evil than Küng. In his analysis of the factual problem of heteronomy, Kant is even more radical than has hitherto been evident. He views the human subject as naturally disposed to heteronomous moral behavior. Indeed, this Kantian idea of universal radical evil converges with the doctrine of original sin. Radical human evil is, for Kant, a concrete reality and at the same time a result of free individual choice, that is, an indeterminate propensity to evil. The difference between this radical evil and original sin is only that the former, although innate, is not inherited by humans through proliferation and thus is not an original character trait in individuals. Hence, the individual also has the power voluntarily to make the move away from the condition of heteronomy and into the sphere of autonomous moral behavior.

Neuhaus even claims that the ethical agenda of PWE concerning common ethics is based on autonomous moral demand; the role of religions is, after all, only to motivate this

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102 In this confusion Küng may be somewhat under the influence of Aristotelianism owing to his Catholic background. In the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition the aspects of ethical justification and motivation are more closely intertwined than in modern Western ethics. (Stocker 1997.) On Thomistic ethics, see more for example McIntyre 1985, 146–180; 1988, 182–208. Cf., 190–198. On the other hand, official Catholic doctrine also distinguishes between justification of ethics and its motivation. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 426–431.)

103 Quinn 1986, 448: “... there is in each of us, according to Kant a morally evil propensity to moral evil ...”

104 See for example Quinn 1986, 448: “Such an evil supreme maxim is, according to Kant, ‘inextirpable by human powers ... and [extirpation] cannot take place, when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt...’” (italics added).

105 Ricoeur 1992, 217.

106 Silber 1960, cx–cxiv.

107 Quinn 1986, 449: “But this is our satisfaction we make out of our own resources by freely acquiring a good disposition.”

108 On the protestantism of Kant, see Greene 1960, xii–xxi.
ethics. On the other hand, one might say that even the motivational role of religions is not absolute; otherwise, there would be no need for a religion-independent ethical appeal such as PWE in the first place. Put differently, the universalist aim of PWE to unite the ethics of individual religions at some level requires an idea of autonomous ethical criterion that is not completely dependent on these religions.

In light of all these factors, it might still seem that Küng, all his possible misunderstandings and internal inconsistencies notwithstanding, emphasizes the role of a transcendent God, while Kant only speaks of the transcendental preconditions of ethics. It is clear that the two are not at all the same thing. John E. Wilson clarifies the point:

We know only what we perceive, that is, we know nothing about the “thing in itself” [Ding an sich] or the “noumenon,” which means that which is only thought, not perceived through the way our cognitive faculty (schemata and understanding) represents it. What we perceive is phenomenon . . . All a priori elements of the mind are “transcendental”; they “transcend” concrete experience but are involved in every possible experience . . . “Transcendent” has a completely different meaning, namely, that of transcending the limits of experience altogether. Kant does not know what the “thing in itself” is because it transcends experience.

In this respect the difference between Küng’s theology and Kant’s philosophy is perhaps the former’s more explicit existentialistic emphasis. Küng’s intention is to extend the Kantian concept of practical rationality, from its role in the sphere of ethics to being a foundation for the whole of human existence. In Küng’s ‘rational trust’ the question is about finding meaning in life. This extension itself reflects a rather substantial continuity to Kant. Wilson makes a noteworthy complement to the picture of Kant sketched above:

There are, [Kant] says, three “postulates” of practical reason: freedom, immortality of the soul, and God. A postulate of “pure practical reason is not as such demonstrable, but an inseparable corollary of an a priori unconditionally valid practical law.” If the law is valid, the postulates have to be valid. They are noumenal; they transcend the bounds of experience. . . . The third postulate, God, must be concluded from the requirement that there must be an objective reality that corresponds to the free moral will. Our freedom for the “ought” and moral law itself require a “highest good” as their true purpose and end. Furthermore, a component of this highest good must be the happiness of those who attain it. Now, he says, there is only one cause of the highest good that is adequate to its concept: God, the free creator and the unconditioned bearer of all creation . . .

Kant insists that the moral law, with its profound effect on conscience (it is itself not the conscience, which may be weak), does not depend for its validity on one’s belief in either immortality or God, but is in and of itself a power in the mind that requires fulfillment. The “categorical imperative” – categorical because it is a pure a priori concept, imperative because it is the moral law – requires that in all instances we act in the conviction that our action follows universal moral law. Kant identifies morality as Christian morality and the highest good as the Christian kingdom of God . . . At the same time he refers again to the task of “negative theology;” which is to reject the illegitimate metaphysical extension of the concepts of God and the highest good “through alleged validity.”

109 Neuhaus 1999, 36.
110 Bechmann 1992, 301. Casanova notes that in general insufficient solutions have been proposed for the problem of moral motivation in PWE. (Casanova 1999, 29, 30, 38.) See also Falk 1999, 79.
111 Komulainen 2000a, 452.
113 CA, 41, 42; Albert 1979, 26–29, 107, 137, 138.
experience” and “super-sensuous intuitions or feelings.” Such experiences fall within the space-
time chain of cause and effect and can therefore only be sources of superstition and obstacles to the
practical use of pure reason . . . Yet God and the highest good, both of which are placed before us through the moral law, are matters of “faith and even pure rational faith” . . . In the preface to the 2nd edition of the Critique of Pure Reason . . . Kant writes: “I have found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith.”[114] [Bold emphasis added.]

William H. Bailey believes that the metaphysically-laden postulates of practical reason have so much importance for Kant’s ethical view that, in the final analysis, Kant may be considered a characteristically Christian existentialist thinker to a significant degree.[115] True, Kant emphasizes the essential idea of an unconditioned God only indirectly, from the requirements established by moral law. But exactly the same can be said of PWE as well: the ultimate intention behind the argument for religion as ‘rational trust’ in God is Küng’s desire to secure the deepest possible sustainability of ethics, which is nevertheless the primary object of focus in PWE.[116]

What I mean may be illuminated by turning from Kant to Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher’s theological intentions generally resemble Küng’s goal of defending classical Christianity in the face of the secularized modernist intellectuals.[117] Hence, it is perhaps natural to consider Schleiermacher one of the great examples of PWE in this sense.[118] Particular religions’ claims to (objective) truth detached from the favored subjective meaning of religion in general also allude to Schleiermacher.[119] For one thing, one might see a tendency in Küng to emphasize the ethical side of religion in a manner reminiscent of Kantianism in general.[120] But it is precisely in this way that PWE may be seen as a Schleiermacherian enterprise. This is primarily because Schleiermacher’s concept of a “feeling of unconditional dependence” as the basis of religion may be interpreted as the concept of summum bonum in

[116] Huovinen (1978b, 141) implies a similar, but far more radical reservation concerning Küng’s earlier period: “Sama ongelma, jonka Küng ilmaisee Kantin filosofiaa arvioidessaan, koskee myös hänen omaa systeemiänsä. Eikö Jumala Küngin ajattelussa redusoidu . . . mielekkyyden ja arvon eksistentiaalisen kokemisen postulaatiksi, subjektiiviseksi ideaksi? Tuleeko Jumalasta ihmisen arvonkaipauksen ja arvonkokemuksen perustelemisen kannalta välttämätön postulaatti, joka ’täytyy edellyttää.’ ”
Kant. The larger point is that if religion is only a guarantee of the practical realization of Kantian morality – as indeed it is in Kant’s system, the reason being the only a priori necessary justifier of morality – then the specific content of a particular religious claim appears not to be so important. Religions are thus evaluated less for their general truth claims, and more for their ability to consolidate the unconditional moral law of reason. In this light it is not surprising that one of Schleiermacher’s most striking early ideas was theology as a purely empirical and descriptive science. In other words, Schleiermacher was reluctant to see theologians take a stand on different doctrinal contents, but wanted them simply to survey all possible variations of doctrines in the world without value statements.¹²¹

This kind of Schleiermacherian thread of viewing theology is penetrated by a neutral attitude toward different religious or ethical claims and convictions. The only possible value statement that comes into question is the ability of religion to foster feelings of unconditional dependence. This view of religion facilitates great respect for radically different faiths. The salient doctrinal tensions of different traditions should ultimately not be seen as puzzling. There is in reality no need to see religious truth claims as true or false or to claim that they speak of something other than what they do. We do not have any information that would make these kinds of assessments possible nor do we need it. What we do need is to allow the radical differences in doctrines to stand and concentrate on the more general feeling of unconditional dependence as the source of unconditional morality. Here for the first time we have arrived at the question of religious exclusivism. Exclusivism appears to be something negative and unnecessary in the Kantian-Schleiermacherian vein because it stresses the mutual differences of historical religions that are considered more or less irrelevant from the moral point of view. This is, of course, an outline of the corollary that PWE is also disposed to emphasize inasmuch as it reflects the same train of thought. Indeed, in general PWE is critical of religious exclusivism, but in a way that leaves Küng’s precise position somewhat open. What can be said here with certainty is that in the event PWE would develop in the direction of what I have called a rational method of consolidating the status of religion in the formation of ethics within a liberalist approach, then the exclusivity not only of particular religions, but also of any other ideologies would appear in a highly negative light – a problem one would prefer to get rid of. Such anti-exclusivism would be an essential starting point for any inter-religious and inter-cultural dialog for global ethics within the rational method of liberalism.

At the same time, however, the claim of the need for a global ethic can be questioned insofar as the claim is derived from the assumption that the project of the Enlightenment has reached an impasse. One could claim that PWE reflects at least as much confidence in the autonomous moral capacities of man as does Enlightenment thought, at least understood in the Kantian sense. Somewhat in contradiction to his claim for the superiority of religion, Küng even appears to acknowledge that religion is not necessary for motivating moral action.

Küng’s positive stance toward the capacities of autonomous reason is perhaps most evident in his invocation of ‘fundamental trust’, while the same type of concept is in turn used by Kant to emphasize his reservations about rational autonomy. For this reason, in the final analysis, the views of Küng and Kant converge significantly in their understanding of individual moral autonomy on the one hand and its insufficiency on the other.

Moreover, it is important that, when it comes to a juncture between Küng and Kant, the emphasis here has been on Schleiermacher rather than on existentialism. This is because Kant himself has an ontological flavor when he speaks of *summum bonum*. Even though *summum bonum* has to do with a connotation broader than moral law, that is, the meaning of life as a whole, and thus lends itself to a certain extent to existentialism, the Kantian *summum bonum* still has some elements that are downplayed within the major part of existentialist tradition. The non-existential element of particular interest here is that, for Kant, *summum bonum* is not expected to do away with subject–object dualism. For Kant, *summum bonum* is related to an ontological entity (a transcendent God) as the final cause: “there is only one cause of the highest good that is adequate to its concept: God, the free creator and the unconditioned bearer of all creation.”

Likewise, Schleiermacher emphasizes the first part of the subject–object dichotomy by focusing on the subjective feeling of the unconditional, meaning arguably, God. There remains the sense that subject and object are ontologically separate things. This basic idea is endorsed by Küng insofar as he is willing to speak of God ontologically as the opposite side of a human being. It is nevertheless not clear that Küng does this separation – and perhaps he should not, in view of different religious traditions, not all of which emphasize the ontological dimension of “God” so unequivocally.

Hence, we now turn to an alternative interpretation of PWE’s argument on behalf of religion that draws on the critique of Kantian dualism and ontology and still remains generally within the liberal tradition. What makes this alternative line of argument a positive method is its critique of Kantian autonomy as too abstract to work in practice. This Kant critique reflects the positive potential of Hegel. However, Hegel still remains deep in the framework of rationalism at other points, and it is indeed worth considering him as one step further along toward a positive method rather than as a complete rupture with Kant. The role of experience will substantially increase in the two following figures, namely, Heidegger and Jaspers, and their respective critiques of rationalist universalism complete the task of what is here called the positive method.

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122 Huovinen 1978b, 141.

1.3. The Positive method: From Hegel to Heidegger to Jaspers

The object of focus above, namely, PWE’s relationship to Kantian ethics, showed major possible affinities. It was also shown that it is not easy for Küng to prove the deficiency of Kantian ethics. But there is another way to interpret Küng’s critique of Kantian ethics, which is clearly more promising, namely, through Hegelian critique. Below, I will demonstrate that there are strong reasons to steer PWE away from articulating global ethics in the Kantian manner precisely because of this classical Hegelian critique. I will revisit the Hegelian critique in the final chapter of the first part of this study (The Content of Global Ethics). Here one need only consider this critique in the context of a plausible articulation of religion’s role in the formation of ethics before proceeding to more emphatically societal questions.

It is possible to pinpoint a continuous tradition from Hegel to existentialism, which extends the question of ethics further than Kant had done and which views Kantianism as rather too reductionist. What is crucial in this tradition is that not only the motivation, but also the content of ethics is found only by going beyond moral law itself to the question of how to interpret life as a whole. For this reason such a tradition can also be called deductive line of thought. “Deductive” here does not refer to starting from some more extensive level than ethics, but rather to finding answers to ethical problems through some “superior” or more comprehensive overall level. Ethics is seen as only part and parcel of this more fundamental project and not the other way around. To put in a nutshell, metaphysics is prior to ethics. This is at variance with what was said above of Kant and early Schleiermacher.

What is then is the “content” of Kantian ethics in the first place? For Hegel this is exactly the problem, because in fact Kantian ethics has no particular content. In the previous section the analysis of Kantian ethics remained at the level of principle. That is, the focal question was from where to derive the concrete principles of ethics according to Kant. The answer, in the final analysis, was not congruent with Küng’s claim, namely, that the human being is the center and source of ethics in Kant. This having been said, it is a different question to ask for the content of the principles thus derived. For Kant, this latter question leads to the two formulations of the categorical imperative. Rationally feasible ethics will necessarily follow the rules of action so that, first, the principles of a considered action could be accepted as a general rule by anyone and, second, any human being is regarded as an end in itself and not only as means. Kant meant these two formulations to explain each other and in this sense to be synonymous. What this kind of ethics means, more concretely, is that in fact there is no particular or substantive content for ethics, but only a so-called pure formal procedure, in which the totally free choice of individuals is prevented from restricting the equally free choice of others.124

Kantian formal procedure ultimately refrains from giving guidance to substantive questions related to how one should lead one’s life as a whole, and yet it is not easy to remove the

124 Kolb 1986, 17.
ethical flavor behind this all-too-human and everyday question as a pre-requisite for action. To be sure, Kantianism amounts to nothing more than that individual human choice is the center and source of any substantive ethical conviction or way of life. Consequently, with respect to the content of Kantian ethics, PWE is indeed right in imputing anthropocentrism to Kantian morality. Nonetheless, as is evident from the previous section, the problem of this kind of anthropocentrism is not so much its lack of unconditional basis beyond human contingency, as Küng seems to assume.

The ultimate problem with Kantian voluntarism becomes evident in Hegel’s classical critique of Kant. According to Hegel, a Kantian society of pure form and procedure, which Hegel calls ‘civil society’, leads to separation of moral subjects from any personal ends in a way that the self becomes, as it were, empty. This means that the self has no antecedent criterion for choosing the content of its ends in different spheres of life and of life in general. But when the self and its choice is its own criterion, the self is inevitably exposed to arbitrariness instead of freedom, as David Kolb explains Hegel’s point of criticism:

The dialectical twist remains that such an individual in such a posture really lives at the mercy of his impulses and whims, the most immediate and least thoughtful content for life.

The question remains whether this is not a price we must pay for freedom. Hegel argues that in trying to relate to ourselves and others as pure and free we are tied to contingent content all the more firmly. True self-determination has not been fully achieved. Civil society illustrates this dialectic but masks it by the efficient satisfaction of needs. Though in fact the member of civil society never identifies himself with any of his needs and impulses, his life is nonetheless ruled by them. He has nothing beyond them to give content to his life. The emptiness of his freedom and his domination by impulse are among the roots of the endless drive for more which infects every aspect of civil society.

It is paradoxical that individual autonomy, which was intended to be the Archimedean point of Kantian ethics, as shown in the previous section, is dismantled by the more concrete and critical account of Kantian ethics. Understood in this particular sense, Küng would in fact seem to be right when earlier he not only insisted that pure (practical) reason is easily subordinated to, even enslaved by, selfish interests, but also introduced Freud’s perplexity over the lack of any basis for his past moral decisions. In a Hegelian account all this is related to the self-refuting nature of freedom in modern civil society. Kolb resumes:

Because of the formal nature of the structures of mutual recognition in civil society, each self can distinguish his or her free choice from the particular content of his or her contingent desires, needs, and satisfactions. This separation liberates the individual from immediate identification with particular social roles. Yet in producing this liberation, civil society also produces a series of economic, psychological, and cultural harms that stem from the same separation. . . .

Paradoxically, the problem Hegel sees with the free citizen of civil society, who has been liberated from tradition, is that he is not free enough. He is still beholden to the contingent content of his desires and the external fate generated by the decisions of others on the market. He needs objective content to give him a rationally valid yet free way of life.

The way Hegel intends to solve the problem of the modern empty self is found in his peculiar general account of logic. Civil society’s predicament is related to modern thinking, which is

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125 Kolb 1986, 35, 36.
126 Kolb 1986, 97.
embodied in Kant’s philosophy in a much a broader sense than only within the framework of ethics. Hegel wants to bring Kant’s transcendental philosophy to its culmination by purifying it of its inappropriate ontological remnants. The paradox of Kant was that, although he saw that humans have access only to things as they appear though transcendental structures of thought (das Ding für uns), he nevertheless assumed that things in themselves (das Ding an sich) were somehow the causes of these subjective appearances. How can one claim the existence of objective reality when all that is at hand is subjective appearance?\textsuperscript{127}

Hegel wants to turn the focus wholly on the categories of thought without identifying them either as those belonging to subject or as those belonging to object, but showing instead that the very dichotomy proves to be misguided when the rational analysis of these transcendental structures is taken to the extreme. The strength of transcendental analysis is precisely that it is able to solve the chief problems of modernism by doing away with Cartesian–Humean as well as voluntaristic puzzles concerning the mutual relation of subject and object. This is done without resorting to traditional ontological metaphysics and metaphysically supported collectivist ethics from which modernism, according to Hegel, has rightly relieved us by emphasizing the importance of individual human “insight” as opposed to externally imposed authorities and related ideological manipulation. This amounts to Kolb’s claim that Hegel operates within the sphere of epistemology even more strictly than Kant, despite the fact that the usual reading of Hegel considers him to endorse some kind of ontological metaphysics of a large self-conscious entity akin to Spinoza. Hegel’s metaphysics is by nature transcendental and not ontological.\textsuperscript{128}

Without going into details, the method by which Hegel arrives at this conclusion reflects his overall attempt to conclude all thinking in an absolute ‘form of spirit’. Absolute spirit is not to be understood in an ontological sense – be it a self-conscious subject of the world or any other large entity – but rather as a very immanent, even finite, structure of thinking that has nonetheless reached its final conclusion so that everything in human thought is put in its place, and all relevant questions of life are solved rationally within the structures of that thought. The method by which all this transparency of thought is gained is the alternate rhythm of division and combination so long as the final combination of the matter in question is realized and in light of which all previous articulations of the question are seen as insufficient.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{127} Wilson 2007, 29.

\textsuperscript{128} Kolb 1986, 40–46. Kolb 1986, 78: “Hegel both applauds and criticizes Kant’s efforts at transcendental deduction… Kant glimpsed the absolute form but backed away from it to rest in a separation of form from content made within a story about subjectivity and things in themselves. His application of transcendental method remained within the framework of the subject-object relation. But though the subject-object relation is among the categories structuring pure thought, it is only one of many and not the highest or most encompassing. This theme informs Hegel’s varied attacks on Kant’s philosophy.”

\textsuperscript{129} Kolb 1986, 38–56.
In the case of ethics and society Hegel’s argumentative process of *Aufhebung zum Absolute* concerns first and foremost two contrary traditions, Aristotle’s and Kant’s. In ancient Greece prevailing customs were so conformist that the individual subject was submerged in or hidden under tradition and community. The life of an individual was completely defined by her or his place in the organism of the community; indeed the condition for individual existence was to have a previously determined place in the whole and the unimaginable person who would not abide by the rules thus derived was considered an out-cast by definition, even non-human. The good thing was that there was no difficulty in finding a basis for moral action, because the criteria for such were already defined by the overall structure of the community. However, the negative side of ancient culture was that individual freedom was downplayed. The definitive division of concepts emerged during the Enlightenment and was articulated philosophically in Kant’s philosophy. The Enlightenment recognized that the individual is essentially different from the community. For Hegel this was a major development and reflected the progressive movement of the spirit. But the movement did not and could not stop there, as the problem of the empty self emerged as the negative symptom of the Enlightenment and threatened to refute the freedom now discovered. In Hegel’s view, the predicament depicted above as a condition of civil society enables the post-Kantian world to rise to the next and final stage of development, that is, the novel synthesis of antique communitarian determinism and modern individualist voluntarism by invoking of the concept of the ‘state’.\textsuperscript{130} Explains Kolb:

Hegel saw Kant as providing the clue to a solution though Kant himself remained tied to separations of form from content . . . Still, Kant had seen that objective content could be found by an analysis of the conditions of freedom. In Kant’s theory of knowledge not just any sequence of perceptions will qualify as perceptions of an independent object; there are rules derived from an analysis of the nature of experience that allow one to distinguish objective content. What is “objective” in this sense is the nonarbitrary, not-up-to-me, even if it can only exist through me. In Kant’s practical philosophy, not just any sequence of actions will qualify as a free decision. Rules derived from an analysis of the nature of freedom allow one to distinguish.

Hegel mixes Kantian and Aristotelian themes. The customs we need to give content to our lives resemble Aristotle’s taken-for-granted social background and its virtues that describe what kind of persons we should be. But Hegel does not take the customs directly from any particular society. He tries to find a structure of customs implied by the concept of freedom itself. Kant tried something similar, but he remained bound to dualities that undermined his attempt. Hegel sets out to find a deeper structure within freedom, what he will call the “absolute form” of freedom as opposed to the “abstract form” of freedom – the structure found in Kant’s analysis and embodied in civil society. The absolute form of freedom is more complex than the two stages of withdrawal and self-determination so far discussed. When the conditions for the existence of this fuller notion of freedom are studied, the structure of the state will appear. The state is the fuller community within which civil society has its concrete existence and is given rational limits.

Thus the task of finding customs that will give content to modern individuality without canceling its freedom turns out to be the process described in Hegel’s . . . arguments against the ultimacy of civil society.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{130} Kolb 1986, 65–76.

\textsuperscript{131} Kolb 1986, 36, 37.
The state that Hegel has in mind has two features that restrict the voluntarism found in Kantian account of civil society. First, there is no infinite number of options to be chosen by individuals; rather the state, residing above civil society, regulates the concrete availability of choices with an eye on the ultimate telos of the state in question; different ways of life should contribute to the substantive content of that overall telos. Second, in addition to the state there are also smaller-scale social units embodying particular kinds of ends under which all individual citizens are organized instead of directly under the state. These groups contain the first-order substantive ends for individuals, so that individuals are defined through these communal ends instead of through their infinitely free personal choices. Both of these modifications are restrictions from the perspective of civil society, but it is important to understand that they are not tantamount to ancient anti-individualism. That is because of two additional premises: first, the social groupings under the state are freely joined, even created by individuals themselves, according to their personal preferences; this is the reason that there are many groupings with mutually different ends; second, the state attempts to reflect these preferences as far as possible when formulating its telos by constructing a substantive unity in difference. Nevertheless, there remains the following, roughly stated reservation besides the fact that there is not an infinite number of real ends from which to choose: after adopting a certain societal group with a particular end, the individual is expected to internalize the identity flowing from that end so that he is bound by it through life from then on to the extent that he is not to be viewed as a completely autonomous self.\(^{132}\)

That this is still freedom is confirmed by the fact that there is no single end for an individual to choose; that the model does not collapse back onto the idea of the empty self is confirmed by the fact that there is not an infinite number of options to choose from by the individual living in a particular state, either at the level of choosing the identity group or at the level of leading one’s life ruled by that particular group. That both claims appear credible is still not sufficient in order to justify the Hegelian societal alternative over the Kantian because, from the point of view of the thinking of civil society, Hegel’s undeniable restriction of individual freedom is at least as serious a deficiency as is the problem of the empty self. Indeed, the method of Hegel’s logic is not only to present a synthesis, but always to show that the synthesis follows rationally and necessarily from the former stage of the logical sequence in question. Hence, in the case of political theory, Hegel intends to show historically that his conception of the state emerges naturally from the dynamics of civil society itself. In *Philosophy of Right* Hegel writes: “The philosophic proof of the concept of the state is this development of ethical life from its immediate phase through civil society, the phase of division, to the state, which then reveals itself as the true ground of these phases. A proof in philosophical science can only be a development of this kind.”\(^{133}\)


According to Hegel, many elements confirming the necessity of the state arise from the development of civil society itself. The preliminary ones are the very restrictions that a person faces even living in a voluntaristic society. There are external hindrances to unlimited pursuit of personal desires on behalf both of other individuals’ interests and of partly uncontrolled market forces. Together these hindrances call for government regulation, even in a civil society, and thus introduce the idea of society as a whole and as a concrete community instead of merely a formal platform of individual undertakings. In the functioning of a civil society, there are also psychological effects that consolidate the feeling of togetherness, such as the general inevitability of individual labor on the one hand and interaction with other citizens on the other. One remarkable rationale for the state is that civil society comes to realize the need for regulation of contingencies of the free market in order to prevent overweening disparities of wealth and other harms that affect the opportunities of citizens to participate in the free exchange. This amounts to subordinating economy to politics. The final tendencies that highlight the rational emergence of the state from civil society relate to the voluntary groupings of individuals. The pursuit of personal ends naturally leads to the search for and the construction of identity groups by citizens with similar interests. Individuals usually pursue their ends through and within groups that have internal dynamics regulating individual actions. The identity dynamics is furthermore also related to politically significant interest groups, which Hegel calls corporations, through and with the help of which citizens set out to enhance and protect their good within the society. The highest modes of this dynamic from the perspective of the state are those groups that function as the legislative subjects within the state. These groups, called “estates” in Hegel’s terminology, work for the common good of the state, while embodying more particular common goods that guide their members’ lives. Thus they would flesh out the whole idea of free but not empty selves whereby individuals strive for their own personal interests and particular good and by that very striving promote the common good of the state.\footnote{Kolb 1986, 105–110.}

The points just covered show how Hegel thinks that civil society, posited as distinct from older forms of community, it develops toward positing the social whole within which civil society exists. Civil society educates its members to a level of conscious universality, and it develops the internal divisions that will provide the rational structure of the state.\footnote{Kolb 1986, 109.}

Despite the education and principal publicity of the decisions made in and by the state through its legislative bodies representing individual citizens, there remains a gap between the actual rationality of the state and an authentic internalization of this rationality by ordinary people. This is why Hegel invokes religion and patriotism to foster citizens’ ultimate loyalty to the state; through their faith in the religion that the state endorses, people trust in the state itself since, for Hegel, the role of religion is above all to confirm the authority of the state by
means other than reason, that is, by faith.\footnote{Kolb 1986, 114.} This idea of religion would perhaps be reminiscent of what PWE calls ‘reasonable trust’ and religion as the ultimate source of moral commitment. Nevertheless, Küng obviously does not, like Hegel, believe that the rationality of the commitment (to the common good of the state) would be perfectly transparent in principle and that faith would be only a kind of surrogate for this full insight for ordinary people who do not have access to rational enquiry.

But while for Küng faith is more than merely a secondary surrogate for reason, for Hegel it should actually be less than that. Ultimately, this takes us to the major criticism of Hegel himself. Indeed, in Hegel’s own system there should be a clear means for every citizen to see that her own preferences and choices are not curtailed by the state, either in principle or in fact, and that citizens are really willing the common good of the state in willing their own particular good. If this is not realized rationally but only trusted in, then the situation is the same as in traditional society in ancient Greece: the value of the individual and of personal “insight” is downplayed by the collective community. The practical need to call for state-religion as a surrogate for the rational justification of the state reveals a significant deficiency in Hegelian rationalism from the perspective of individual citizens. Behind this there lies an even deeper problem, namely, that there is in fact no sufficient basis for claiming that the dynamics of civil society will inevitably come to endorse the principles of the Hegelian state without external imposition from the outside.\footnote{Kolb 1986, 113–115.}

... the transition between civil society and state is supposed to come about through the two faced-institutions, the corporations and estates, which arise freely in civil society yet express the rational structure of the state. But what kind of connection do they provide? It is plausible to see civil society generating groupings of some kind, but do they develop themselves into the elements of the state? Manfred Riedel (1970) has argued that these groups do not fulfill the role Hegel assigns to them. They develop in terms of civil society and its aggregate good, not the state and its common good. While it is true that the state needs these groupings in order to actualize its structure, the dependence is not mutual. The groups do not need the state’s authorization in order to be what they are within civil society. Nor do they have of themselves any tendency to move to that authorized status. The state’s enfolding of these groups seems to respond to the state’s needs, not civil society’s. It may be true that viewed from outside with an eye to totality and harmony, the state “should” be there to contain the excess of civil society and its harmful effects on human identity. But these are not problems from within civil society. They are simply effects. It is not easy to show that civil society fails by its own standards in any way that demands the transition to the state. Civil society succeeds: it allows the sway of particular interests, it generates wealth, it protects freedom. To ask more is to place external demands upon it.\footnote{Kolb 1986, 112.}

In other words, there is no ultimate rationality upon which the state is based, even in principle. This devastating notion brings us to the even more general critical point with respect to Hegel’s enterprise. The question is whether Hegel can show that the movement of the spirit, in the way he understands it as the logical sequences of thesis–antithesis–synthesis, is in fact to be universally evident to provide an absolute content of thought so that the transcendental
project started by Kant is taken to its definitive and final culmination. This requires us to scrutinize the details of each logical sequence and see whether it is possible to perform every relevant division and re-combination in a way that permanently and universally settles the matter. We have already seen that this is not the case with ethics and society. As to the other kinds of logical sequences that Hegel deals with carefully, it may be that he can demonstrate the rational plausibility of the proposed logical movement more effectively. However, without going into details, Kolb aptly notes that in many fields of inquiry Hegel has in fact introduced two mutually irreconcilable sequences, each of which ends up in a final rational conclusion.\textsuperscript{139} This suggests that there is actually more than one rationality and, consequently, even to succeed in showing that within one such overall rationality there is only one logical conclusion does not make this conclusion absolute, that is, definitive, from the perspective of other, unrelated rationalities. One type of logical sequence cannot be made transparently necessary to others embracing other kinds of comprehensive understandings. In the final analysis this is also the problem with Hegel’s argument for the state. There appears to be no substantial continuation between the Kantian culture of civil society and the Hegelian culture of state such that one could be universally shown to be more feasible than the other. Reason does not arrive at an absolute and universal conclusion. While this critique of Hegel is indeed in line with the spirit of PWE, the originally presented Hegelian proposal on the problem of the empty self still seems worth considering both in general and in light of the claims of PWE in particular.

We have thus arrived at two notions concerning Hegel’s alternative both of which are significant for the analysis in this first part of the study. First, Hegel’s critique of the empty self and its problems within a Kantian type of procedural liberalism cannot easily be defeated; meanwhile, Hegel’s own alternative is similarly susceptible to Kantian critique. There seems to be no clear way to settle this controversy. This preliminary notion will lay the foundations for a more detailed juxtaposition of the Kantian and Hegelian political views in the third and final chapter of this first part in the context of the contemporary discussion. For now I will examine more closely the question of rationality versus faith as the basis for ethics.

Here it is worth to emphasizing the second notion we have arrived at, that is, the problem of many rationalities. Hegel cannot show that there is only one logical sequence or that there is an absolute way to articulate the content of metaphysics in general and of ethics in particular. How is one to solve this more general problem in order to offer a plausible alternative not only to the Kantian empty self, but also to Hegelian quasi-absolutism? This is not only the question for PWE, but also for the whole discussion of global ethics today. I will first search for an answer in recent history before proceeding to the more contemporary discussion.

Historically seen, the needed revision of Hegel in this last sense concerning the problem of absolute rationality is provided by Martin Heidegger. Above all, Heidegger is interested in the finitude of the human condition. Humans cannot transcend the particular situation they

\textsuperscript{139} Kolb 1986, 81–84.
inhabit by means of objective reason, nor is there any other way to reach the absolute from within their finite condition. Every culture and every epoch in history is essentially bound by a particular understanding of how the world is. This basic hermeneutic orientation concerns all things with which we may occupy ourselves in our dealings with reality. Significantly, reality is preconceptually given to us, that is, we cannot ultimately choose how we understand reality; our basic horizon of orientation is already there because we inhabit a particular epoch in history. Nor can we change this horizon ourselves. Change is brought about independently by history and by time. This happens, however, in a way that, while revealing a novel horizon for our understanding of the world, time also encloses us with a new understanding, so that we cannot escape from it and return to our former orientation.\textsuperscript{140}

The problem for Heidegger is that modern thinking as well as philosophy naturally blinds us to this deeper preconceptual understanding in assuming that we ourselves can compare different cultural understandings at least sufficiently in order to choose between them. In reality our choices are always guided by the hermeneutic horizon imposed by time. This event of giving meaning to the whole is at once both an opening and a closing: along with it there emerges a “clearance” in a world otherwise devoid of meaning, while simultaneously this very clearance prevents us from reaching other horizons.\textsuperscript{141}

It is important that the phenomenology of Heidegger runs counter to both Hegelian metaphysics and the antimetaphysics of modern voluntarism of which Heidegger takes Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy to be the final embodiment. Hegel’s problem is that he does not realize that he himself is operating within the framework of one particular understanding of reality, which cannot be transcended by rational analysis; at most his logical enquiry can yield rational, but not absolute or universal, conclusions.\textsuperscript{142} At the same time Heidegger sets out to complete Hegel’s critique of modern individuality by resorting to his overall phenomenological argument. According to Heidegger, Kantian voluntarism has culminated in Nietzsche’s conception of will to power. In the culture of modernity the preconceptual horizon open to understanding is that in which there are only individuals who use things and even other humans for their own purposes. Because the ungrounded metaphysical remnants of the Enlightenment, such as objective morality, are totally relativized, there is ultimately no restriction whatsoever on the freedom of will or the empty self that Hegel had pointed out. In this way the Enlightenment criticism of metaphysics has reached its natural conclusion. What Heidegger imputes to Hegel’s metaphysics he also imputes to the anti-metaphysics of extreme voluntarism: whereas a voluntarist naturally takes itself to be the last word in historical development from the bonds of tradition and the tyranny of authority to the freedom of the individual, he does not realize that his very voluntarism is not itself a result of free will but instead a so-

\textsuperscript{140} Kolb 1986, 131–137.

\textsuperscript{141} Kolb 1986, 129, 166–169.

\textsuperscript{142} Kolb 1986, 213–222.
vereign “gift” of history. This makes voluntarism finite in the sense that it is not the last word, but in line with all the other finite epochs of history. In the final analysis, the subject does not create its world in any substantial sense, but is already thrown into the world of unchosen meaning. This also means that there is no such thing as the empty self, even in the culture of the empty self; there is no such thing as the self prior to the ultimate horizon of meaning that enables one to think about the concept of self in a certain, finite way.\textsuperscript{143}

Heidegger’s whole project is about the ability of phenomenology to “step back” from the ordinary talk of “what is” to the preconditions of that kind of talk; from general claims on existence to the particular ways of understanding that enable to interpret what is meant by that something “is” something.\textsuperscript{144} Normally, the reality is taken as a self-evident and neutral thing. This is what Heidegger relates to the term ‘being’ (\textit{das Seiendes}) as distinct from ‘Being’ (\textit{das Sein}), which has to do with the meta-question of how in fact reality is understood as a whole before any and above any conflicts in interpretation at the conceptual level.\textsuperscript{145} Only when one is able to take the phenomenological “step back” does one see that ‘Being’ enables ‘being’ in a way that all metaphysics (‘being’) is anything but universal or absolute. This is because there is no “pure” ‘Being’ that is not “incarnate” in some particular ‘being’. In this way, which Kolb calls a propriative event, Heidegger intends to abolish the chimera of metaphysics and absolute meaning:

\begin{quote}
We rest on the abyss of finite openness. There is no “why” to what we have been granted, and no escape from groundlessness. Except this: we are aware of our participation in the propriative event. This awareness goes beyond the space opened up for us, but it reaches no foundation for self-certainty, only the opening of that space and the history of other ungrounded openings. We remain within our finitude and mortality.\textsuperscript{146}
\end{quote}

At the same time, however, the liberating value we may trace in Heideggerian phenomenology is that it enables us to complete the transcendental philosophy of Kant and Hegel. What makes Heidegger’s a transcendental philosophy is, first, that the self does not exist prior to ‘Being’, which enables the self as its transcendental condition of ‘being-in-the-world’, and, second, that ‘Being’ does not exist prior to the self either. As to the first aspect, Heidegger is a transcendental thinker, at least in a more general sense, in that he aspires to the necessary conditions for “what allows ordinary life, experience, propositions, and truth to take place.”\textsuperscript{147}

If the second prerequisite was not true, then one would have to imagine ‘Being’ as an entity

\textsuperscript{143} Kolb 1986, 137–157.

\textsuperscript{144} Kolb 1986, 174.

\textsuperscript{145} Wilson 2007, 259, 260; Kolb 1986, 129.

\textsuperscript{146} Kolb 1986, 181.

\textsuperscript{147} Kolb 1986, 173.
with separate existence prior to the existence of a human person.\textsuperscript{148} This would bring us back to pre-modern ontological metaphysics, which transcendental philosophy opposes.

Heidegger may be treated as a transcendental philosopher in the sense that he considers the human person to be the only actualization of ‘Being’. This is why his phenomenology is not only transcendental, but also existential: Heidegger’s preoccupation with ‘Being’ reflects his focus on ultimate meaning as a prerequisite of human existence – contrary to non-human existence – and not of ‘Being’ as the absolute ontological ground of reality. Both aspects of Heidegger’s transcendentalism point to the basis of all history in the particular “revelations of Being” restricted to the context of human existence through and within different times; it is in fact groundlessness that emerges, but that groundlessness is nevertheless the ground because it provides an unconditional overall view that transcends our normal particularity.\textsuperscript{149}

Even though talk of the unconditional in this context would no doubt be against the general spirit of Heideggerian philosophy of radical finitude, there is indeed something absolute in the way Heidegger talks about ‘Being’. Moreover, he sees in the “experience of unconcealment as clearing” – referring roughly to the same thing as the experience of ‘Being’ – no less than a degree of eschatological liberation of the essential nature of human beings and the world. Consider, for example, Kolb’s illustration of “thinking the unthought” in Heidegger:

\begin{quote}
In Heidegger’s later writings the term thinking (Denken) places philosophy for naming the task of liberating and radicalizing man's fundamental transcendence and his appropriation into the finite opening of the space where man stands with things. This thinking is what must come about if modernity is to be overcome in whatever sense this is possible.

In this thinking, which is neither science nor philosophy as traditionally understood as a search for certitude, foundations, and ultimate unities, we can experience the clearing that lies behind the Western world and our current situation.

“Our concern is to experience unconcealment as clearing. That is what is unthought in what is thought in the whole history of thought. In Hegel, the need consisted in the satisfaction of thought. For us, on the contrary, the plight of what is unthought in what is thought reigns” (Heraclitus Seminar 259/162)

“Ecstatic inherence in the openness of the locale (Ortschaft) of being is the essence of thinking.” (Nietzsche 2:358/4:218)

We are urged to liberate and to be fully what makes us human in the first place. We are to become what we are.\textsuperscript{150}
\end{quote}

The reason Heidegger believes that the liberating aspect of ‘Being’ has gone unnoticed through previous epochs in history is that ‘Being’ itself characteristically withdraws from any analysis. This is because it is not an entity in itself. It enables one to “see in the darkness” by giving the necessary deep meaning to the world, but it does not itself belong to the world of meaning as one of its parts. It is not a thing to be understood, but an event that has already happened before any understanding takes place. This idea of the “silence” or “withdrawal” is

\textsuperscript{148} Kolb 1986, 162.

\textsuperscript{149} Kolb 1986, 172–177.

\textsuperscript{150} Kolb 1986, 181.
an essential character of ‘Being’,\textsuperscript{151} but it appears to introduce a somewhat paradoxical element into Heidegger’s talk about the liberating role of his philosophy: “our experience of being already involved in the propriative event [or ‘Being’] is an experience of finitude.”\textsuperscript{152}

It seems that while PWE could accept the Heideggerian relativization of Hegel’s rationalism, no doubt there is still more to its corollaries as devised by Küng than the extreme finitude and immanence to which Heidegger confines himself. And indeed, it is possible to endorse the unconditional against finitude more positively than Heidegger seems ready to do and still remain within the same general framework of transcendental philosophy. Paradoxically enough, this is enabled first by doing away with the final traces of unconditionality remaining even in Heidegger. It is worth turning to a colleague of Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, who will provide a critical existentialist alternative to Heidegger, which is also more congenial with the rendering of PWE than Heidegger’s. Moreover, both PWE and Jaspers recognize that there is an ethical and political price to pay in emphasizing groundlessness at the cost of the absolute and unconditional, as Heidegger does. Let me introduce the transition from Heidegger to Jaspers by stating the central problem in Heidegger.

Even though Heidegger means that ‘Being’ cannot be treated separately from its particular “incarnations” in ‘beings’, Heidegger himself seems to make that separation in his philosophy. One could rejoin that Heidegger is making the distinction only allusively, but this does not mean that ‘Being’ could be analyzed more systematically; rather the question is about wondering, giving a name to an event that is ultimately beyond our grasp.\textsuperscript{153} Yet the ultimate problem here seems to be that Heidegger is making a conceptual distinction between ‘Being’ and ‘being’, while according to his general account, concepts are always finite embodiments of pre-conceptual ‘Being’. Still, Heidegger could insist that it would be more to the point to stick to the possibility of transcending ‘being’ through the \textit{experience} of ‘Being’ in anxiety.\textsuperscript{154} Yet it is difficult to see why any human experience, including the experience of ‘Being’, would not be equally guided by complete finiteness or, to say the least, how any \textit{articulation} of that experience should be taken as definitive. Indeed, even though the “image of clearing offers less temptation to imagine that there is a total clearing to be performed. There is no totality, no total view, no first or last word,”\textsuperscript{155} one cannot avoid the impression of a total view in Heidegger’s account of ‘Being’ and of the last word in his account of finitude. But why would Heidegger’s conceptual distinction of ‘Being’ and ‘being’ be the last word or display the total view of human finitude?

\textsuperscript{151} Kolb 1986, 163–166, 182.

\textsuperscript{152} Kolb 1986, 167.

\textsuperscript{153} Kolb 1986, 164, 165.

\textsuperscript{154} Wilson 2007, 259.

\textsuperscript{155} Kolb 1986, 167.
In light of these considerations it would be more to the point to think of faith in ‘Being’ in the sense that it is not possible to articulate the object of faith in any definitive manner because of the finitude of human language and thinking. This suggests, however, that what makes an articulation of ‘Being’ relevant is not the use of certain concepts, such as ‘Being’–‘being’ distinction, but the more general appeal to unconditionality or definitiveness. Yet if this last suggestion is true then how is Heidegger able to defend his way of talking about ‘Being’ against other ways of talking about deeply definitive concepts? And how is he able to claim that he alone is speaking about ‘Being’ while previous epochs in history have only tried to speak about ‘being’? While no culture has succeeded in articulating ‘Being’ as such, why is it not possible that all previous cultures have tried to do it in the same unsuccessful way as Heidegger? This suggestive question puts Heidegger’s own philosophy in line with other cultures and in the same way as he himself intended to do to Hegel and extreme voluntarism.156

The above said brings us to the explicit contribution of Jaspers with respect to the positive method. Jaspers in his later years names the inevitable search for ground as the operation of reason against the dismemberment of ‘Being’, thus anticipating a threat that would eventually emerge in mature existentialist thought after the time of Jaspers. Leonard H. Ehrlich explains Jaspersian concept of reason:

We may see the multiplicity of modes, be able to distinguish them, find incompatibilities within them, encounter strangeness, separation, hostility, polemic, and yet seek the ground of that oneness with reference to which all that is real obtains significance and justification in view of what is other than itself. The living manifestation of this impulse toward oneness Jaspers calls reason. Reason seeks to transcend what from any one aspectual standpoint is strange, adventitious, extraneous, or enigmatic. It does not dissolve distinctions, alternatives and disfunctions by viewing them from a supposedly Archimedean point. Rather, it is the force whereby distinctions are recognized as such, and whereby through such recognition realities which are mutually delimited are brought at least into a mutual concern in view of that oneness wherein ultimately all is cradled. Reason seeks order where there is a scattering, a lack of relatedness. It acknowledges relations and achieved unifications, but transcends these in realizing their limitations and their failures, and persists in its yearning for ultimate oneness. Therefore, it does not conceive this oneness to be a oneness among one-nesses; its task is the oneness of fulfilled orderliness.157

In this account the transcendentalist aim for finality is fully articulated in Jaspers’s particular understanding of reason. At the same time, however, Jaspers articulates the other aspect of the transcendental method defined earlier in a general sense. Ehrlich resumes on Jaspers’s concept of reason:

The method of reason is transcending thought. The ultimate intention of the transcendental method is the one Being which encompasses all diremption into subject and object. This Being, however, cannot be thought. As thinkable, it would again be merely an object among objects, and an object for a subject. It can be approached in thought only by means of transcending thought, only by means of determinate thought which is its symbol for what cannot be determinate.158

156 Ehrlich 1993.
157 Ehrlich 1975, 126, 127.
158 Ehrlich 1975, 127.
In other words, Jaspers is after the same thing as Hegel and Heidegger in their transcendentalist versions: the dismantling of the subject-object dichotomy to the utmost. The promise of transcendental philosophy from Kant to Hegel to Heidegger is that the Cartesian-Humean deadlocks, as well as the modernist ethical deadlocks over the dichotomy of subject and object can be dissolved by placing the dichotomy itself in an ultimate context, which is displayed as the pre-condition of these dichotomies and, through that, by showing that the dichotomy is not the last word. This means first and foremost that the transcendental ground itself cannot be characterized in either objective or subjective terms. But, in addition, and completely in contrast to Hegel and to a greater extent than for Heidegger, for Jaspers this also means that one cannot grasp ‘Being’ within the sphere of thought – or, by analogy, within any finite operations in time. That the task of reason is transcendent amounts, among other things, to the fact that “Reason as reason in time, i.e., as carried by Existenz, seeks to transcend time, for it views temporality too restrictive for the achievement of unity, and yet seeks to manifest itself in time, for time is the conditio sine qua non of Existenz.”¹⁵⁹

The creative tension flowing from the two mentioned aspects, reason as seeking ultimate ground and human existence as bound by time and finitude without ground, in a way encapsulates all the important elements in Jaspers’s overall thought. On this basis it is possible to consider those questions to which Jaspers makes an essential contribution and which moreover appear to have considerable affinities with the spirit of PWE.

The aspiration to ultimate oneness described above can in fact be identified with Heidegger’s account of ‘groundless ground’, the result of his transcendental quest for “final theory.” Kolb identifies the point in Heidegger:

We rest on the abyss of finite openness. There is no “why” to what we have been granted, and no escape from groundlessness. Except this: we are aware of our participation in the propriative event. This awareness goes beyond the space opened up for us, but it reaches no foundation for self-certainty, only the opening of that space and the history of other ungrounded openings. We remain within our finitude and mortality.¹⁶₀

Heidegger contends that the liberating function of his theory is the ‘letting be of Being’ in the finitudes of human existence; in other words, the eschatological promise of “thinking the unthought” is ultimately the thorough acceptance of one’s own finite condition. Although it is a very peculiar type of promise or liberation, because it recognizes the ultimate oneness precisely in radical fragmentation, all the same, for Heidegger, it is the grasp of oneness as a total view that liberates. Jaspers’s inflection on this is that this type of totality is attained not only through ‘thinking the unthought’, but also through thinking the unthinkable. This means that the ideas offered by Heidegger and other transcendental thinkers cannot have a final status, not even as non-analytical intimations of ‘Being’. Paradoxically – remaining in the sphere of thinking – they cannot help but reach the oneness through radical multiplicity. This is an import-

¹⁵⁹ Ehrlich 1975, 127.

dispensable part of philosophy’s critical task, but in the final analysis such “formal transced-
ing” by thinking is not sufficient transcending with regard to finitude. At most it must point
toward a more profound dimension, which is not thinking, but rather is an existential relation
to transcendence as unconditional oneness through personal commitment. It is precisely be-
cause this transcendence cannot be though or even experienced in an immediate sense that it
is to be approached solely by faith.161

The significance of this dimension of faith is derived from the fact that it is related to
the ultimate freedom of the self. This emphasis leads Jaspers to concentrate first and foremost
on the Kantian antinomy of freedom in his own radical way, as Ehrlich explains the statement
of Jaspers:

Insofar as man is free, he is independent of and transcends the determination of mundane being. At
the same time, in consideration of his limitation, he is not the source of the possibilities of his exist-
tence. Consciousness of one’s freedom is, for Jaspers, therefore, intimately tied to consciousness
of its transcendent grounding. He says,

“Freedom and God are inseparable. Why? Of this I am certain: in my freedom I am not through
myself but am given to myself; for I can miss being myself [Ich kann mir ausleben] and cannot
force my being free.”162

What this means, particularly from the ethical perspective of PWE, is that the noumenal free-
dom that Kant ascribed to moral agent is in the final analysis confirmed by Jaspers with refer-
ence to humans transcending ground as “God.” This brings to mind Kant’s own bias, men-
tioned above, toward summun bonum as an ultimately ineradicable ingredient in his moral
philosophy. Jaspers differs, however, in having in mind a broader scope of which ethics is
only a part. To connect these two revisions, it is worth quoting Ehrlich once more: “Even as
Kant shifted man’s God-relatedness from the theoretical pursuit of proving God’s existence to
the practical concern of the moral realization of reason, so Jaspers sees man’s relation to tran-
scendence as a fundamentally existential concern.”163 This reflects the continuation between
Hegel, Heidegger, and Jaspers in a manner that was described as “deductive” in the beginning
of this section. But there is yet another way in which Jaspers embodies existential concern as
opposed to Kant. Whereas Kant wants to demonstrate that the content of ethics, namely, the
categorical imperative, as the concrete criterion for human freedom can be derived rationally
and objectively, Jaspers denounces this possibility altogether. Here the development of “for-
mal transcendentalism” from Hegel to Heidegger has its deserved place within the Jaspersian
constellation, showing that the radical plurality we inhabit escapes any unanimous evidential
argument. Indeed, as Heidegger has shown even in the case of Hegel, there is no such thing as
universal rationality, owing to the finitude of the human condition. This amounts to the fact
that the transcendental ground of human freedom can neither be demonstrated nor articulat-

161 Ehrlich 1975, 141.

162 Ehrlich 1975, 142.

163 Ehrlich 1975, 143.
The only way to escape determinism is to defy the limits of phenomenological reality by faith in the indeterminate and inarticulate unconditional source of the self.

One may see that the deductive line of thought is itself a continuation of the transcendental method initiated by Kant. What is more, in Jaspers one may notice the circle closes in the sense that there is a reaffirmation of faith paradoxically as fulfilling the need that comes about through the requirements set by reason. The ‘reasonable trust’ underlying the argument on behalf of religion in PWE may be interpreted in both Kantian and Jaspersian terms, but not in a Hegelian or Heideggerian way, because Hegel neglects the importance of faith and Heidegger neglects the importance of reason. Still, it is precisely Jaspers’s position in line with the last two figures that enables him to provide an alternative to the problem of the empty self lurking behind Kantian ethics. Despite the decisionist emphasis on pure faith in transcendental ground, the self is not self-sufficient in concrete ethical matters because it is seen as being antecedently overwhelmed by its finite condition in time in a quite Heideggerian way. Still, for Jaspers, more than for Heidegger, the ultimate freedom of the self from its finite condition in the phenomenological realm is highly essential. On the one hand, Jaspers gives the self and its freedom a more existential type of rendering than Kant is prepared to do; on the other hand, Jaspers is still able to address the problem of morality better than, say, Heidegger, through his concentration on the classical Kantian antinomy of freedom. This is what makes Jaspers’s the most useful (liberal) counterpoint to PWE, when it comes to Küng’s idea of ‘rational trust’ as the basis of ethics. Without transcendental freedom from determinations of this world there would be no basis for ethical responsibility. In order for the self not to be totally immersed in and reduced to finitude, in order to leave room for normative morality, the self is in need of the act of “transcending,” showing ‘reasonable trust’ in the indeterminate and unconditional One that nonetheless is manifest nowhere other than in the finite thinking of the self. All the same, Jaspers’s rendering of committed faith implies not only an idea of oneness, but also of certainty, indeed self-certainty, which is quite foreign to Heidegger’s account. In the following Ehrlich’s account of Jaspersian certainty one cannot help recognizing the affinities with Küng’s idea that “only the unconditional can oblige unconditionally:”

Faith is the fundamental certainty of being on the part of the self existing in its situation and time. It is manifest in thought. All thought requires for its fulfillment in truth something other than thought. Empirical thought gains its truth in its reference to sensuous perception. Also, the certainty of empirical thought and of all determinate thought is founded on conditions. Thought which is the expression of faith is different. It also requires an other for its truth, namely the existing self, which illuminates its faith by means of thought. But such thought is “objectively” unfounded; it expresses the existential awareness of unconditioned truth intimated at the limits of determinate knowledge. Such unconditioned truth is the condition for all conditional truth, and the unconditional certainty of faith is the condition for all other certainty, for cognitive and ethical certainty. Faith, then, is the original certainty of being which is the indeterminate source of certainty concerning all other beings and modes of being. Thus faith is also the motive force and task master of thought.\textsuperscript{164}

The unconditionality of faith signifies the freedom of the self in its relation to the world. Beyond acceding to the mundane being as I find myself to be, psychologically, culturally, biologically,

\textsuperscript{164} Ehrlich 1975, 58.
beyond yielding to the demands of my mundane situation, I am as a choose myself to be, I shape the world as it ought to be, I am guided by the demands which intimate themselves beyond all conditions and considerations of purposes and desires, and participate in the indeterminate ground of being whence springs the demand to myself.165

Given the affinity of Jaspers’s thought to that of Küng, we may now, finally, consider PWE’s criticism of the Enlightenment in a new light. Even though Küng strongly criticizes the Kantian position of moral autonomy, I have shown that Küng is in fact very close to this position himself. In PWE there is a clear emphasis on universal human capacities with regard to morality and ethical thinking. Nor is there any confrontation between different religions in this sense. If certain historical religious forms have taken paths that deviate from the all-human continuum reflecting the right moral action, it is only because of having gone astray, of having ignorantly denied their own roots. All authentic human ethical strivings reflect the truth. All this suggests a strong faith in all-human self-sufficiency in moral matters akin to Jaspers.

And as was the case with Küng, so it is with Jaspers: these anthropocentric notions seem to be in contradiction to the earlier claim that it is not possible to give reasons for moral behavior without “God.” Is the authentic recognition of unconditional obligation an all-human possibility of reason or is it restricted to the sphere of religion over and above reason? Nevertheless, note that here the main focus has shifted from abstract and demonstrative grounds for moral obligation – be they Schleiermacher’s religious feeling or Kant’s categorical reasoning – to a meta-level wherein contingent history is closely intertwined with the Absolute. In Hegel this meant understanding history itself as the determinate and absolute process toward the fulfillment of reason. While this is strongly denounced by Jaspers, the entanglement of Absolute and history is still there in a different manner. The context in which content of particular religion or ethics is reached becomes more important than arguments for or against certain assertion as such.

In the actuality of faith the freely invoked guidance by the transcendent ground is historic. According to Jaspers, if we may alter a Wittgensteinian sentence, God reveals himself only in the world. I am independent vis-à-vis the world only in the world. And this independence is concrete in my active involvement in the world. We are not surprised to find such paradoxical characterizations of the historicity of faith in Jaspers. . . . historicity is the indication of the paradoxical character of human existence as self. In the actuality of faith the self participates in eternity – but only if he attains it ever anew in time.166

Reliance on abstract individual reasoning is transformed into reliance on the factual testimony of all-human (religious) tradition. But how is it possible to draw normative conclusions from factual history? One rejoinder to this question is an existential one, with its focus on the inevitable all-human condition to reach “toward” instead of “to” the absolute. Exactly here we may return to Küng’s critique of Kant. According to both Küng and Jaspers, Kant is too human-centered not in the sense that he relies too much on self-sufficient human capacities in defining ethical norms. Rather, the anthropocentrism of Kant, resorting to abstract rationality,

165 Ehrlich 1975, 59.

166 Ehrlich 1975, 59, 61.
arises from the fact that he excludes the possibility of the most authentic assertion of the absolute precisely in these human-made traditions.

One peculiarity of Jaspers is to emphasize the mutual entanglement of history and unconditional transcendence in the actuality of philosophical faith, in his “philosophy of ciphers.” By cipher Jaspers means that the content of any real conviction in history does not directly capture the actual relation of faith to transcendence. In this sense any metaphysical or ethical conviction points outside of itself toward the unthinkable and inarticulate. In this way Jaspers comes close to endorsing the classical type of negative theology and opposing the Thomist doctrine of analogia entis. In the finite world there is nothing that would symbolize the existential ground which wholly transcends the dimensions of finitude. The unconditional is something infinitely different from individual convictions, and yet the latter have an indispensible role in mediating the former. Hence, in ciphers lie the seed for Apophatic theology: by describing what God is ciphers intimate God in their very destiny to fail – completely, necessarily, and eternally – in these descriptions. Metaphysical convictions, be they philosophical or religious, are symbols of the unconditional only in the sense that they do not refer to anything that would be an object of thought, even though symbols themselves are such objects. The concept of cipher illustrates this fundamental discrepancy between religious, metaphysical or ethical symbols and their “referents.” The whole problem of the ambivalence of transcendence within history and the non-symbolizable within symbols derives from the notion mentioned above that being-in-itself, as Jaspers would call the transcendental and unconditional ground of human freedom, is beyond subject-object dichotomy, while that dichotomy is the necessary sphere of all thinking. Anything that thought grasps is the object or subject of thinking. If being-in-itself inhabits the sphere of thought, then it would either be an object that the human being as subject thinks or a subject, including human self-consciousness or not, who treats the world, including humans or not, as objects. The idea of transcendental being is that it transcends such finite dualisms.  

There are interesting points of contact between PWE and the existentialism endorsed by Jaspers. As for Küng’s earlier period, which was more about fundamental theology, Huovinen demonstrates a connection between Küng’s christomonism and his existentialist emphasis.  

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168 Huovinen 1978a, 142–146. Huovinen is restricted to the time of Christ sein and before. In his later works Küng does not take a stand on the relationship between non-subjective ontology and monism, at least in a manner that would yield substantial conclusions about his position. See for example C, 803. On the other hand, according to Huovinen, this ambiguity is also true of his earlier work – a fact that Huovinen sees as supporting his claim of Küng’s monistic idealism. As Huovinen (1978) observes (s. 143): “Arvokokemuksen ja ontologian väliseen problematiikkaan on vaikea antaa yksiselitteistä vastausta, koska Küng ei varsinaisesti käsittelle siihen liittyviä ongelmia. Tästä vaikenemisesta ei tosin voida vielä päätellä mitään ehdottoman sitovaar arvokokemuksen ulkopuolella mahdollisesti olevasta ontologiasta. Silti argumentum ex silentio on konvergoivana perusteluna myös tukemassa edellä esitettyä tulkintaa Küngin ajattelun taipumuksesta subjektiiviseen idealismiin. Tällainen vaikeneminen kokemuksen ulkopuolisesta ontologiasta on myös sikäli symptomaaattista, että subjektiivisen idea-
In the framework of PWE a monistic type of christology, for instance, would amount to viewing the decisiveness of Christ as symbolic rather than literal – as proposed by Raimon Panikkar – and such a positive view would basically enable Küng to endorse all individual religions as equally true foundations for a transcendent source of ethics. In any case, from the perspective of this study, the relevant question is the other aspect of Huovinen’s notion, namely, Küng’s existentialist dimension. How does it manifest in the context of PWE?

Historical Jesus is a rather instrumental figure, pointing toward something more essential, “die Sache Jesu Christi,” referring ultimately to the meaningfulness of life. ‘Basic trust’ is a decisive concept in Küng’s theology; for him, it is ultimately directed toward God. Religion only makes this existential trust more explicit. In this light it is understandable that Küng seems ultimately to take religion as an existential, non-rational, and non-propositional value-experience. This is tied to personal choice in favor of God; thus faith, value-experience, and personal decision are mutually connected. Moreover, the way Küng...
treats the basic Christian dogma such as the divinity of Jesus bears noting. Küng’s revision of the classical articulation of Jesus’ divinity has clear echoes of the existential approach along the lines of Bultmann’s. For Küng, Jesus as figure or basic model is more important than ontological questions. He also directly refers to the Bultmannian concept of demythologizing as a tool for updating Biblical themes.

Through Bultmann one may perhaps best see the general linkage between PWE and Heideggerian existentialism; at the same time through Jaspers’s corrective to Heidegger, presented above, we may see why PWE, in order to be philosophically consistent, should not adopt Bultmann’s version of existentialism in more detail. While Bultmann’s existentialist theology is rather close to Jaspers’s philosophical version, there is one major difference that makes one think that the Heideggerian line of thought should lead in the direction of Jaspers rather than that of Bultmann, namely, that for Jaspers, Bultmann does not go far enough in his project of demythologizing:

In Jaspers’s view, which Bultmann does not controvert, Bultmann wishes to confirm the contents of faith by means of a methodical understanding of the mythical idiom of the Bible and thereby translate it into a non-mythical idiom conforming to modern views and expressing truth literally. Jaspers does not think this is possible. Truths conveyed by myths are translatable only into other myths, or symbols or ciphers, and are heard as possible unconditional contents of faith only in such a form. As methodically determined universal truths they would be merely conditional.

1.4. Exclusivism

It would seem that, if there is no substantial connection between religious or metaphysical symbols such as ‘ciphers’ and the transcendental reality they intimate, then it does not make any difference which of the countless metaphysical symbols is used to denote being-in-itself. To a certain extent this is indeed true for Jaspers who characteristically reaches out beyond particular expressions of faith to what he calls the ‘general fundamental knowledge’ of all the

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176 Cf. C, 78, 86, 87. Cf also e.g. J, 730.


178 Ehrlich 1975, 166, 167.
varying experiences of ‘Being’. General fundamental knowledge is related to his doctrine of ‘encompassing’. This he names as ‘periechontology’, a word whose ambivalent connection to “ontology” is meant to exemplify Jaspers’s hostility to any dogmatic fixations of the faith in one particular expression of faith. To be sure, inasmuch as ‘Being’ transcends any specific doctrinal expression or even any intimation of it, in the manner of negative theology, ‘Being’ is also equally present in any such expression, in the manner of ‘periechontology’.  

At the same time, however, this particular account of ‘periechontology’ and ‘general fundamental knowledge’ reflects only one of two upshots of Jaspers’s philosophy. The other one emphasizes the non-arbitrariness of any authentic conviction. In other words, from the fact that the self always operates through thinking, even in experiencing the transcendence, there follows the fact that there is only one possible way in which the unconditional manifests for each self. To refer restrictedly to the interchangeability of ‘ciphers’ does not grasp the fundamentality of the personal element in Jaspers’s philosophy, the essentialness of existential truth. Ultimately, man in his existence does not have anything other than a particular conviction by which he is in a position to direct himself to transcendence in the first place. Hence, Jaspers opposes mysticism that detaches itself from the chains of time altogether; the articulation of faith is an indispensable part of what, in the final analysis, cannot be articulated.  

At bottom, then, the relation of man to man, where the historicity of the human realization of truth and the indispensability of freedom for it is valued, is that of communication no matter whether “man” in that relationship be a fellow human being or a human actuality such as an authority, an institution, or one’s heritage. Jaspers’s idea of philosophical faith is founded on the conception of the “unreserved,” “unrelenting,” “boundless” “loving struggle” of communication as the historic and the free man’s way to truth. The more intense the awareness of the historicity of truth for man, the more intense the appreciation of the multiplicity of this truth. The consequence of this awareness is a person’s affirmation of another person’s truth for that other person, even as one’s own truth is absolute for one’s own historicity. The submission to or even the flirtation with another’s historicity is as truly the death of communication as is the imposition of what is absolute for oneself upon the other. The search for the one truth by virtue of philosophical faith does not imply a community of believers in one faith but a communicative solidarity of believers, each with his own historic vision of truth upon which he freely risks grounding his life, without confusing this vision with the one truth transcending all historicity.  

This sets out the basis for dialogue between particular traditions. Indeed, relentless inter-faith dialogue is for Jaspers the upshot of his philosophy instead of inter-faith indifference or one meta-religion. In this he could not have better anticipated the spirit of PWE. It is easy to see

179 Ehrlich 1975, 6–8.

180 Ehrlich 1975, 58, 157–163. Ehrlich 1975, 119: “It is precisely for the sake of enhancing the possibility of man’s historic realization of truth that Jaspers finds it useful to engage in the task of formulating a general fundamental knowledge. This would be merely formal, and would not anticipate the content of faith. It would merely disclose the dimensions of man’s realization of Being and not proceed, as the person in his singularity will and must, to determine the historic realization within these dimensions.”

181 Ehrlich 1975, 119.
how PWE’s standpoint toward religions can be applied precisely on the basis of Jaspers’s philosophy. Küng resorts to the following two-level approach:

Seen from outside, from the perspective of so-called religious science, there are different true religions: religions that despite all their ambivalence at least ultimately fulfill certain common (ethical as well as religious) criteria. There are different ways of salvation (with different figures of salvation) to one end, ways that even partly overlap and in any case can contribute to each other.

Seen from inside, that is from the New Testament-oriented believing Christian, that is for me as encountered, challenged person, there is only one true religion: Christianity, insofar as it testifies to the one true God, as he has made himself known in Jesus Christ.¹⁸²

Of course, it is a rather sociological perspective along the lines of Emil Durkheim that enables Küng to speak so emphatically of religions with respect to secular types of world-views as compared with Jasper’s more comprehensive approach along the lines of existential philosophy. For Durkheim, if there is no possibility of a direct link between the moral agent and the Absolute then there is actually no possibility for moral obligation. Only in the light of a humanity-transcending absolute is it possible to say anything substantial about normative morality. This is why religions are in a primordial position with respect to other ideologies. After all, the emphasis is not so much on the objective aspect, but on the subjective one. In PWE, this Durkheimian emphasis is accompanied by Küng’s hesitation to comment about anything substantial concerning particular religion’s actual relationship to absolute truth. Like Durkheim, Küng exhibits a certain disinterest in the final truthfulness of the particular religions. His aim is more modest: to trace some elementary interreligious ethical obligations, instead of evaluating the more substantial truthfulness of particular religions. Hence, for Küng it is enough to state that religions are dealing with the question of the absolute regardless of how well they succeed.¹⁸³

All the same, one may perhaps best treat PWE as a combination of Jaspers and Durkheim. Durkheim has a tendency to emphasize the neutral point of view of science in a sense that both PWE and Jaspers want to avoid. What is more important, Jaspers offers a philosophically more nuanced and thus more plausible account of the mutual relations between different religions with respect to the questions of truth and exclusivity. I will proceed by critically reflecting on PWE’s rendering of the mutual exclusivity or inclusivity of world religions. Thereafter, I will revisit these questions in the sphere theology of religions from Jaspers’s rather philosophically articulated point of view in order to shed light on his relevance for PWE’s argument. Along the way, the reader should bear in mind my ultimate purpose, name-


¹⁸³ José Casanova (1999, 28–29) points out these affinities of PWE’s critique of Kantian morality with Durkheim’s social anthropology.
ly, what stance toward exclusivism does the liberal positive method entail and in what sense does it differ from the rational method within liberalism, presented above? Put another way, how does the positive liberal method differ from the Kantian and Schleiermacherian fundamental hostility to exclusivism, on the one hand, as well as from the postliberal stance toward exclusivism, on the other?

Küng proclaims, “Thus the great religions will hopefully find a path in this turbulent transitional period of new ethical and religious types of antagonisms: a path between modernism without fundament and fundamentalism without modernity.” Küng sees significant problems in both extremes. He jettisons three standard positions used particularly within the theology of religions with respect to truth, that is, exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism. All are either fanatical with regard to truth or downplay the quest for truth. Küng’s relationship to the three models is in fact a preparation for the more concrete articulation of the liberal interpretation of PWE.

By exclusivism Küng means that “only one’s own religion is the true one! All the other religions are untrue!” and that “religious ‘peace’ will be guaranteed only through this one true (state-) religion.” The flaw of exclusivism lies in that it is self-centered and intolerant; it does not appreciate religions other than one’s own. There is little further elaborate reflection on this principal claim in PWE, but Küng seems to offer essentially two kinds of more or less historical types of reasons to defend his refutation.

First, the Roman Catholic “Extra Ecclesiam Nulla salus!” is no longer valid. According to Küng, this ecclesiastical type of exclusivism has been denounced both by the second Vatican Council and the World Council of Churches. Küng interprets the statements of Vaticanum II relatively progressively: the proponents of all religions – even atheists – may be saved.

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185 For more on this threefold division, see e.g. Schmidt-Leukel 1993; D’Costa 1993.

186 PW, 105: “‘Nur die Eigene Religion ist die Wahre! Alle andere Religionen sind unwahr! Religiöser ‘Friede’ wird nur garantiert durch die eine wahre (Staats-) Religion!’”

187 PW, 105: “Als ob die Kirche schon das Reich Gottes wäre! Als ob Gottes Geist nicht auch in allen anderen Religionen wirkte, die ja allesamt vorläufig sind.”

188 Among others, David J. Bosch subscribes to Küng’s experiential criticism of exclusivism (Bosch 1991, 483).

if they have good will; hence, he does not consider the traditional position of the Catholic Church to be the official doctrine.\textsuperscript{190}

Second, Küng appeals to at least four types of experiential factors. (1) Historically and sociologically, exclusivism has proved to be a more destructive power than a constructive one.\textsuperscript{191} (2) Other religions are so numerous in their membership that it is unrealistic to relate to them from the standpoint of exclusivism. (3) Christianity has also encountered the qualitative challenge of other religions. It is a historical fact that the fate of Christendom hangs in the balance under postmodernism. (4) Most important from the perspective of the argumentative plausibility under consideration is the phenomenological fact that all religions claim to be advocating truth. In such a situation it would be unrealistic to insist that in fact only one religion owns the truth. Dogmatic condemnation of other religions is implausible in view of the phenomenal reality. In practice, the only workable alternative in practice is, authentically and without reservations, to acknowledge the plurality of religions and draw appropriate conclusions concerning religious truth.\textsuperscript{192}

To recapitulate, Küng’s criticisms of exclusivism are experiential in nature. The emphasis is on the phenomenal facts and realism: there is no historico-sociological reason that makes one religion truthful and others not. On the contrary, on the basis of its negative historical side effects, exclusivism, it must be conjectured, is in a flawed position. This kind of experiential argument is relatively typical of pluralistic proposals in the sphere of the theology of religions.\textsuperscript{193} It is nevertheless Jaspers who shows a more nuanced articulation of anti-exclusivism and who thus can be seen to anticipate PWE in this question. The following description of Jaspers’s position by Ehrlich also appears to capture something essential about Küng’s idea of reasonable trust in this question:

\textsuperscript{190} CWR, 196. Here Küng points out ironically: “We cannot change the words, because the conciliar statement was, indeed, infallible definition, but we are allowed to say the contrary,” basing this statement on a claim that, according to Vaticanum II, “‘this is valid even for atheists of good will.’ ” See also Knitter 1986, 63. Cf. Ruokanen 1992, 61, 115–120; 2003; Vasko 2003. See, however, Dupuis 1997, 166–168. On Küng’s critique of exclusivism, see CW, 54, 55, 173, 174, 439–441; WWR, 541, 542; ZÖT, 76; WTR, 233–235; KWR, 27. EF, 534. Cf. Kuschel 1990, 149; ACR; Klöcker 1994.

\textsuperscript{191} PW, 106: “Überall derselbe Geist von Intoleranz, Wahrheitsabsolutismus und Selbstgerechtigkeit, der so viel Elend über die Menschen gebracht hat. Verbunden mit diesem religiösen Imperialismus und Triumphalismus ist eine rechthaberische und lernunfähige theologische Apologetik, die mehr Probleme schafft als lost.”


Opposed to reason is the perversion of reason, i.e., the supposition that the oneness of truth in time towards which reason impels has been essentially realized in time, and hence for all men. What is opposed to reason, in Jaspers’s view is, then, not authority or even its apparently indispensable claim to exclusiveness, but that position of some authority by which it deems its vision of truth to be valid for all and binding on all, and thereby reduces the significance of other and denies the historicity of its own and all human realizations. This is the position of catholicity.

The second false position in the theology of religions, according to Küng, is inclusivism, which he defines as follows: “The one and only religion is the true one, but: all historically developed religions have a part of this one true religion’s truth! Religious ‘peace’ will best be attained by integration of these others.” Küng bases his objection to inclusivism by and large on the same type of arguments as found in his criticism of exclusivism. No doubt, he sees only a difference in degree between inclusivism and exclusivism. Küng’s appeal to experiential reality has, if possible, an even stronger emphasis in this context. The problem of inclusivism for Küng is that it ascribes a hierarchy among religions, which runs counter to the self-identification of religions and is thus unrealistic.

Küng relates the third position he opposes to a motto: “The existential problem called truth does not exist in reality, thus: every religion is in its own way, in its essence similarly true. Religious peace will best be attained by ignoring the differences and counter-claims.”

This definition, which Küng calls “the strategy of making harmless,” has in fact a two-fold meaning. In a sense Küng identifies Verharmlosungsstrategie with philosophical relativism. Here the focus will nonetheless be on the following connotations of harmless-making.

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194 Ehrlich 1975, 124.

195 PW, 108: “Eine einzige Religion ist die wahre, aber: alle historisch gewachsenen Religionen haben Teil an der Wahrheit dieser einen Religion! Religiöser ‘Friede’ wird am besten erreicht durch Integration der anderen!” Küng defines inclusivism loosely without, for instance, discerning a so-called fulfillment model on the one hand or a model concerning the mystical presence of Christ on the other. On these and other more nuanced categories of inclusivism, see Dupuis 1997, 130–157.

196 PW, 108: “Wir begegnen dieser Strategie – wenn wir von der spekulativ-unrealistischen christlichen Theologie von Nicht-christen (Juden, Musulmen…) als angeblich ‘anonymen Christen’ absehen – vor allem in Religionen indischen Ursprungs . . .” (italics added); TA, 184: “Der Wille derer, die nun einmal nicht Christen sind und nicht Christen sein wollen, wird nicht respektiert sondern nach eigenen Interessen interpretiert . . . als ob all diese Menschen nicht würsten was sie selbst sind” (italics added). On Küng’s critique of inclusivism, see also CW, 175, 270, 404, 438–441, 565, 566, 578; WWR, 542, 543; ZÖT, 76; WTR, 236, 237; KWR, 29, 30; WW, 23, 24; EF, 534. Cf. CW, 577, 578; CC, 140; Knitter 1986.


198 PW, 106.

First of all, it is not the intention of PWE to construct any integrated religion or even a global ethical system.\(^{200}\) Nor does Küng want to draw a parallel to any sort of irrational religiosity with what are perceived as more serious religions.\(^{201}\) Further, according to Küng, there is no reason to hold that religions are in any sense the same in their ultimate essence; “the religious mixture is not the solution.”\(^{202}\) This is how Küng also sets himself against religious *pluralism*. To this is also related Küng’s criticism of religious “indifferentism.”\(^{203}\)

Of the contemporary representatives of religious pluralism, Küng would appear to be criticizing Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Although Küng uses Smith even in support of his own criticism, he nevertheless displays his hostility to a view that universal “subjective” or “mystical” religious experience exist alongside objective religious diversity.\(^{204}\) This view is precisely analogous with Smith’s historically-laden pluralism.\(^{205}\)

Küng’s argument against pluralism is, again, based on realism.\(^{206}\) A pluralistic position does not do justice to the real diversity of individual religions with respect to their claims of truth and morality.\(^{207}\) Thus, Küng’s criticism of religious pluralism by appeal to experiential realism is methodologically similar to his criticism of exclusivism and inclusivism. In terms of its content it is perhaps more reminiscent of his criticism of inclusivism. The emphasis is


\(^{201}\) TA, 283; CW, 538. See also WWR, 541; ZÖT, 4; CC, 72–86, 151, 304. Cf. Falk 1999, 76, 77.

\(^{202}\) PW, 107: “... Der religiöse Eintopf ist die Lösung nicht.” Cf. SR, CC, 124–126, 199–201, 218; WW, 80, 81; Abe 1993a; Concalves 2000. However, see also Cobb Jr. 1990, 81–84; Milbank 1990, 176–181.

\(^{203}\) PW, 107: “... ein theologischer Indifferentismus, für den alle religiösen Positionen und Negationen gleich gültig und so gleichgültig sind...”

\(^{204}\) PW, 106, 107: “... wer die nun einmal miteinander konkurrierenden Religionen *wirklich* kennt, wird kaum behaupten, alle seien gleich, und damit auch gleich wahr. Eine Unterscheidung der Geister (wahr– unwahr, *gut–böse*) wird man sich von daher nicht schenken können ... Angesichts der nur zu *reichen* und oft tödlichen Rivalität der Religionen *ignoriert* er [ein theologischer Indifferentismus] die Probleme, die er gelöst zu haben vorgibt” (italics added). On Küng’s critique of pluralism, see also CW, 458–460; WWR, 541, 542; ZÖT, 76; WTR, 235, 236; RFV, 77; KWR, 28, 29. Cf. e.g. Moltmann 1984, 12, 13.
on the phenomenal religious reality. On this basis he considers it an unrealistic enterprise to blur the distinction between religions from the perspective of some ultimately common standpoint. Significantly, it is again Jaspers who offers a fruitful philosophical counterpoint to PWE’s critical account of inclusivism and pluralism:

Being might be isolated and absolutized, and all there is might be reduced to this mode. Our tradition and culture are fraught with a plethora of “isms” corresponding to such absolutization, e.g., naturalism, existentialism, idealism, et al. . . . Another kind of putative realization of unity of truth in time is the ontological system. The different modes of Being are held to be different pieces of a picture which fall into place to form a composite, orderly whole by virtue of a set of principles or a schedule of categories. Yet no system is all-inclusive; it would seem that what it gains in consistency it loses in its grasp and breadth of reality. And even if a congeries of fundamental problems is solved in a certain way in a given system, this does not mean that a solution at variance with it is impossible in another system which is also internally consistent, though based on different presuppositions. One sees systems next to other systems, each grasping aspects of reality which others, on the basis of their presuppositions, cannot grasp, or whose understanding of reality is at variance with the former ones. The array of systems can become a chaos of dogma, and in the end the unity of accomplished systems is shattered against man’s continual unfolding and grasp of reality.

The criticisms of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism together reflect the experiential interest of PWE. On the whole, PWE’s answer to the question of the status of individual religions in PWE’s own train of argument is rather unambiguous. No individual religion or world view, not even the pluralistic one, has a dominant role according to the rules given by Küng for inter-religious dialogue in general as well as in the further articulation of global ethics in particular. To be sure, from PWE’s perspective, every religion – with the exception of some “irrational,” “immoral,” or “indifferentist” versions – has exactly the same stake. As such, this appears indeed natural, even inevitable, given Küng’s global aim. It is simply wrong, at least from the global ethical point of view, to demand a paramount role for one or a few religions, leaving others in secondary positions. Moreover, it sounds almost as natural when PWE attacks the problem of religious exclusivism and inclusivism in general for the same reasons: in today’s pluralistic world it is simply flawed arrogance to hold fast to one’s own truth in order to promote exclusivism. Resistance to any kind of exclusivism is one of the prominent features of PWE. In that way the project in fact reflects one of the prominent features of the whole discourse on global ethics. Neglecting the mostly religiously motivated exclusivism is generally seen as the basis for finding paths for ethically sustainable globalization in the first place.

The problem of exclusivism in Küng’s negative stance toward all three standard positions is confirmed by further critical elaboration of the classical three-fold typology in the theology of religions. Gavin D’Costa has plausibly shown that simply to avoid exclusivism and endorse one of the other two alternatives does not prevent the kind of criticism described above. First of all, the position that seems most tolerant at first glance, namely, pluralism, includes a whole new way of seeing the religions. It is not merely a heuristic idea to help dif-

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208 Ehrlich 1975, 121.

209 PW, 105, 106.
ferent religions overcome their hostile tendencies for the sake of love and peace. On the contrary, religious pluralism is a comprehensive view of how global religious diversity is to be understood. In all its varieties – John Hick’s philosophical version, Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s historical view, and Paul F. Knitter’s ethical version and all their derivatives – pluralism neglects all traditional religions. Behind the pluralist idea that, with the exception of some radically “irrational” and “inhuman” religions, all are fundamentally the same, there lurks a new missionary project to convert the adherents of different religions to a completely new one.

The religion that religious pluralism is advocating is derived from the rational revolution of the Enlightenment with its hostility toward any tradition-specific understanding of the ultimate meaning of the world. In practice, the pluralist project urges the adherents of the world’s religions to leave their beliefs behind and convert to a new religion, as exclusivist as the one they sought to leave. This does not necessarily mean, even in the most cases, that people ought literally to leave the religious institutions to which belong; rather they are expected to see the same religion from a new perspective. The point is that every religion has its important place in the plan of the world, but the reason is because people tend to see the same things from different perspectives according to their social contexts. Despite the radical differences in religions, or perhaps precisely owing to those differences, everyone should adopt a higher level of religious reflection than the individual religion itself can offer. This level is the belief that all religions lead to the same ultimate end. The problem is that there is a contradiction in the claim that pluralism takes all religions equally into account on the one hand and that it excludes every particular view for the sake of its own religious view on the other. In the end, what seems to be the most tolerant view of religions proves to be exclusivism par excellence.\(^{210}\)

There still remains the chance to escape exclusivism by recourse to inclusivism. What makes inclusivism a notably better alternative is that it is not in a self-contradictory position. The inclusivist idea that all religions are on the same scale in a divine plan, but not by being on par with each other, does not claim to treat religions with equal standards. Usually, this means that religions are viewed from the perspective of one particular religion that is taken to be the primordial one with ultimate authority. Yet this does not lead to the supposition that all the other religions are totally false, as may be the case in the exclusivist religious view. On the contrary, inclusivist understanding accommodates the roles of other religions as positive, at least to some extent. This could mean, for instance, the Christian view of other religions’ soteriological fulfillment in Christ or the understanding of Islam as a supreme religion among the other Abrahamic traditions. Consequently, inclusivism appears to occupy a kind of middle position between the two exclusivist extremes. No doubt, it would seem to escape the exclusivist charge better than the other two. However, there are two factors that call this assumption into question.

First, as Gavin D’Costa has shown, it is questionable whether inclusivism really gives more room to other religions. This is because from the idea of one supreme religion there follows another assumption, namely, the idea that other religions are viewed in the light of the supreme religion. The crucial question is whether the religions other than the paramount one are treated, strictly speaking, as they are, with an eye on their self-understanding, or as something else. No doubt, inclusivism is about the latter, because adherents of religions themselves do not really understand the essence of their faith in the way it is presented to them within the framework of the alien inclusivist religion. The exclusivist tendency in inclusivism is that it neglects the authentic renderings of other religions. In this sense there is after all an idea that other religions are false as comprehensive systems. These religious systems are always defined by a categorical renouncement of any idea of a supreme religion in light of which the religion in question is to be evaluated. To speak of particular religions one has to include the whole doctrine; if the religion is detached from its self-understanding in some crucial sense, it is problematic to continue to speak of the same particular religion. The denial of the doctrines of particular religions as an organic whole is exactly the feature that ultimately leads the inclusivist position to collapse into exclusivism.\(^{211}\)

Second, it is difficult to see a principal difference between exclusivism and inclusivism, even at a more practical level. While inclusivism is laden with strong exclusivist elements, the converse is also true: the exclusivist position is hardly ever presented as not allowing for inclusive elements. Instead, usually there are both inclusive and exclusive elements within all religious views. What is most important is that we have no way of determining which of the religious positions are more inclusive or exclusive in the final analysis. The only thing we can be sure of seems to be that no adequately pluralist position of any kind exists.

Still, to abandon both pluralism and inclusivism as alternatives to exclusivism is not to claim that some or all of the three religious positions are false. Neither, of course, does it claim say that all three positions are the same. Rather, it is to show that one has to reconsider the case of exclusivism. The main point is that the claim that religious exclusivism would present an obstacle to such global issues as inter-religious dialogue, world peace, or global ethics does not hold. Instead, it begs the whole question: exclusivism is equally relevant independent of the vantage point.\(^{212}\)

For the opponents of exclusivism, there is still one noteworthy way of avoiding criticism. In PWE it is related to the two-level approach; the dialectics of internal and external perspective mentioned earlier. Whereas D’Costa’s argument consists, in fusing the two, as it were, Küng wants to have it both ways:


\[^{212}\] One possible solution to the problem of exclusivism Heim’s postmodern suggestion (1995 and 2001), namely, there are many true religions, each of which is the only way. Heim, however, undervalues the fact that each religion ultimately claims to speak of the same reality as any other religion. Heim’s suggestion in turn assumes that reality is dispersed according to different religious views.
None of the religions will be able wholly to avoid applying their own very special truth criterion to other religions, be it Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist or Confucian. Dialogue means really no self-denial. And the stranger-criticism remains necessary. But he who keeps reasonable and honest knows that these criteria can be relevant, not to say binding, most of all for the respective religion itself and not for the others.\footnote{PW, 113: “Keine Religion wird ganz darauf verzichten können, die ihr eigenen, ganz spezifischen Wahrheitskriterien auch an die anderen Religionen anzulegen, seien es die chritslichen, jüdischen, islamischen, hinduistischen, buddhistischen oder konfuzianischen. Dialog heisst ja nicht Selbstverleugnung. Und Fremdkritik bleibt nötig. Aber: Wer nüchtern und erlich bleibt, weiss, dass diese Kriterien zunächst nur für die jeweilige Religion selbst und nicht für die anderen relevant, gar verbindlich sein können” (italics added).}

On the basis of Jaspers’s discussion, it is again easy to recognize the applicability of his philosophical considerations to the position that Küng represents in a more theological manner. PWE’s position, which resists both exclusivism and inclusivism as well as pluralism without collapsing into relativism, to an important extent reflects Jaspers’s position.

A characteristic of our historical situation is the acute awareness of traditions and fundamental conceptions of the truth of Being other than our own. The ensuing problem posed for mankind and for philosophy is, according to Jaspers, to come to terms with this multiplicity. Jaspers rejects a relativistic resolution of it. And rightly so. For the cause of truth is not served by denying those who deemed themselves in possession of it and thereby gained fulfillment. And that all human visions are relative can be as little known as the absoluteness for all men of one of these visions. Neither can man rise above humanity in such a manner that he can gain enough insight into all possible human visions of truth to assign each its place in a comprehensive synthesis. The only synthesis which, in Jaspers’s view, is possible, is of the modes of truth, their scopes and limits, their forms and possible contents, and their peculiar opposition to falsehood. It would have to open up the regions in which human realization of truth can take place. This would have to be done without adulterating or gainsaying what has been realized by man in the past, and without prescribing or proscribing what may yet be realized. Moreover it would mean recognizing as truth and promoting truth which is not one’s own fulfillment of truth.\footnote{Ehrlich 1975, 5, 6.}
2. The Nature of Global Ethics

2.1. The Rational Method: Kant Against Consequentialism

Up to now the focus has been emphatically on the question of religion’s role in the foundation of global ethics. What we still have to explore more carefully is the question of why global ethics is needed in the first place. Some preliminary answers have already been presented in the beginning of the previous chapter. Küng, for instance, argues for global ethics as a necessary precondition for global stability and peace. Indeed, the question arising from PWE’s somewhat Jaspersian standpoint vis-à-vis individual religions is whether it is even possible to create an inter-cultural ethical vision on any basis other than global peace. This question follows from the fact that finite manifestations of God always and necessarily are only intimations ex negativa. One cannot define truth by thought; consequently, one cannot determine ethics that would be attuned to this truth in any particular way. As the different religions all have their extraordinary stake in truth, whether in a general or an ethical sense, it might perhaps be better to restrict oneself to fostering peaceful co-existence among them rather than engaging in the quixotic question of truth or normativity.

The idea of religions as subjects of the construction of sustainable peace is by no means a novel one. Ramon Llull was motivated to replace theological differences between Islam and Christianity with mutual consensus precisely for reasons deriving from inter-religious peace. The importance of preventing and ending wars and mutual hatred was behind the even more radical religious pluralism of Nicolas of Cusa, expressed as una religio in rituum varietate in his Pace fidei – a utopian work written in the form of a vision, which today has been criticized as unrealistic. Franciscus of Assisi also endeavored to foster inter-religious peace, particularly between Islam and Christianity. Thus, the great theologians of the Middle Ages had penetrating ideas that the struggle for peace between religions is essential to earthly peace.215

Modern Europe faced another kind of challenge in mitigating religious conflicts and putting an end to religious wars. In the aftermath of the Reformation, intra-Christian controversies were jeopardizing societal stability. This could be prevented by creating a common ethico-political basis among individual states according to the principles of the Enlightenment. This agenda is even more reminiscent of the problems behind PWE, where the focus is not so much on religions as such, but on elementary ethics at the societal level. Indeed, Neuhaus sees Enlightenment Europe as the predecessor of PWE,216 and there is some reason to juxtapose Küng’s vision with, for instance, Kant’s strivings for peace in his time.217 As far as

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216 Neuhaus 1999, 12–14. Cf. KGK, 200, 201. On peace efforts in modern Western history, see for example Huber 1986; Mieth 1986; Garstecki 1993. On the newest scientific-political peace projects, see for example Bialas 1999e.
217 Falk 1999, 65. See Kant 1795.
our own time is concerned, global peace is a highly relevant motivating argument behind inter-religious dialogue.\textsuperscript{218} In the following sections PWE’s argument on behalf of peace is considered with the help of two opposing perspectives used in Küng’s project: real politics and ideal politics.

2.1.1. Consequentialism and Politics

Küng asserts that the significance of global ethics follows directly from the need for world peace. Global ethics is important above all because it secures the preconditions for societal peace, economic and jurisdictional order, and the institutions that hold these together.\textsuperscript{219} Along the globalization, increasingly, the ultimate society we inhabit is the whole world. The vision of PWE is related to this global view. We live in a society in which the ultimate common interest is global stability.\textsuperscript{220} In the commentary regarding the Declaration (of Global Ethic), Karl-Josef Kuschel explains that the new global challenge obliges all religions to even up their mutually antagonistic differences for the sake of a common global society free of conflicts.\textsuperscript{221} Political aspects are thus an essential part of PWE. Ethical ground consensus is a condition for world order and global peace.\textsuperscript{222} In this light, PWE has a socio-political agenda in a global context.\textsuperscript{223}

That PWE has concrete societal stability as an ultimate aim may be considered its consequentialist face. “Küng’s profound analysis and responses are ordered to making a real difference in the real world.”\textsuperscript{224} The intention, though, is not to sketch philosophical theory; nei-

\textsuperscript{218} Cf. e.g. WW, 71, 83, 84, 88–93; VD, 12; \textit{Brücken in die Zukunft}, 239.


\textsuperscript{223} Cf. GSM, 69; WR, 28; GGE, Swing 1999a.

there is it to stick to political studies as such. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that both fields are more or less at stake. While Küng expresses his clear doubts about political realism as a guide for action, in what follows I will discuss some salient features of PWE that indeed indicate to international application of realpolitik.

Political realism, in the way that Küng understands it, is related to the kind of thinking in which the primary focus of interest is societal stability and its protection; this aim ultimately overrides ethics and justice whenever necessary. According to Küng, in the contemporary world not only are there national interests that are to be secured. As we find ourselves increasingly inhabiting a global village, the task of contemporary politics is also to protect the whole world-order. This has to be the primary aim of all decision-making. To clarify this goal Küng juxtaposes realpolitik with idealpolitik. With the latter, moral values are always preferred to practical results when it comes to establishing criteria for political action. Idealpolitik appears for Küng, however, too moralistic and dogmatic a model. The deficiencies of idealpolitik include “fictitiousness” and “inefficiency.” Religions in particular have a tendency to search for a “fixed ethical solution from heaven.” That being the case, there is a danger that no practical results will be attained because the concrete world is more dynamic and procedural than the ideal world:

At the end of the twentieth century we are less able than ever to bring fixed ethical solutions from heaven or from the Tao, derive them from the Bible or some other sacred book. . . . Historically seen, the concrete ethical norms, values, insights, and key-conceptions of the great religions have, according to all historical research, taken their form in a highly complicated socio-dynamic process.

225 GSM, 61–66; MRMV, 141.

226 See e.g. WWW, 50: “Das von der Realpolitik bestimmte Politik-Paradigma der Moderne ist in eine fundamentale Krise geraten . . .”

227 Cf. for example WWW, 289: “zentrale Aufgaben eines globalen Politik”


230 WWW, 52–61.


Here one may see that Küng considers it important, in societal considerations, to pay attention to what really happens in history. The weakness of idealpolitik is also evident in “ideal economics.” According to Küng, the real world proves to be different than the ethical ideal. Therefore, there is an inevitable conflict between the moral ideal and realism. “What is not reprehensible in realpolitik is that it differentiates between dreams and real facts, orients itself toward the given political possibilities and, by taking foreign interests wisely into account, concentrates on the interests of one’s own country.”

The motive and aim of ethics is thus a global equilibrium. Why exactly is that equilibrium worth striving for? Part of the answer is that PWE is not so much about theory, but about internal conviction, transformation at the level of personal attitudes. The very necessity for a common ethic becomes clear only when people individually open their eyes to the fact that the world needs a global ethic in order to survive. Survival is precisely the motive that justifies PWE: “No survival without world ethics. No global peace without peace between religions. . . . That is what this book is about.” Thus, Küng identifies survival with world peace. His obvious aim is to extend the traditional focus of ethics to meet the requirements of contemporary knowledge. In addition to global focus, one corollary is that the world order is not to be articulated in a traditional anthropocentric way.
Here Küng is indebted to the *ethics of survival* by Hans Jonas.²³⁹ Ethics based on humanity at all levels would be able to prevent the atrocities of the twentieth century. “An awareness of one’s own temporal position in the chain of generations” must be developed.²⁴⁰ Along the lines of Jonas’s argument, Küng claims that only religions are in a position to bring about this awareness. Only religions can motivate unconditional obligations that contribute to survival. In other words, Küng justifies the religiously-based common ethics with the need for survival – and thus, above all, with the importance of achieving global peace.²⁴¹

On this account it would seem that it is precisely global survival and stability that is PWE’s primary objective. If this is so, it alludes to a consequentialist ethical view: the value of any action is derived from the assessment of its results. The determination of the results themselves in turn is characteristically derived from obvious human interests. PWE’s consequentialism is in line with real politics as presented above. The primary problem to be solved then is the *means* by which the aim is to be attained. A purely realistic political position would be to invoke the use of political power as the right means.²⁴²

Do ethics then have any intrinsic value in PWE? A negative answer would appear to be in conflict with the absolute nature of moral obligation, presented above. On the other hand, such an answer would reflect the real political thread displayed in this chapter. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Küng is against non-ethical means, such as use of power to attain world order.

Therefore, must the power politics of the twenty-first century not be placed under humane ethical benchmarks . . . “so neither can an international order be grounded solely on power for the simple reason that humanity, in the long run, will always revolt against sheer power. Every international order requires a general consensus to a substantial degree.”²⁴³

Küng does not accept any means whatsoever, like the Macchiavellian use of power.²⁴⁴ On a closer examination, however, there is no intrinsic value in the ethical aspect in the above quotation. Or at least the ethical value is determined from the perspective of the results,²⁴⁵ on the basis of how well action fosters a global order. The ethics, in the quotation is not argued as an

²³⁹ WWW, 331.


²⁴¹ See also WWW, 329–332.

²⁴² See for example Mills 1956; Woit 1999b; Scheler 1999a, 33–41.

²⁴³ WWW, 76, 77: “Muss also die Machtpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert nicht neu unter humane ethische Massstäbe gestellt werden . . . , so kann eine internationale Ordnung nicht auf Macht allein gegründet sein, aus dem einfachen Grund, weil die Menschheit auf lange Sicht immer gegen nackte Macht revoltieren wird. Jede internationale Ordnung setzt ein substantielles Mass an allgemeinem Konsens voraus’ ” (italics added).


²⁴⁵ See also for example WWW, 123: “Eine Menschenrechtspolitik . . . muss aber andererseits die realen Bedingungen kühn kalkulieren, unter denen sie überhaupt erfolgreich sein kann” (italics added).
end in itself. This is in line with realpolitik. Political power as a means for achieving global peace is not condemned for the reason that use of power as such would be morally wrong. Rather the criticism is focused on the fact that the use of power is not workable in practice; “. . . humanity, in the long run, will revolt.” Instead, common ethics does work. Ethics appears to have a rather instrumental role. The same impression is given in the Declaration. Ethos is, in a proper sense, a means instead of end in itself. On the one hand, Küng does not believe that real political use of power would be the right means of attaining world order. On the other hand, he acknowledges the principal validity of real politics: the end in itself is global order and peace instead of ethics as such.

It is important that the term “project” expresses the methodological thinking behind PWE. Moreover, as is already evident in the motto – “no global peace without dialogue of religions” – although absolute values do not lose their importance, they are nevertheless linked to practical processes: the ethically right unfolds gradually through such procedures as religious dialogue. Cooperation in all fields of society and culture is an essential theme of PWE; the practical significance of a global Ethos is of primary importance. Küng seems to take the whole agenda of PWE as a project consisting of practical ingredients rather than as a theoretical model that is justified through consistent steps of an argument. In this light the emphasis appears, roughly expressed, to be on the effects of the religious peace dialogue. This kind of consequentialist vantage point is characteristic of both realpolitik and, for instance, pragmatistic social thinking. The “truth criterion” of inter-religious theology is its effect from the perspective of the common good, expressed here as global stability and a level of cooperation. The practical effects are to be observed and evaluated only in the sphere of experience.


250 See for example J, 758–761; Küng and Kuschel 1993b, 10, 11; Robinson 1995; VD, 11–13. See also for example Bialas 1999e; GBE, 100–102. Cf. Spaemann 1996 and, for a different view, WWW, 380, 381.
instead of theoretical speculation. Here historical and sociological approaches converge with realism and pragmatism in a manner characteristic of the positive method. In this sense there are features in PWE that remind, for instance, of Langdon Gilkey’s model for a theology of religions, both Küng and Gilkey drawing particularly on the pragmatism of John Dewey and William James. Küng himself defines pragmatism in a way that is analogous with James’s religious analysis:

According to [pragmatism], the question from the perspective of finding true religion is simply how the religion “works,” what “practical” effects it has, what is its actual value for a personal form of life and for a common social life — in history, here and now. The criterion that “tests the workability” then would be global peace and survival. Along these lines there will emerge an “ecumenical theology for peace . . . ,” where “. . . what is needed is not so much a mirror that mirrors everything but rather a burning lens that enables concentrated seeing.” In other words, religions should emphatically strive for what promotes life on earth and global peace. Interpreted through these consequentialist lenses, PWE


252 Gilkey 1987, 46: “We have seen the theoretical dilemma that plurality has forced upon us. On the one hand, the inescapable drive toward ecumenical community, toward respect for and recognition of the other as other, and of the religious validity and power he or she embodies, has pushed us toward a relativity that seems to defy intellectual resolution. There seems no consistent theological way to relativize and yet to assert our own symbols – and yet we must do both in dialogue. On the other hand, the shadow side of religious plurality frequently forces us to resist, to stand somewhere, and also to hold some alternative religious position with absolute fidelity, courage and perseverance. How are we to understand and resolve this contradiction or puzzle dealt us by plurality? Faced with this reflective impasse, I suggest we refer to the venerable, practical American tradition. The puzzle that to reflection may represent a hopeless contradiction, said John Dewey, can through intelligent practice be fruitfully entered into and successfully resolved. As James reminds us, moreover, praxis brings with it a forced option, one that cannot be avoided. When praxis is called for, puzzled immobility before a contradiction or indifferent acceptance of a plurality of options must both cease – for to exist humanly we must wager, and must enact our wager. So is it with the dilemma forced on us by an oppressive ideology: faced with that menace, we must act — that is, we will act whether we wish to or not. More specifically, we will either conform or we will resist; and both are actions, choices that transform much about ourselves that went before, not least our relationship to our social environment. Praxis and its demands do not leave us alone”; pp. 48, 49: “The dialectic works both ways: relativizing the manifestation on the one hand, and so all incarnations of the absolute, and yet manifesting as well through the relative an absoluteness that transcends it — otherwise neither liberating praxis nor creative reflection would be possible.” Cf. DiNoia 1990, 121, 122; Newbiggin 1990, 143–146. For more on Dewey’s method, see Campbell 1995, 193–200.

253 TA, 276: “Danach wird im Blick auf die wahre Religion einfachhin gefragt, wie eine Religion im Ganzen ‘wirkt,’ welche praktische Folgen sie hat, welches ihr tatsächlicher Wert für die persönliche Lebensgestaltung und das soziale Zusammenleben ist – in der Geschichte, hier und heute” (italics added).

would seem to have features analogous to the classical realistic political model of Kissinger that Küng sketches as follows:

*Peace and justice cannot* be the chief goal of foreign politics. With the help of diplomacy statesmen are to strive only for *stability and security through a balance of power* in order that the world, marked by tragic, through stabilizing the balance of power, could be led toward somewhat more stability and security and thus indirectly toward peace: by mitigating crisis and, if possible, by avoiding wars, slowly, step by step and bit by bit toward peace.²⁵⁵

The features of PWE, presented earlier, would all seem to fall under this consequentialist framework: peace, the primacy of societal order with respect to ethics and justice, crisis management and prevention, practical proceduralism, dialogue, and arbitrative methods with global peace as the ultimate aim. Thus, the consequentialist rendering of PWE would appear to culminate in at least some kind of consequentialism reminiscent of realpolitik on a global scale.

### 2.1.2. Kant Against Consequentialism

At this point it would seem that the primary goal of PWE is global peace. Those actions that promote peace are taken as fostering the spirit of PWE in general. It is, of course, this interpretation of PWE that can be questioned as well. Is it really global peace to override any other criteria with which to assess the ethical value of actions? Neuhaus articulates his criticism as follows: “Is religious consciousness in and of itself in a position to relativize its claim to absoluteness for the sake of public peace?”²⁵⁶ Küng himself accuses consequentialism of being philosophically inconsistent because it is difficult to assess the moral value of different consequences themselves; this criteriological problem is evident, for instance, in James’s religious pragmatism: “According to which *criteria* are phenomena as complex as the great religions to be assessed?”²⁵⁷ Indeed, there is a need for a more elaborate criterion than merely a general appeal to global peace. If what works is more or less the criterion for truth, then the problem lies in the question of how to derive the second-order criterion to distinguish what really works from what works only superficially.²⁵⁸ Küng acknowledges that stubborn pragmatism is particularly problematic in the context of religions.²⁵⁹


²⁵⁶ Neuhaus 1999, 16: “Ist das religiöse Bewusstsein von sich aus in der Lage, um des öffentlichen Friedens willen seinen Wahrheitsanspruch zu relativieren?”

²⁵⁷ TA, 277: “Nach welchen *Kriterien* wären so Komplexe Phänomene wie die Grossen Religionen zu beurteilen?” (Italics added.)

To take one example, expansive missionary work may involve a serious potential for conflict, at least when applied to cultures hostile to foreign world views. This is not to say that missionaries would have to endorse any violence; they may have a completely negative attitude toward any use of violence. Rather the subjects of violence may be found in a host culture; they may consider violence a justified reaction to a spiritual threat. They might, however, have something other than conflict prevention as their paramount value, for example, the eternal salvation of all human beings. From the perspective of conflict management, Küng consistently opposes the standard idea of religious mission work. This would imply a positive answer to Neuhaus’s question above: is religious consciousness in and of itself in a position to relativize its claim to absoluteness for the sake of public peace?

At the same time Küng considers defensive war to be justified. He contends that the goal of achieving global peace does not mean absolute pacifism, for this would be against the idea of planetary responsibility. “Peace at any price is not responsible.” Taken at face value, this sounds understandable. Nevertheless, from the perspective of present problem, it is important to see how Küng elaborates on this statement: “for not a false peace, but peace as a means to justice (Augustinus: ‘Opus iustitiae’) is what is required” The tentative analysis in the former chapter alluded to global peace as the primary aim of PWE. In the present light, of

in jedem Fall stellt sich die Frage: Nach welchen Kriterien wären so komplexe Phänomene wie die grossen Religionen zu beurteilen? . . . Was aber bedeutet dann in diesem Zusammenhang ‘Philosophisch erweisbarer Vernunftgemässheit’ [W. James]?” (italics added); WWR, 536–538.

259 TA, 277.


265 WWW, 177.

266 “Frieden um jeden Preis nicht verantwortbar ist.”

course, this is too simplistic an interpretation. The paramount aim is not peace, but justice. Peace is valuable only because it promotes justice. Global peace and stability are, in the final analysis, means rather than ends in themselves.

There are noteworthy affinities between a realistic political position and ethical relativism in philosophy. One of the major relativist positions in moral philosophy is John Mackie’s subjective relativism. According to Mackie, humans should create their own morality individually when necessary and without fundamental criteria; the guidance for this endeavor is derived from the practical avoidance of conflicts where flexible and liberal alternatives are preferable to rigid dogma. The spirit of Mackie’s relativism is akin to that of such classical realist politicians as Kissinger, Richelieu, Machiavelli, and Morgentau. In opposing what he earlier had called “the strategy of making harmless,” Küng obviously denounces postmodern relativism in general. He ascribes such mottos to this strategy as “anything goes” or “everything is possible” as well as the “existential problem called truth does not exist.”

In his book *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (1979) Jean-Francois Lyotard is said to be the first to have used the term ‘postmodern’ from the perspective of philosophical and social discourse; Lyotard writes: “Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives.” Lyotard’s focal point is akin to late Wittgensteinian pragmatism: there are only mutually incommensurable language games. In this kind of constellation speculative philosophy as well as religion have purely instrumental status: they are of practical help in orienting in a radically relative world. It goes without saying that in this kind of postmodern thinking metaphysical truth and ethical normativity are highly relative concepts.

Küng identifies arbitrariness and non-ethical attitudes as among the dangers of relativism: although all relativism does not converge directly on real politics, in practice relativism...
ism’s natural corollary is no doubt the subordination of ethical considerations to political ones.\textsuperscript{276} On this basis Küng denounces real politics insofar as there is the danger that non-ethical factors, such as power, turn politics against normative morality.\textsuperscript{277} A global order is not to be aspired to as the highest value any more than are national interests. Political factors, such as societal and cultural stability, are not ends in themselves, but rather ethics.

The statements about the priority of ethos over politics are delightfully clear: “Ethos must have priority over politics and law . . . ethos must therefore inform and inspire our political leadership . . . in order to give ethical guidance to our ethical, national, social, economic and religious tensions.”\textsuperscript{278}

To be sure, it is not that world peace is expected to be attained by purely consequentialist means according to PWE. Global ethics has an intrinsic value whether it succeeds to promote global peace or not. This explains why Küng does not see the use of power, but rather common ethics as the means to attain global peace and stability. Earlier it was shown that Küng considers it unrealistic to attain peace through the use of power. Now, it is obvious that he is also against the use of power and real politics in principle. It is not insignificant for Küng, just how global stability is to be attained. Ethics is characteristically an end in itself, superseding all other ends mentioned in PWE.

In order to elaborate more carefully on the substantial content of the ethical dimension now shown as the paramount focus it is not sufficient to restrict ourselves to the general concept of justice. It is worthwhile returning to PWE’s underlying idea of planetary responsibility. In the same context in which Küng opposes anthropocentrism,\textsuperscript{279} he also speaks of the actual centrality of humans in nature.

\textsuperscript{276} WWW, 73: “. . . und politische Unterordnung der Moral, welche allgemein verpflichtende ethische Massstäbe gerne als ‘abstrakt’ und politische Moral als unrealistisch abqualifiziert und kaum höchste Werte und allgemeine sittliche Grundsätze anzuerkennen scheint.”

\textsuperscript{277} WWW, 50: “Verwerflich ist nur, wenn sich solche Realpolitik zugleich gegen die Orientierung staatlichen Handels an politischen Ideen und ethisch begründeten Wertvorstellungen wendet und so Gefahr läuft, in reines Machtdenken zu verfallen.”


\textsuperscript{279} WWW, 327, 328.
b. The aim and criterion: man in an environment worthy of living in . . . On the threshold of the third millennium the cardinal ethical question is posed more urgently than ever: Under which basic conditions can we survive, as humans on an earth worthy of living on and humanly organize our individual and social lives.\textsuperscript{280}

In fact, the quotation alludes to a relatively anthrocentric world view. Although Küng uses the term “planetarian responsibility,” he nevertheless includes the idea of humans in a central position with regard to nature as a whole.\textsuperscript{281} Thus the global order appears to be the means with which to promote well-being first and foremost among humans. The goal of protecting the environment is ultimately intended to improve conditions for human life. In this way, the general concept of ethics or justice is explicited through the term humanity.\textsuperscript{282}

The same thing applies in political decision making, a matter directly related to opposing realpolitik. “Not reality, which may also mean bestiality in politics, but humanity, where morality culminates, must be the supreme measure of political practice as well.”\textsuperscript{283} Justice and humanity are closely intertwined in PWE. In the final analysis, it is obvious that Küng’s opposition to realpolitik is related to endorsing both justice and humanity. “The market economy is not end in itself; it must be in the service of the needs of people . . .”\textsuperscript{284} A following collection of normative principles is a useful recapitulation:

\textit{The primacy of ethos over economy and politics . . . every human and every group of people must be treated humanly . . . critical fundamental reflection, which above all analyzes the normative premises of economic positions, is of great significance . . . Economy and state exist for the sake of the people, so that civil as well as economic institutions may not be stamped with power alone, but also as always doing justice to the value of man.}\textsuperscript{285}


\textsuperscript{283} WWW, 88: “Nicht der Realität, die auch in der Politik Bestialität bedeuten kann, sondern die Humanität, in der die Moralität gipfelt, muss obersten Massstab auch des politischen Handels sein.” Cf. e.g. CW, 539.

\textsuperscript{284} WWW, 283: “Die Marktwirtschaft ist nicht Selbstzweck, sie muss im Dienst der Bedürfnisse der Menschen stehen . . .” (italics added).

Of the two ethical concepts, humanity is clearly superior to justice. “Justice is for the sake of people and not people for the sake of justice.” There is then a need to scrutinize the very concept of humanity proposed as the focal point of PWE.

Fortunately, Küng openly, albeit quite loosely, articulates the nature of the ethics PWE is set to promote. First of all, PWE is meant to introduce a “general ethical criterion” by which to evaluate all individual religions as well as non-religious ideologies. As shown in the first chapter, Küng’s existential emphasis facilitates belief in the idea that a single religion does not add anything substantial to ethics with regard to other religions or even to non-religious world views in principle. In this light it is understandable that individual religions or secular ideologies do not show any principal or qualitative differences with regard to ethics in general; the question is rather one of differences in degree, deriving from differences between explicit sources of moral motivation. Of the major positions in the theology of religions, PWE has affinities to Paul F. Knitter’s religious pluralism, in which commonalities among individual religions are sought in the restricted ethical sphere of these religions rather than in their more comprehensive truth claims. What then does the general ethical criterion, a principle designed to be universal, regardless of particular religions or ideologies, actually amount to?

A general ethical criterion is defined quite simply: all that promotes humanity is true and right. Hence, its other name in PWE, humanum. Despite the fact that the criterion is ethical, it still takes on indirect stand on metaphysical truth. In these terms a general ethical criterion can be considered as akin to what Küng observes of James’s pragmatism. The following analysis, however, will show that pragmatism is not the whole picture. The intention behind the criterion is to express “... the common humanity of all humans ...” It is exactly in this sense that the criterion is general and also radically ecumenical: it applies equally to all

286 WWW, 114: “... das Recht für die Menschen da ist und nicht die Menschen für das Recht...”

287 See for example C, 66: “Spezifisch christlich ist also gerade nicht, dass diese oder jene bestimmte ethische Forderung erwogen wird, die als einzelne unvergleichlich sein soll. Die von Paulus aus jüdischer oder hellenistischer Tradition übernommen ethischen Forderungen liessen sich auch anders begründen. Spezifisch christliches also ist, dass alle ethischen Forderungen vom gekreuzigten und aufweckten Jesus Christus her verstanden werden ... Dies alles heisst: Wie dass Unterscheidende für das jüdische Ethos der Jahweglaube ist, so ist das Unterscheidende für das christliche Ethos der Christusglaube” (italics added), 55–57, 71, 77–87; PW, 160.

288 Insofar as the extreme interpretation of Huovinen is right (see above), one must, however, ask what is the real difference between Küng and such pluralists as Hick and Smith, since as all religious essence is reduced to universal value-experience. Kuschel 1993a has nonetheless strongly criticized Huovinen’s views as being too simplistic.

289 TA, 277: “William James hatte schon am Anfang seines Klassikers über die ‘Verschiedenheit religiöser Erfahrung’ (1902) als brauchbares Kriterium der Beurteilung echter Religion ... die ‘ethische Bewahrung’ genannt ...” (italics added).

290 PW, 119: “... die gemeinsame Menschlichkeit aller Menschen ...”
religions. Küng’s aim is to offer an alternative to the relativist paradigm, usual today, which he critically calls “truth forgetting”; he thus assumes the existence of an independent, absolute, and universal truth criterion.

What has been said about PWE’s humanum as a general ethical criterion for all religions makes it considerably akin to Paul F. Knitter’s model for a theology of religions, which Knitter calls a liberation theology of religions. He believes that the proper task of theology is to prevent and do away with injustices among and between individual religions. This vantage point has the name soteriocentrism as distinct from christocentrism or theocentrism. According to Knitter, one should not pay too much attention to the truth claims of religions, but instead evaluate religions according to how they promote justice and prevent social oppression. He justifies his increasingly pragmatistic emphasis with the fact that theocentric dialogue has proven to be too theoretical and abstract with result that religious dialogue fosters too particularist a type of religious attitude. Heim emphasizes Knitter’s anti-propositionalism: “Truth is neither a proposition nor a correspondence: religious truth is a disposition that one enters into by means of religious statements and practices.”

This view of truth justifies assessing the truthfulness of religions according to the so-called “capacity of justice.” This amounts to the fact that the absolute criteria for truth found in different religions are, for the ethical reasons just mentioned, justice and human rights rather than metaphysical truths.

Importantly, Küng also questions the resort to a Tarskian correspondence theory of truth and other propositional truth models. It is significantly the argument on the pragmatistic nature of truth that brings Küng to evaluate the truthfulness of religions with the help of the principle of humanum. Thus, the ‘general ethical criterion’ and its universal focus as well as

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291 PW, 119: “... ein wahrhaft ökumenisches Grundkriterium zu formulieren... Sollte es nicht möglich sein, dass alle Religionen zumindest bezüglich dieser kriteriologischen Grundfrage übereinstimmen...”


295 TA, 286, 287: “Man könnte mit langen und komplizierten Erörterungen fortfahren über die Frage, was Wahrheit ist, und den verschiedenen Wahrheitstheorien der Gegenwart (Korrespondenz-...) Stellung beziehen... Die Frage nach der Wahrheit einer Religion zielt auf mehr als die reine Theorie. Was Wahrheit ist erweist sich nie nur in einem System wahrhaf Aussagen über Gott, Mensch und Welt, nie nur in einer Reihe von Satzwahrheiten, gegenüber denen alle anderen falsch wären. Es geht immer zugleich auch um Praxis, einen Weg der Erfahrung, Aufklärung und Bewährung sowie der Erleuchtung, Erlösung und Befreiung’” (bold emphasis added). On the counter critique in defence of the correspondence theory, see for example Puolimatka 2002, 59. Küng’s statement on the propositional view on truth alludes historically to young Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein 1921) and logical empirism. (e.g. Ayer 1936).
its content as an Enlightenment kind of justice may reflect not only a Kantian, but also pragmatistic vein in PWE, thus enabling its juxtaposition with Knitter.\textsuperscript{296}

The general definition of humanum as a general ethical criterion is further explicated in two ways. First, Küng elaborates on the ethical content of a general ethical criterion, which in turn illuminates the ideological background of the criterion. Second, he also applies the criterion to practice and thus makes it more concrete by defining clear principles that parallel the individual precepts of all great religions in the important questions of life. I will return to this second explication later. For now my purpose is to analyze the ethical substance of the criterion, that is, the deeper meaning of humanity, and its principal validity, or its generality. Along with this treatise some considerations will be given also to the philosophical background of PWE’s ethical view.

To clarify what Küng might mean by “promoting humanity,” it is worth recapitulating the affinities of PWE’s ethical view to Kant’s. In the most general articulation of this affinity, ethics is characteristically about obligation, and its content is humanity: an all-human obligation is to act so that the action promotes humanity. In this light it is not surprising that Küng appeals directly to Kant’s categorical imperative, particularly its second version.\textsuperscript{297} The categorical imperative connotes precisely an unconditional obligation distinguished from conditional imperatives.\textsuperscript{298} The first formulation of the categorical imperative runs as follows: “Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”\textsuperscript{299} Kant’s second formulation of the categorical imperative is meant to elaborate on the first expression. It runs: “Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another always as an end and never as a means only.”\textsuperscript{300} In other words, in constructing common global ethics, the vantage point is that the human person is never merely an instrument for some other purpose, but always an end in itself. Man himself is the criterion of ethical life and all action.\textsuperscript{301} This explicitly shows that PWE’s chief argument, the end

\textsuperscript{296} Schreiter 1998, 521; Komulainen 2000b, 588.

\textsuperscript{297} PW, 54: “... ethisches Grundprinzip muss sein: Der Mensch – das ist seit Kant eine Formulierung des kategorischen Imperativs – darf nie zum blossen Mittel gemacht werden. Er muss letzter Zweck, muss \textit{immer Ziel und Kriterium} bleiben” (italics added).

\textsuperscript{298} Kant 1797a, 21: “... and, moreover are \textit{categorical (unconditional) imperatives}. In being \textit{unconditional}, they are distinguished from technical imperatives (rules of art), which always give only conditional commands. According to categorical imperatives, certain actions are permitted or not permitted... Hence for morally necessary actions there arises the concept of \textit{duty}” (italics added).

\textsuperscript{299} Kant 1788, 80.

\textsuperscript{300} Kant 1788, 87.

\textsuperscript{301} PW, 54: “Aber welche Projekte man auch plant für eine bessere Zukunft der Menschheit, ethisches Grundprinzip muss sein: Der Mensch – das ist seit Kant eine Formulierung des kategorischen Imperativs – darf \textit{nie} zum \textit{blossen Mittel} gemacht werden. Er muss \textit{letzter Zweck}, muss \textit{immer Ziel und Kriterium} bleiben” (italics added).
in itself, *is not global peace, but humanity*. Küng applies the term *humanum* to this principle of humanity with a Kantian flavor.  

As shown in the previous chapter, humanity is closely linked to the concept of justice. Now, in light of the categorical imperative, it is even more understandable that Küng subordinates justice to humanity. The former is ultimately in the service of, *humanum* as a paramount value. Parallel to justice are all the fundamental modern values derived from the Enlightenment such as liberty, equality, women’s emancipation, and solidarity with nature, which similarly promote the Kantian *humanum*. Human dignity is the primary value, and the fundamental values of Western liberalism are its concrete articulations. They are intertwined with *humanum*, more closely than, say, global peace, although it may also be that they could be used to non-human ends as well without being subordinated to *humanum*. Even though PWE alludes to a postmodern rather than a modern paradigm in its rhetoric, it is difficult to see the clear difference between Western liberalism in general deriving from Kant and *humanum* as a general ethical criterion in particular. On this account, one possible interpretation is that the primary argument of PWE is the Kantian type of Enlightenment humanism. 

An essential aspect of *humanum* in PWE is the emphasis on *human rights*. In fact, the *Declaration* is meant to be understood ultimately as a consolidation of human rights. Not

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303 WWW, 114: “. . . das Recht für die Menschen da ist und nicht die Menschen für das Recht . . .” 

304 PW, 93–95; C, 833, 835; C, 834, 835, 855–865. 

305 PW, 119: “. . . auf der Menschenwürde und ihm zugeordneten Grundwerten . . .” 

306 See e.g. Kymlicka 1990, 207; MacIntyre 1985; Sandel 1999, 224–237. 


309 GSM, 53, 54, 84.
surprisingly then, Küng has been characterized primarily as a human rights theologian.\textsuperscript{310} In this interpretation, \textit{humanum} is to be understood as a continuation from the philosophically formulated categorical imperative all the way to the political realization of human rights.\textsuperscript{311} If this is the proper interpretation of \textit{humanum} as general ethical criterion,\textsuperscript{312} it reflects the similar continuation from Kant’s categorical imperative to the societal sphere in the form of political liberalism.\textsuperscript{313}

One possible interpretation of PWE then is a Kantian one so that the deontological nature of ethics as well as the articulation of the content of \textit{humanum} is by and large tantamount to the tradition of Kantian Enlightenment. What is novel in PWE is that it appears to include mainly two ingredients. First, Küng wants to take the focus of \textit{humanum} away from human-centeredness. As has been suggested, this modification is nevertheless not substantial in reality, for in the final analysis man retains her role as the central point of ethics. Significantly, rational autonomy and the categorical imperative are derived from an anthropocentric world view rather than from a planetarian world view.\textsuperscript{314} Second, Küng attempts to avoid deriving the foundation of ethics from man himself as opposed to the ideal of Kantian Enlightenment. However, this revision of Kant has already been discussed critically.

In the first section of the previous chapter, it was suggested that both Kant and PWE may be interpreted in a way that considerably diminishes the differences between the two. In light of what Kant and Küng ultimately mean by autonomous reason, PWE may be seen to advocate Kantian moral autonomy, at least indirectly. Both modifications of the Enlighten-
ment paradigm may be seen as insufficient insofar as Küng aims at an alternative to Kant’s model. Not surprisingly, Küng’s assessment of Enlightenment humanism is strikingly positive in principle: the content of the ethics of humanism and world religions is basically the same, and the question is about degree or moral motivation rather than qualitative difference.\footnote{PW, 115; C, 67: “Christen sind nicht weniger Humanisten als jene Humanisten, die ihre Humanität unchristlich, gegenchristlich, ja, antireligiös oder auch gar nicht begründen. Kein Christ braucht Berührungsängste vor dem Wort Humanismus zu haben. . . . Doch vertreten Christen einen radikalen Humanismus. Sie bejahen . . . nicht nur, wie ein idealistischer Neohumanismus sagte, alles Wahre, Gute, Schöne und Menschliche, sondern konfrontieren sich auch mit dem nicht weniger realen Unwahren, Unguten, Unschönen und Unmenschlichen”; J, 447, 546, 547; CA, 248, 249; WW, 132, 164; Ching 1988, 91–99; GW, 33, 34. Cf. Thomas 1990.} The re-unification of Christianity and humanism in modern times is for him a sheer victory for the church; whereas humanism has re-discovered its secure foundation, Christianity has re-discovered its \textit{humanum}.\footnote{PW, 115. Cf. Casanova 1999, 21–24.} Küng views this as nothing less than a happy historical synthesis.

\section*{2.2. The Positive Method: Hegel Against Consequentialism}

In his emphasis on both “horizontal” (\textit{humanum}) and “vertical” (theonomy) levels of PWE, Küng seems to converge with Karl Jaspers and thus close the circle from Kant through Hegel and Heidegger back to Kant. Similar to Kant and (early) Schleiermacher, Jaspers also invokes an \textit{ethical} way to assess the truthfulness of what he calls ciphers, that is, articulations of humans’ horizontal relationship to Absolute Being, which is otherwise impossible to assess.

Ciphers lack the sort of concrete, determinate evidence by which they can be given a literal meaning and scientific truth value. Thought about ciphers would be a merely formal operation with empty conceptions if there were no concrete test of their truth at all. For Jaspers such a touchstone of metaphysical truth is the practical life which it makes possible, and the actions by means of which adherents to such truth testify to it. Ultimate philosophical positions and their analogues (e.g., in religion) have political implications and consequences, and practical affairs of mankind, unless they are devoid of meaning and aim, are the testing ground of transcendent truth and man’s commitment to it. The concern with clarifying the political impact of man’s vision of the ultimate truth and with confirming the grounding in truth of man’s practice and association is the counterpart of Jaspers’s philosophy of the cipher-script. It is also another recurrent motive of and a possible approach to his thinking.\footnote{Ehrlich 1975, 5.}

This Jaspersian view, depicted by Ehrlich, follows the same line with Jaspers’s dialogue partner in his later years, Hannah Arendt, who speaks of responsibility in a way that is analogous to PWE’s use of the term. The same idea, that of a “theology of responsibility,” is strikingly similar to PWE, and is endorsed by Fritz Buri, who applies Jaspers’s philosophy more fully to a dialogue of religions. In Buri’s discussion one may see the Jaspersian philosophy taking fully-fledged theological articulation in a way that makes it a trailblazer for PWE; at least to a significant degree. The similarities among the four are all present in the way John E. Wilson describes Buri’s agenda:

\begin{quote}
Buri’s “theology of responsibility” is accessible in a short work . . . “Thinking faith” is not the object of science. “There is no thinking without objects but there are objects of thought which are not
\end{quote}
merely objects, for they point to what is not objectifiable.” Human thought encounters a “boundary” that cannot be crossed in three all-important interrelated aspects or dimensions of human existence: (1) Being-in-Totality, which exceeds any attempt to conceive it objectively; (2) the human soul or personal self; and (3) Transcendence, which like Being-in-Totality is “unconditioned” and with which the soul exists in a nonobjectifiable relationship. Transcendence communicates meaning indirectly in the “symbols” of the world religions, in their historical myths and liturgical forms. . . . it is by the grace of hearing the “voice” spoken in the symbols that one understands one’s life as existential faith. . . . To the voice of the summons one owes the recognition that the “Thou” of the other person belongs to one’s own personhood, and that one’s own personal decision in assuming responsible personhood in the community, in both church and world, is free and unconditional. Christian dogmatics and ethics have among their tasks that of preventing the mistakes of orthodoxy and nihilism, both of which take away the freedom of human responsibility: orthodoxy, by having belief and behavior already decided; nihilism, by saying nothing is true. Christian responsibility requires engagement with modern philosophy and the criticism of traditions, and it requires openness to the global community. Buri pursued dialogue with other religions which perceive the summons of Transcendence and its grace through their own religious symbols. . . . he called for the openness of Christianity to new forms of faith that may develop from these dialogues . . .

Now, the key question in the cases of Jaspers, Buri, and Arendt, as well as of PWE insofar as it endorses the same position, is how is the criterion for this proposed ethical assessment to be derived? This is in fact the same reservation that Küng himself has raised vis-à-vis consequentialism and Jamesian pragmatism. This is less a problem for Kant insofar as he sticks to the immanent possibilities of practical reason in this matter. But while the sufficiency of these possibilities is denied by Heidegger and Jaspers, there are no alternatives other than that of transcendence as the source for certainty in any matters of life. But transcendence does not, according to Jaspers, manifest itself by way of unconditional articulation at the level of language. Unambiguous language is indeed what is needed if any criteria for the ethical value of conceptions of the Absolute are to be established for inter-subjective evaluation; and is it not after all humanum as a universal value, which PWE sets out to advocate?

What then is the point of advocating global ethics in the first place? Would it not be better to leave this question for individual religions to determine, be they mutually exclusive or not? These questions raise a serious challenge to the vision of PWE, and it is worth examining more carefully how realpolitik and some sociologically-oriented research is indeed in a position to advance these criticisms.

2.2.1. Consequentialism and Sociology

In the first chapter of part II I showed that that the role of religion in arguing for a global ethic is relative in PWE. In other words, Küng does not place strong emphasis on religion in justifying ethics. It is similarly possible for an atheist to find grounds for successfully evaluating ethical questions. On the other hand, Küng criticizes the Enlightenment ideal of autonomy in ethical matters. He seems to indicate that it is difficult or impossible to derive either justification or even motivation for a certain ethical conduct without reference to transcendent counterpoint independent of human contingency. In some sense, however, Küng leaves his points so open that it is difficult to conceive clearly in what direction he is ready to develop PWE in this question.

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What then is a consistent way to view the role of religion in PWE in particular and in the quest for global ethics in general? Perhaps there is a way to find an answer. Here it is necessary to return to the question of the definition of religion in PWE. I would like to concentrate on ‘religion’ as a sociological phenomenon, observed from the outside. This overall definition, however, is not to be confused with a pluralistic method in a straightforward sense, meaning that one would have to assume a reality over and above the religions as a sociological phenomenon, be it transcendent or phenomenological, which ultimately connects the individual religions with each other. The observant view of religions is not meant to do away with the radical difference of individual religions on the phenomenological level nor to ignore their rival truth claims. The most fruitful question would thus be as follows: what is the status of individual religions in the formation of ethics? Now that the analysis has come to the point of further construction of global ethics from the basis of PWE, it is perhaps useful to modify the question to be still more to the point: what is the status of individual religions in the formation of elementary ethics provided in a comprehensive theory for global ethics? Accordingly, one might be better off changing the original question to plural and adding a comparative aspect: what are the roles of individual religions in the formation of ethics in PWE with regard to each other?

Küng no doubt wants to avoid the problems lurking behind consequentialist models, political as well as ethical. Philosophical and theological questions about truth are also important for him in principle. Along these lines he emphatically criticizes syncretistic efforts in the sphere of inter-religious ecumenics. At the same time, however, Küng’s own ecumenical ambition does not conform to the idea that each religion should stubbornly stick to its own truth alone. Indeed, a middle-way must be found between “truth fanaticism” and “truth forgetting” in the global ethical discourse in general and in the theology of religions in particular.

Küng does not consider this task to be an easy one. For him the central problem is related to what he calls “the troublesome question about the criterion for truth.” Religious communities tend to collapse into fundamentalism. History gives evidence of numerous conflicts that have derived from religious fundamentalism; the polarization characteristic of fundamentalism is thus to be prevented.

The previously mentioned liberal syncretism is also a

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319 Küng directs a particular criticism to the high level meeting in Assisi where a broad group of religious leaders from the Pope to the Dalai Lama were assembled (PW, 104). Cf. for example Wessels 1994; Probst 1994, 90, 91.

320 PW, 104, 105. Vrt. CW, 20, 21; CC, 18; ZWR; MS, 70; WW, 105.

321 TA, 286: “Die heikle Frage nach einem Kriterium für Wahrheit”

problem for Küng, particularly because it does not embody any ethically or theologically relevant substance; this inevitably contributes negatively to the Western crisis of orientation, the prevention of which has already been shown to be an essential motive behind PWE.\textsuperscript{323}

According to the liberal interpretation, it would seem that Küng solves this dilemma by introducing a novel exclusivist claim over and against any religion. More precisely, the point in PWE as an extraordinary exclusivist claim is twofold. First, PWE completely accepts the differences between religions, but not the exclusivist way of criticizing or condemning other religions from the perspective of one’s own. Second, Küng dedicates the purely exclusivist point of view to the ethical criterion of \textit{humanum}, which is found in all the major religious traditions of the world. In other words, \textit{humanum} is the only criterion by which it is possible thoroughly to evaluate religions other than one’s own.

From the necessity of differentiating between true (good) and false (bad) religion among all the religions there arises the necessity for an inter-religious criteriology for every religion, which I can now summarize as follows:

- According to the \textbf{general ethical criterion}, a religion is true and good if, and insofar as, it is human, it does not suppress or destroy humanity, but supports and promotes it.
- According to the \textbf{general religious criterion}, a religion is true and good if, and insofar as, it remains faithful to its own canon, that is, to its authentic "essence," defining Scripture or figure, to which it continuously appeals.
- According to the \textbf{specific Christian criterion}, a religion is true and good, if, and insofar as, it confesses in its theory and practice the spirit of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{324}

As stated earlier, Jaspers too invokes an ethical criterion for evaluating the truthfulness of individual articulations of ‘Being’. For both Jaspers and Küng – even though the former does not, of course, use the same terminology – the core connotation of the concept \textit{humanum} is to treat other people humanely. Now, it is not a humane action if one condemns other humans merely because they have religious convictions other than one’s own. In the pluralistic situation we find ourselves today, the only way forward is to define a common ethical standard derived equally from every relevant world view. But precisely because it is not right to exclude any of these from the process of forming global ethics, exclusivism is necessarily problematic. It is not possible to work together for a common \textit{ethos} while the parties condemn

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{323} PW, 105: “Umgekehrt freilich haben müde Wahrheitsvergessenheit Orientierungslosigkeit und Normenslosigkeit zur Folge, dass viele an überhaupt nichts mehr glauben”; WWW, 201: “Umgekehrt sollten die \textbf{Liberalisten} sich der Selbstkritik nicht verschliessen: angesichts so mancher fauler Anpassung der Zeitgeist, die nicht Nein sagen kann; angesichts allen Mangels an religiöser Substanz, theologischem Profil und ethischer Verbindlichkeit in einer modernen liberalen Religiosität, die kaum ethische Grenzen kennt.”
\end{itemize}
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each other at another level. However, if some exclusive minimum ethical criteria are established with an impartial role with regard to any particular religion, yet still flowing from a common enterprise, there is hope. Precisely this kind of impartial understanding of global ethics leads to the *humanum*: to live humanely is to accept the radical religious differences on the one hand and to refrain from radically exclusive claims on the proponents of other world views on the other.

But here Küng’s own critique of religious pragmatism reappears: whence the criterion for assessing the moral consequences of religions? In other words, according to what criteria is the *humanum* itself to be determined? If it is to be derived independently from religious and other existing ideological traditions, then are we not drawing on the hubris of a pluralistic bird’s eye view that both Jaspers and Küng deem impossible? Thus, it remains to be asked, on what grounds should the world accept the idea of *humanum* as presented above? How is this understanding justified? Particularly given that *humanum* stands for anti-exclusivism with regard to religions, it is difficult to see why any comprehensive world view, exclusive as these are by their deepest nature, should yield to *humanum* in the first place. Here Neuhaus’s question reappears: “Is religious consciousness in and of itself in a position to relativize its claim to absoluteness for the sake of public peace?”

Or, now that peace is no longer claimed as the paramount aim, are religions in a position to relativize their claims for the sake of global ethical consensus? It is worthwhile to sharpen Neuhaus’s critical question further both with his own more comprehensive critique of PWE and also with other, similar notions from the field of sociology. This leads us to comment on the position of the French historian, literary critic, and social scientist, René Girard.

Girard deals with human evil as aggressiveness. His religiously emphasized theory is thus relevant, particularly when global peace is at stake. Risto Saarinen applies the Girardian model as follows: Girard views religions as channels of aggression. The role of sacrifice and the scapegoat in particular are ways to control the violence lurking in humans. The decisive point is to understand that this evil is an inherent quality. This idea is particularly problematic in Western culture with its bias toward a positive view of man. Popular Western values are those of humanism, such as equality and global togetherness. In this ethos questions of violence and hostility are not directly encountered. The modern West is largely based on denial, or at least underestimation and elimination, of these dark sides of humanity instead of channeling them. One result of this is that things considered taboo or sacred increasingly are disappearing from our cultures. However, these are the very elements that provide a way to handle aggressiveness in an open, but usually harmless manner in traditional cultures and religions. It remains to be asked whether the ideal of a world ethos also embodies the Western ideal of

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325 Neuhaus 1999, 16: “Ist das religiöse Bewusstsein von sich aus in der Lage, um des öffentlichen Friedens willen seinen Wahrheitsanspruch zu relativieren?”
kindness and tolerance in a way that makes it rather difficult to take at a face value from the Girardian point of view.326

Basing his rather comprehensive criticism of PWE largely on René Girard,327 Neuhaus takes an example from daily life. When a teacher wants to create a friendly atmosphere she may easily pose a question to a pupil, “Aren’t you Mary’s sister?” This question, however, may in fact provoke irritation in the pupil. She does not feel hostility primarily toward the teacher, but toward her sister, and she feels a strong desire to separate herself from the sister. This is because, according to Neuhaus, humans have a need to see themselves as unique individuals. Neuhaus calls this phenomenon Aneignungsmimesis. Religions especially define themselves through uniqueness. The effort extrinsically to find common denominators for religions may even, as in the example of the two sisters, create new antagonisms, because the commonness itself will manifest as a threat to the uniqueness of one’s own religion.328 For Küng, religious fanaticism and exclusivism are essential threats to world peace.329 Neuhaus’s approach is the reverse: the solution for peace will be found in regulating internal and mutual mechanisms of aggression in people and in religions, instead of fostering ethical idealism as is characteristic of PWE.330

Neuhaus thus disagrees with the Künigian proposal that a common ethic among religions would be the only right solution to attaining global peace.331 His objection to PWE is rather consequential and somewhat akin to realpolitik.332 That Küng strives realistically to guarantee the world-order and simultaneously do so methodologically in a way that is against realpolitik, that is, through a common ethic, is self-refuting.

To interpret Neuhaus loosely, one may draw the following conclusion about his experiential criticism of PWE. Küng should be more realist as a politician in order to offer feasible tools for global peace. He should replace PWE’s conformist ingredients with some kind of global power balancing. The issue is one of viewing humans and religions more as consisting of antagonistic instead of peaceful potentials. This being the case, religions require realistic political balancing and control, so that the antagonism would not burst out in a destructive

328 Neuhaus 1999, 25–27. This can be directly applied to Küng’s agenda of planetarian responsibility as well. Kondylis (1991, 18, and particularly 1992, 18) introduces a similar political dimension within this theme. See also Frühbauer 1997, 588, 589.
329 AWW, 12, 13; WW, 71.
331 Neuhaus 1999, 169. See also for example Huber 1993a, 565; 1993b.
332 Neuhaus gives a characteristically pragmatistic rendering of religion, and a particularly Christian one, see Neuhaus 1999, 91.
way. If every religion were to have its own “power zone,” including with respect to ethics, then societal stability would be on an optimally secure basis. In this sense, the Girardian as well as real political anthropology and the resulting societal view are more pessimistic than that underlying PWE. Küng’s ultimate agenda amounts to what he calls ideal politics, wherein ethical considerations override political aims in striving for peace. In light of Neuhaus’s Girardian analysis Küng’s program is not realistic, at least to the extent that what is meant by ethics is drawn from the Enlightenment view of impartiality toward particular religions. The reason is that impartial ethics inevitably leads to unifying ambitions, which in turn creates conflict. In reality it is the religious claims for absolutism that will promote global peace. This amounts to a need to acknowledge that religious truth, as much as any ideologically comprehensive truth, provokes tension and even conflicts. Drawing on Girard, Saarinen says:

... to my mind it would be most appropriate to say that religions contain the potential for both peace and contention, that neither are to be dismantled without vitiating religions’ self-understanding. Of course, what is more, the potential for aggression is not merely the “bad” or dark side of religion, as the enlightened and kind modern person would readily think. Instead, these aspects are essential parts of religions. In Christianity, first, the truth claim of the religion (Acts 5:29) and a certain exclusivity (John 14:6) and universality (Matt. 28:19) generate conflicts.

Joséf Niewiadomski puts it from the Christian perspective as follows: “The one who faithfully abides by the Biblical truth ... will provoke conflicts and confrontations.”


WWW, 52–61.


Neuhaus’s Girardian claim is that retaining the absoluteness of Christianity is a necessary precondition for world peace. (Neuhaus 1999, 169.) This rather striking claim will be briefly revisited in the close of this study through a consideration of Girard himself.


Niewiadomski 1996, 94: “Der biblischen Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung treu bleibend, wird er ... Konflikte und Auseinandersetzungen provozieren.” By way of illustration, Bonhoeffer has stated that the essence of the visible church of Christ includes the so-called expansive demand for space in the world (Bonhoeffer, 193, 193–216), which inevitably involves the potential for conflict. (Bonhoeffer, 1937, 51–66. Cf. Bonhoeffer 1951, 234.) The development of Bonhoeffer’s personal life, of course, illustrates this message. (See Robertson 1987.) In view of King’s position, it is interesting that there are to be found in this sense similar features in the social ethics of Bonhoeffer as well as in dialectical theology (Lovin 1984).
criticism is particularly applied to all kinds of religious endorsements of globally integrated culture. He regards global theological superstructures as servants of the superficial and equalizing market society. By evening out differences, these superstructures attempt to suppress all controversies of truth and religion in the name of global peace.\textsuperscript{339} The idea of religions being in the service of the market amounts to the relativization of all religious truth claims.\textsuperscript{340} Moreover, religion is being replaced by the power of the market, provided with similar omnipotent and all-satisfactory attributes than have traditionally been attributed to God. This requirement is now being justified, for instance, by referring to the transformation of the world into a huge global village in which stability and order are universal requirements. Thus, in reality, the recommended global order amounts to the tyranny of marketplace:

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\ldots \text{the market itself has long since gotten the function of a super-religion. Within its own framework the market bears a lot; only the alternatives to the logic of the marketplace itself are unbearable. The confession "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" has thus extended its radicality to a new confession, which runs: "Extra mercatum nulla salus." There is only one "dogma," which is believed in and lived, not just in the central European and American society and which requires of us all a sacrifice of faith: the dogma of the marketplace. ... In the mega-machine of world civilization and its totalitarian claim to be the sole horizon of life and death lies the actual theologically relevant danger that aims to displace other religious claims.}\textsuperscript{341}
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Niewiadomski contends that, in contrast to what the super-religion of the global village suggests, the authenticity of the dramatic encounters of ultimately exclusive world religions must be secured. This being the case, these encounters would indirectly promote peace better than the religions of the marketplace.\textsuperscript{342}

The same may be said of Cobb’s reservations. He also approaches PWE from a rather experiential point of view, but focuses more on economic aspects than religious ones. Accord-


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{340} Cf. C, 868, 869.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{341} Niewiadomski 1996, 87, 88: “... der Markt selber längst die Funktion einer Oberreligion bekommen hat. In seinem Rahmen duldet der Markt vieles; nur die Alternativen zur Marktslogik selbst sind ihm unerträglich. Das Bekenntnis: ‘Extra ecclesiam nulla salus’ hat somit seine Radikalität auf ein neues Bekenntnis hin verlangert, und dieses lautet: ‘Extra mercatum nulla salus.’ Es gibt nur ein ‘Dogma,’ welches nicht nur in der mitteleuropäischen und amerikanischen Gesellschaft geglaubt und gelebt wird und von uns allen Glaubensopfer fordert: das Dogma der Marktwirtschaft. ... In der Megamaschine der modernen Weltzivilisation und ihrem totalitären Anspruch, der alleinige Lebens- und Sterbebegriff der Menschen zu sein, ist die eigentliche theologisch relevante Gefahr, die auf die Verdrängung anderer religiösen Ansprüche zielt, zu orten.” Küng himself shows similar reservations about strict realpolitik; WWW, 92: “Ist möglicherweise allein die Erhaltung der Nation (und die Erhaltung ihrer Kultur) das Ziel, alles übrige jedoch, selbst territoriale Integrität und politische Unabhängigkeit, nur Mittel?” Cf. e.g. Alliez 1991; Kindhäuser 1992; Beck 1997; Fenenn 1999; Falk 1999, 75, 76; Krysmanski 1999.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{342} Niewiadomski 1996, 94: “... so wird gerade diese ‘dramatische’ Begegnung selber schon ein Beitrag zum Frieden sein.” Cf. Griffiths 1990; Werbick 1993, 11–13; Lütterfelds 1998.}
ing to Cobb, PWE does not pay sufficient attention to the economic status of the Third World. The global village is viewed, as it were, too evenly with a result that the Third World is dealt with using Western standards. There should be a more open acknowledgment that poor countries cannot possibly increase their production in phase with the West. Therefore, “. . . unless that new ethos expresses itself in new economic theory and practice, it will do to half of the world’s people little good.” The common ethos proposed by Küng does not appear to provide us with proper guidelines for actual practice. It is hence an inefficient means as well as an unrealistic approach from the viewpoint of global stability and peace. However, Cobb also shows a more properly ethical emphasis akin to that of Niewiadomski:

One reason for my great concern about the nature of the ethos that the religions will support is that the economic theory and practice that is destroying the Third and Fourth worlds stems from individualistic and dualistic anthropology. As a result for the sake of increasing Cross National Product, it has systematically assaulted traditional community and exploited the other creatures, animate and inanimate. Current policies and proposals are no different in these respects. I see little hope for Third and Fourth world peoples unless this changes. Nothing said about the humanum in Küng’s book indicates that it would give significant support for the needed change. All the critical comments mentioned above, particularly the direct critique of PWE by Neuhäus, reflect a kind of reality-oriented approach that has in mind first and foremost the concrete dynamics of the religious and societal world and is concerned with reconciling them in a happy synthesis or at least a livable equilibrium. Hence, generally speaking, they are akin to the vantage point of the real politics presented earlier, albeit real politics would perhaps appear too narrow a term to imply the added value of the reality-oriented approach in the positive light it deserves. Rather one might speak of a revisionist theory of democracy, which is attributed to Joseph Schumpeter, Robert Dahl and Seymour Martin Lipset; and these differ from the classical realist figures that Küng deals with, such as Machiavelli, Morgentau, and Kissinger. It was not some sort of political realism that preoccupied the first three, but rather scientific ambition. They launched a reaction against the so-called classical theory of democracy, which they saw as too normative and ignorant of the actual inequalities of power, all of this idealism being the result of neglecting the strict methods and inevitable results of the empirical sciences.

In view of the relevance of the revisionist theory of democracy to the above considerations, the theory of “cross-cutting cleavages” in the question of multi-ethnic democracy is of particular interest here. It implies that in order for a democracy to be stable, there does not necessarily have to be a common ethos of its citizens. Rather there must be a multifaceted network of personal affiliations so that different identity groups pull a single person in different directions. If this kind of possibility for cross-cutting cleavages is taken into account when designing the structure of the government, then it is not necessary to mitigate the exclusivity

344 Cobb 1999, 178. See also for example Bechmann 1992, 301; Krysmanski 1999.
345 Neal 2001, 196, 197.
of particular group-values because the moderation of conflicts takes place at a more functional level whereby parties seek to win the majority of the voters. Although the theory of cross-cutting cleavages is controversial, the whole debate around it and similar theories shows that normative criticism of ideological exclusivism is not the only way to foster democracy as a moral ideal. One of José Casanova’s sociological criticisms of PWE is that its hidden indebtedness to Durkheim runs counter to PWE’s concrete applicability in reality.

We have shown how Küng, like Durkheim, invokes religion as the authoritative source of “a basic social consensus about ultimate values, without which modern pluralism will have a destructive effect.” Yet as Niklas Luhmann’s systems theory has shown, functionally differentiated modern societies do not require and are likely to have the kind of normative societal “positive” integration postulated by Durkheim.

This means, in practice, that more empirically-based arguments are called for as the necessary counterpoint to those that proceed from categorical or otherwise non-realistic axioms. But in the final analysis Kantian “categorism” is not the truth in PWE, or at least it is not the whole story. Küng may be endeavoring to face the reality-oriented counter-criticisms, not only those by Casanova, but also of all other critical authors presented in this section, precisely by not entirely abandoning what he calls realpolitik. PWE itself includes not only normative, but also empirically-laden arguments for humanum as common ethical ground for the whole world. In this way Küng sets out directly to oppose the claim that in reality it is impossible to derive humanum as the integrating value of contemporary global society from the very ideologies and religions included in that society. Küng seems clearly to insist that the charges of idealism are misguided when it comes to the spirit of PWE, at least to a significant degree. I will now consider how PWE seems to provide potential rejoinders to this charge of being unrealistic.

2.2.2. Hegel Against Consequentialism

To return to Neuhaus’s question of whether religions are prepared to accept the relativizing of their truth claims in the face of global ethical interests, we can find an immediate rejoinder in PWE. It is precisely that there is no need for such a thing as active acceptance in the first place, because the proposed ethical principles are already found in the authentic renderings of any world religion. What is needed now is only to revitalize these elements. It is thus possible to include two ostensibly opposite proposals within the framework of PWE’s argument. The proposal that humanum as such is an end in itself such that it will be preferred to any consequence-oriented historical or sociological consideration amounts simply to implementing humanum from above. But the proposal that humanum already exists, or is about to exist, may still function as the ultimate rationale for this implementation, thus considerably mitigating the danger that PWE amounts to a violent cultural intervention in the self-identification of religion. If this proposal is accepted, then neo-Hegelian reality-oriented teleology would have

347 Casanova 1999, 37.
to replace Kantian epistemological apriorism. There is some reason to think that the Hegelian rendering does justice to the nature of *humanum* in PWE even more than the Kantian one.

Indeed, PWE has the potential for meeting this problem by resorting to the criteria of *humanum* within the traditions themselves more than by deriving *humanum* independently of these traditions as a totally impartial criterion. This kind of more empirical claim would no doubt better meet the reservation Küng himself has aptly raised about consequentialism and pragmatism, but which can also be applied to Jaspers. But in order to understand how it is really possible for Küng, in the face of the objections of the sociologists above, to claim that it is indeed realistic to strive for a common ethical integration in our contemporary, differentiated, and pluralistic world society, it is important to consider the ultimate moderateness of PWE’s claim. This moderateness is tentatively present already in the definition of *humanum* as a “general ethical criterion,” namely, in its first term.

By the term *general* Küng refers to the term *universal*. The intention behind PWE is not some global system of norms and a related comprehensive ethical codification after all. By generality Küng does not mean that the ethical code systems of the world religions are identical. Instead, as is apparent in the *Declaration*, his aim is much more moderate, namely, an inter-religious *ground consensus*. The question is not one of a unified ethics among religions, but rather of their sufficient ethical overlapping on a global scale. “Without a **minimal basic consensus** of certain values, norms, and attitudes, it is not possible to live a life worthy of humans in either a smaller or a larger society.”

The key attribute to this underlying idea of PWE, basic consensus,

is the word sufficiency. It implies two things.

First, the idea of sufficient consensus is related to societal stability. Ethical consensus is needed to the extent that it will secure societal life worthy of humans. Through law alone a well-balanced and sustainable societal life will not emerge. “The *ethical acceptance of laws* . . . is a precondition for any political culture,” a statement that recalls what was said in the previous chapter about the primacy of ethics with respect to politics. Mere political use of power such as in the matter of jurisdiction, for instance, does not guarantee societal stability. Second, and more precisely, there arises a question about how extended consensus should be in order to be sufficient. Here Küng distinguishes between basic consensus, on the one hand, and ethical minimalism, on the other:

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349 See for example PW, 48, 49.

what is meant by “thin” and “thick” ethics is, of course, comprehensible and as such well expressed. And at the same time, when it comes to the “certain universal character” in this context, I can . . . gladly feel confirmed in my striving for a common ethos for humanity. Personally, I would not speak about “mini-morality” or “minimal-morality,” and particularly not about “moral minimalism:” after all in German “ism” has a devalued connotation related to a new ideology more than it does in English; Walzer also emphasizes that “minimalism” signifies “not an ethics that is organized afterwards or that would be emotionally dull,” but rather an “ethics in its purity.” In any event the question here does not have to be about “minimized,” decreased ethical standards lowered to a minimum, let alone standards that are reduced or hardly adhered to. Strictly speaking, what is at stake is less a question of minimal standards, but the minimum of consensus, the necessary basis for societal consensus. An ethical consensus means the agreement necessary for contemporary society on the fundamental, ethical standards that, in spite of all political, social, or religious differences, can function as the least possible foundation for human life together and for shared commerce.\(^\text{351}\)

The intention is not somehow to sort out the ethics of individual religions based on previously designed basic moral principles. Moreover, PWE’s general ethical criterion is meant to express certain universal “core ethics,” not a comprehensive unified ethics.\(^\text{352}\) Although \(huma-num\) is a relevant and valid ethical axiom, PWE is nevertheless designed around a more moderate aim to determine only the minimal common denominator among religions.\(^\text{353}\) Küng does not want to ascribe the primary role of moral education to the secular sphere: whereas the Declaration proposes a pattern for a minimal ethos, the task of fostering a “maximal” ethos is left for particular religions – or secular ideologies – to take care of.\(^\text{354}\) One may, of course, ask

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\(^{353}\) GSM, 85.

\(^{354}\) GEWP, 5: “Let me avoid from the very beginning all possible misunderstandings concerning the term ‘global ethic’: it is not a new ideology or superstructure; it will not make the specific ethics of different religions and philosophies superfluous; it is therefore no substitute for the Torah, the Sermon of the Mount, the Qur’an, the Bhagavadgita, the Discourses of the Buddha, or the Sayings of Confucius. A global ethic is nothing but the necessary minimum of common values, standards and attitudes, which can be affirmed by all religions despite their
whether it would be wise to search for a maximal common criterion instead of a minimal one. The Küngian rejoinder would possibly bring up two notions. First, it could link the concept of ethical ground consensus to what has been said about basic trust in the first chapter of this study: the universality of the basic trust indeed provides reason to propose a global ethical model, but at the same time it restricts its scope to a very elementary level, since basic trust as a concept is not so much about the content of morality, but about its general foundation.355

Second, the restriction to an elementary consensus reflects the underlying intention of the last large quotation: the essential point in articulating a global ethos is not about ethical similarities among religions and other ideologies, but about the practical results gained by such an ethos, namely the peaceful functioning of society. Insofar as this goal is attained more easily by confining the focus to smallest possible unity, it is not politically expedient to strive for a more comprehensive result. In line with this possible answer Küng seems to think that the degree of overlapping that enables the sufficient harmony of a global societal ethos is determined by the “historical situation” and is constantly transforming in a “dynamic process” instead of being a super-historical invariable.356 This kind of “concession” appears to contradict somewhat the Kantian idea that ethics as human dignity is substantially independent of historical factors of any sort.

Here one may notice that the tension between the two counterpoles presented in the previous chapter, namely realpolitik and idealpolitik, reappear. No doubt, Küng invokes a categorical subordination of realpolitik to normative ethics: the ethical ground principles have an absolute intrinsic value that reflects human-centered ethics as an end in itself. At the same time, however, he refers to reasons more akin to realist politics: the fact that the principles invoked are only ground principles is interpreted such that they are to be newly constructed historically, based on the consensus needed in each particular societal situation instead of some categorical inference beyond contingent history. Is it then possible to reconcile the a-historical categorical face of humanum, on the one hand, and its proposed entanglement with historical development, on the other? At this point, Casanova seems to answer in the affirmative:

Shortly after the turn of the century, Émile Durkheim announced that the old gods were dying while new ones had not yet been born and that “the cult of the individual” and the sacralization of humanity it entailed were bound to become the new religion of modern societies. Here Durkheim was simply following a long line of Enlightenment prophets, Saint-Simon and Comte being the most prominent among them, who had assumed that a new religion of humanity would sooner or later replace the old theocentric religions. The triumph of and the global expansion of human rights doctrines and movements at the end of the twentieth century seems to confirm at least part of their visions. What none of these prophets and founding fathers of positivist sociology have an-

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355 GW, 31–33.

356 PW, 49: “Wie weit dieser ‘überlappende’ ethische Grundkonsens im Konkreten gehen muss, hängt von der historischen Situation ab . . . Der Konsens muss also in einem dynamischen Prozess stets neu gefunden werden.”
ticipated was that, paradoxically, the old gods and the old religions were going to gain new life by
becoming the carriers of the process of sacralization of humanity. Drawing on the same idea, Küng sets out to prove the other side
of the story as well, namely, that religions at the same time have themselves gone through
significant paradigm shifts in the course of history with the result that today all major world
religions endorse humanum as their ineradicable feature; this is in effect Küng’s peculiar,
religiously emphasized way of using Kuhnian paradigm theory. The application of Kuhn’s
paradigm theory in this way is an underlying motive behind Küng’s books on the major world
religions.

However, in this case humanum is to be understood in relatively general terms. It may
clearly be better to describe it as the recognition of human dignity than as the sacralization of
the human individual. This description also has the ability to counteract the market forces of
global neoliberalism; thus Küng characteristically opposes the “tyranny of the market-place”
with the weapons of humanum, whereas Niewiadomski, conversely, does the same thing by
emphasizing the significance of the exclusive elements in religions. Given this kind of juxta-
position, it is interesting to compare PWE particularly with Alexandre Kojève.

In fact, Kojève may be seen as trying to fulfill the eschatological promise of Heidegger’s philosophy mentioned in chapter 1, ‘the letting be of Being’. At the same time Kojève proceeds by selectively adding Hegelian features to this Heideggerian critique of Hegel while resorting to early Marxian interpretations of Hegel as well. This selective mixture gives Kojève a very unorthodox flavor, but it is fruitful, in general, to consider the spirit in PWE as reflecting this kind of mixture and, in particular, to consider whether Kojève actually provides some clues to the philosophical rationale of PWE.

In Kojève’s interpretation, the Heideggerian critique of Hegel replaces the universal and
absolute metaphysics of pure reason with existential freedom and general experience with
personal experience. Because man is essentially embedded in time, individuals have to ac-
knowledge fully the finitude of the human condition with a result that the ultimate aim in life
is to accomplish one’s most profound desires in the context of the temporal horizon endowed
by ‘Being’. Kojève’s aim, however, is to provide a definitive account of this eschatological
time of living attuned with ‘Being’ by introducing an openly progressivist historical thesis. He
sets out to defend a non-metaphysical application of Hegel as a supplement to the Heidegge-
rian critique of Hegel as a metaphysician. This Kojève does by using Hegel’s famous account
of the master and the slave as the socio-psychological rationale for his deterministic account

359 See for example J, C and I.
of history rather than, like Hegel, deriving it from transcendental structures by pure thought and reason.\textsuperscript{360}

Owing to his Hegelian contention that humans (as distinct from animals) strive for self-consciousness and that this consciousness will be attained only through recognition of their individuality and dignity by other humans, that is, by inter-personal recognition, Kojève sees history ultimately as consisting of a struggle following the dialectics between the master and the slave. The master aims to consolidate his human dignity by subordinating the slave to his power. It would appear that this kind of asymmetrical relationship gives dignity to the master, but not to the slave. Yet on more careful examination, the truth appears more complicated. Through work the slave has a direct relationship to nature, while the master, allowing the slave to do the work, has this relationship only indirectly. The slave comes to realize his human dignity in his ability to control nature directly. What is more, the recognition the master gets from the slave is not authentic, but forced and, furthermore, this recognition comes from a person whom the master does not himself consider to be an equal. All the same, what really fulfills the master’s desire is that he is willfully recognized by another person whom the master personally considers worthy of recognizing him in the first place. These factors make the slave a person who is closer to the self-recognition of human dignity, while the master is alienated from his selfhood. Owing to their stronger self-recognition, the oppressed are the ones who are psychologically equipped to carry out the transformation of the original asymmetry of power to achieve a balance. This happens through continuous revolution until finally there emerges an end of history in the sense that each of the two parties gains full and authentic mutual recognition in an equal society.\textsuperscript{361}

Kojève’s Hegelianism thus has a clearly Marxian flavor. It is especially important to emphasize the reality-oriented modification of Hegel’s rationalism, originating from F. W. J. Schelling’s later period, which guides the so-called left wing or “Young Hegelians:”

The second point revived the claim made by some of Hegel’s earlier critics that the “Absolute” can only have its existence as “Son” not in a particular human being Christ, but in all humanity. Hegel’s universal \textit{[allgemeine]} “Spirit” \textit{[Geist]} that comes to itself in the process of history is nothing other than the “spirit” of humanity. Feuerbach and Marx, who focused on human experience and history, agreed with the later Schelling’s critique that Hegel wrongly made the concept prior to existence . . . but they entirely rejected the late Schelling’s “philosophy of revelation,” and they considered Hegel, however much he needed correcting, superior to all previous philosophers.\textsuperscript{362}

The feature that marked Marx’s later period was, of course, more than a general realism. In cooperation with Friedrich Engels, Marx would introduce strong economic determinism whereby the dynamics of the financial market was seen to lead to communism as the only and final realization of equal recognition.\textsuperscript{363} Kojève disagreed with Marxism at this point because,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{360} Yar 2009.
\item \textsuperscript{361} Yar 2009; Matthews 1996, 114–116.
\item \textsuperscript{362} Wilson 2007, 70.
\item \textsuperscript{363} Wilson 2007, 77.
\end{itemize}
first, Kojève did not see the master–slave dialectics as taking place so emphatically within the framework of economics and, second, contrary to Marx and Engels, Kojève saw that capitalism was not about to be tipped over into crisis. Instead capitalists found ways out of the problems of poverty and inequality. For Kojève the “end of history” would emerge from a market economy wherein equal human rights are fully and universally recognized as the ethics of the global society. In his economic view, Kojève was perhaps closer to Hegel than to Marx. What Kojève did adopt from Marx as opposed to Hegel was the former’s realistic approach, at least in his period before Das Capital, wherein humanity and human actions to improve humanity were not seen in a deterministic way. As Kolb comments on this question:

Our awareness of the structure of the modern world is not an outside event but part of the workings of that world, and our criticism of inadequate understandings are part of the progress of that world. But unlike Marx, however, Hegel attributes no causal efficacy to this understanding. Spirit develops on its own and does not need our comprehension to accomplish what will be made transparent through our achieved knowledge.

Instead, it is not Hegelian, but at most neo-Hegelian logic that guides PWE. While Küng does not believe he has constructed some independent moral norm and religions are seen to endorse humanum as a result of their internal development, common ethics are globally and actively propagated precisely on the basis of this development. On the whole, aside from the central status of religions in PWE’s account of a history of global humanum, Kojève’s general spirit is akin to that of PWE. What made Kojève so attractive to his leftist contemporaries may be what makes PWE so popular among open-minded religious people today. This is apparent in Eric Matthews’s description of Kojève, assuming that Kojève’s opposition to the Marxists’ societal determinism reduced to class struggle is replaced by Küng’s more optimistic alternative to the Huntingtonians’ apocalyptic predictions about the clash of civilizations:

It is perhaps now clear why Kojève’s reading of Hegel had such an appeal for those who hankered for a more humanistic and less mechanistic Marxism. For it seemed to show how it was possible to

364 Yar 2009.
365 Kolb 1986, 90, 91.
366 See more e.g. Ng; J, 42, 60, 71, 72, 423, 588, 685, 749; CA, 47, 74–76; D, 300, 302; C, 54–57. Cf. CC, 140–142, 144, 145; WR, 22–24; WW, 28, 64, 84, 130, 144, 147; Ching 1988, 91–117; Küng and Moltmann 1990; Borowitz 1990; Baraudy 1990; An-Na’im 1990; Mukerji 1990; Sivaraksa 1990; Kuschel 1993c, 209–211; Mieth 1998. Significantly, this is also the official position of the U.N. (Brücken in die Zukunft, 226–234.)
367 See for example CC, 140: “Das Humanum (jén) ist zugleich gegeben und aufgegeben, macht zugleich Wesen und Aufgabe des Menschen aus”; 302; CA, 49; A, 139, 140; WWd; Kuschel 1990; H. Schmidt 1995; R. von Weizsäcker 1995, 50–52; Sommagura 1995, 78; WW, 38. Cf. for example Schockenhoff 1995, 224; Rockefeller 1997. Interestingly, there is a somewhat similar logic at work as Max Weber’s account in his classical The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. It concerns the relationship between the doctrine of divinely sovereign pre-destination and personal activity, which is intended to “confirm” one’s own pre-destination by good works and earthly success.
present a Marxist account of human history as a story of class struggles in which at each stage the oppressed, or labouring, class represented progress, while retaining the view of human beings as autonomous subjects, distinct both from non-human animals and even more from mere inanimate objects. Such a view thus made it at least conceivable, in a way that mechanistic Marxism could not, that the final class struggle, in which we were now engaged, might result, not in the mere replacement of one ruling class by another, but in the creation of a truly human society, in which human beings were no longer divided into Masters and Slaves but could truly recognize each other’s humanity on an equal footing, and collaborate in transforming nature. If human beings were naturally destined to live in society, if even their individual identities depended, as Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel implied, on mutual recognition by others, then it was not necessary to accept the conservative pessimism which declared that human beings could never be fully socialized but were doomed to remain individuals in conflict with each other. On the other hand, if a fully human society of co-operation and mutual recognition was not just a vague ideal but rooted in the real nature of human beings, then realistic action to create such a society was possible: we did not need to depend, like the liberals, on mere preaching or appeals to people’s “better nature.”

Here we see Kojève’s ability to knit Hegelian, Heideggerian and Marxian elements into one theory in a way somewhat similar to what we find done in PWE – albeit not so forthrightly – given the slightly different context. After all, there is a danger that results from just this type of highly ambitious synthesis, namely, selectivity and inconsistency. In Kojève’s case, the problem is above all that he is not in a position to explain plausibly why the Master-Slave dialectic should penetrate all of human history. Even if this were de facto the case, there still arises the logical question of why the dynamics of this dialectic should, in a normative sense, be the (ethically) right way to mutual recognition of human value. In a word, Kojève’s view of human history seems to be too reductionist and selective based on his theoretical vantage point. Matthews conjectures that it was probably for reasons related to this problem that Marx himself wanted to proceed to even more empirically-based accounts in his later period of Das Capital, in which he resorted to purely economic causes to describe the development of history.

Would it then be more plausible to expect a clash of civilizations than the end of history? This is at issue in the controversial proposals by Samuel P. Huntington, on the one hand, and Francis Fukuyama, on the other. Fukuyama draws heavily on Kojève’s historical progressivism, albeit in a manner so reminiscent of the individualism and materialism of neo-liberalism that it is at odds with Kojève. While Küng is clearly at odds with Fukuyama when it comes to the latter’s advocacy of neo-liberalism – in this particular question Küng would perhaps subscribe instead to Kojève’s communitarian capitalism – in the content of the eschatological culmination, Küng nevertheless shares with Fukuyama Kojève’s general optimism about the universalization of humanum. But significantly, Küng does not set out to provide a Master-Slave type of philosophical rationale for the emergence of humanum in the universality of human history. On the contrary, he appears to follow the same line of thought as Marx, although with very different content: in place of pseudo-historical rationale provided by Hegel

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368 Matthews 1996, 117.
and Kojève, Küng bluntly resorts to history. He does not hesitate to make his claim plainly empirical.

PWE’s proposal then is both more modest and more ambitious as compared with the proposals of Kojève and Fukuyama. On the one hand, PWE does not have to reconcile theory with reality and thus avoids the problems that lurk behind Kojève’s proposal. On the other hand, PWE will have to show empirically that religions de facto are in agreement about humanum – or at least, that they are well on the way to this agreement. This Küng has indeed been determined to do, particularly in his vast research on the world religions: he sets out to suggest, case by case, that religions have developed internally to a contemporary postmodern phase that endorses humanum.

The aim of the present study is not to challenge Küng’s claims for the availability of humanum within those religions as such. Instead, there is an even more fundamental point that needs elaboration here. It is related to the above-mentioned moderateness with respect to the content of humanum. My purpose is to show that, even in Küng’s project, there is at least one sense in which empirical arguments might not be authentic history, but selective history. There might after all be theoretical assumptions lurking behind the claims, at least in that there is no clear guarantee that what is meant to be history might not become pseudo-history in the final analysis.

Küng may be liable to the same charge as Paul F. Knitter in his late period. Thus, I will now turn to criticism of Knitter by S. Mark Heim and others in order to shed light on the proposed vicious circle of PWE. No doubt it may be possible to point to certain principles of justice embedded within all major religions, much in the same way that the Declaration points to universal principles of humanity.371 The aim here is after all to show that difficult problems arise, especially when these general principles are applied to concrete questions. The problem consists of the ambiguity of the terms humanity and justice. How is it possible to guarantee that all parties are after the same thing? This is not at all clear, despite the similar terminology. The danger is that which one has intended to avoid, namely, a criterion of justice is applied to religions that, in the final analysis, is too particular. If this is the case, then it will not do justice to the intention of all considered parties as to what justice really is in practice.372

With this idea, in fact, the realism of PWE has been turned against itself and here we come to the classical objection of John Dewey to any non-realistic or pseudo-realistic societal models. James Campbell describes:

... As [Dewey] writes, it is possible for words to become “mere counters ... to be manipulated according to certain rules, or reacted by certain operations without consciousness of their meaning.” ... When this happens, we have stopped thinking about these terms as intellectual tools for opening up and analyzing situations. In such cases “the words at our disposal are largely such as to prevent the communication of ideas,” he continues. “The words are so loaded with association de-

371 There have been more or less successful efforts to find support for the Declaration, even with the help of theories in the sphere of natural science; see Maxwell 1998, 191–193; Loye 1999; Brücken in die Zukunft, 235.

rived from a long past, that instead of being tools for thought, our thoughts become subservient tools of words” . . . Such fixed conceptions, like other sorts of general answers, “do not assist inquiry. They close it.” . . .

This Deweyan criticism may indeed be seen to apply to PWE as well. For instance, Heinz Bechert, a scholar of Buddhism, worries that, when analyzing world religions, Küng does not sufficiently occupy himself with the internal structure of Buddhism: the danger is a circular process of interpretation whereby previously established ecumenical interests lead to a superficial interpretation, in this case, of the nature of Buddhism against its own self-understanding. Indeed, sometimes Küng would appear to have a tendency to settle the obvious controversies between religions by resorting to what he calls their original essence and which he then suggests corresponds to *humanum*. In fact, Dewey’s critical notion applied to the theology of religions indirectly apparent in Bechert’s reservation represents the most relevant critique of PWE. This issue is one we will consider carefully.

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki has attempted to revise Knitter’s model in order to avoid the above problem, and her modification comes close to PWE. Similarly to Küng and distinct from Knitter, Suchocki admits that one has to acknowledge the dangers behind a too stubborn truth claim, even though it is a pragmatic type. It is true that justice itself is in need of some definitive explication, lest it lack the required minimal objectivity. Suchocki’s suggestion is that there should be a minimal common denominator that all religions could agree upon. Only in light of this minimal justice would dialogue be possible in the first place.

However, Heim directs considerable criticism toward Suchocki’s solution. To put it simply, the problem lies in the fact that this kind of common denominator appears to be out of reach, even at a minimal level. As far as justice is concerned, even such a simple value as the protection of basic physical well-being as a measure of justice appears to be a highly compli-

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373 Campbell 1995, 155.


376 Heim 83–87.
cated concept in a global context. Through these difficulties in defining justice Heim ends up in a quite classical dilemma of the universality of ethics.

As is evident in this section, with the exception that both Küng and Suchocki mitigate the thoroughly pragmatistic conception of truth, the analogy between them is that both seek out minimal common denominators among religions. Although Küng may distance himself from what he calls ethical minimalism more drastically than Suchocki, it is easy to see the substantial similarity in the basic framework of the two. The pair could also be viewed the other way around, namely, that Suchocki more openly acknowledges the virtual consequences of an ethically emphasized theology of religions: inasmuch as the dogmatic aspect of ethics is unavoidable, there is inevitably a need for ethical minimalism as well. The fact that Küng derives the content of global ethics from factors related to societal stability rather than directly from strongly ethical arguments may shift the emphasis away from stubborn ethical minimalism as Küng defines it, but the problem remains the same: there is a need for “minimal agreement.”

In the event this criterion cannot be justified so that it satisfies all parties – as I have suggested when commenting on Knitter and Küng – one faces a Kantian type of critique of all historically-oriented proposals for global ethics, which takes us back to a Kantian rather than a Hegelian framework. To be sure, the strength of PWE is that it is not so vulnerable to the experiential type of criticism of standard theocentric pluralism. In other words, it cannot be so easily criticized for disregarding the doctrinal self-understanding of world religions, because it is moderately confined to ethics at a very elementary level. Moreover, it does not remain merely a theoretical construction, but is designed to achieve concrete results in practice. At the same time due precisely to these ingredients, PWE nonetheless appears to be weak in the face of the third type of criticism. One of the most significant critiques of PWE is outlined, among others, by Peter Singer. The minimal ethics of PWE disentangled from religious doctrine as a whole ends up with considerable problems on a practical level.

(It would, of course, be easier to agree on common ethical principles if we could first agree on questions that are not ethical but factual, such as whether there is a god, or gods, and if there is, or are, whether he, she, or they has or have expressed his, her, or their will or wills in any of the various texts claimed by the adherents of different religions to be divinely inspired. Unfortunately, on

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377 Of course, the difficulty is not confined to defining inter-religious ethics by means of a general conception of justice. According to Carol Gilligan, for instance, the Western concept of justice is derived from Kant and in itself is defined one-sidedly by a masculine culture. Therefore, Gilligan endorses broader ethical concepts that more openly embrace social as well as emotional aspects of ethics. Gilligan directs her criticism to the whole tradition of ethics, but particularly to the Kantian-Rawlsian liberalism. Her critique culminates in the refutation of Lawrence Kohlberg’s developmental psychology. See further, Tong 1993, 80–107. Cf. Baier 1997.


379 Heim, 1995, 85. Cf. Haker 2001, 58. This concept used by Heim and applied directly to Suchocki’s version also illuminates the problem with Küng’s intentions.

380 For more on the critique of Hickian pluralistic theory, see for example Heim 1995, 23–43.
these matters we seem to be even further from agreement than we are on basic ethical principles.)
If we are to achieve consensus on a common ethic, we are unlikely to be able to go beyond a few
very broad principles. Hence, it may be said, these very universally accepted ethical standards, if
they exist at all, will not be the kind of thing that political leaders can draw on to show that they
are justified in intervening in the affairs of another state.\(^{381}\)

It is questionable whether the Küngian principle of *humanum* can withstand criticism not only
interculturally, but also within Western culture. Insofar as *humanum* draws substantially from
Enlightenment’s moral ideals, owing to its individualistic and normative nature, it is subject
to criticism from feminist, discourse ethical, and communitarian sources, and, paradoxically,
even to criticism arising from Knitter’s liberation theology.\(^{382}\) Thus Heim has some reason to state:

> \dots why should we not seek to “disarm” political and social conflict as dramatically religious con-

\footnote{381 Singer 2002, 142,143. See also DiNoia 1990; Bechmann 1992, 301. Cf. Hausmanninger 1994; Strüning
1999a.}

\footnote{382 On discourse ethical critique of PWE, see Casanova 1999: “\dots common norms cannot be presupposed as the
premise and foundation of a modern social order but, rather, as the potential and always fragile outcome of a
process of communicative interaction.” Discourse ethics will be treated more carefully later in this study. On the
communitarian type of critique of PWE, see Cobb 1999, 177: “\dots the weaknesses in the focus on the *humanum*
stems from its connections with Enlightenment individualism and dualism, and \dots these have not had compara-
ble effects in other traditions. \dots Today this communitarian character of personal life and its embeddedness in
the natural context are gaining recognition both in religious communities and in secular ones.” Despite the exis-
tence of a communitarian critique of PWE, the documents related to Küng’s project also have a rather communi-
tarian flavor. See for example Maxwell 1998, 188, 189. More generally on the communitarian position, see for
example Kymlicka 1990, 199–237; Aristoteles 1943. On a feminist perspective, see Ruether 1987; Suchocki
1987; Gerle 1995. On the reservations proposed by Knitter with respect to PWE, see Knitter 1993; 1994;
O’Connor 1994, 162, 163.}

\footnote{383 Heim 1995, 94.}

\footnote{384 Heim 1995, 91–98. See also Surin 1990; Newbigin 1990, 143–147; Milbank 1990, 185–188; Huber 1993a,
565–574; Huber 1994, 42–46; Burrows 1998; Knitter 1998; D’Costa 1998; Otte 1998, 188; Swing 1999b; Krys-
manski 1999; D’Costa 2000, 30–40; Clarke 2000; Porter 2001. Characteristically, Singer views the problem of
PWE as the philosophical problem of imperialism (Singer 2002, 139–144). Cf. C, 828; CC, 266, 292. Along the
lines of Heim, one may ask what is the real difference between colonialism and pragmatically-oriented reli-
gious pluralism. Both impose Enlightenment types of culturally determined views actually dissociated from
particular religions onto foreign cultures in the name of objective, cultivated truth.}

Here one is faced with the same dilemma encountered earlier in connection with global peace.
According to Heim, theories akin to Knitter’s soteriocentrism rarely offer reasons for their
claims on peace and liberation. In speaking of justice, for example, these theories advocate
*the tradition of the Western social view* as an objective ideal, a view that actually exemplifies
a highly particular standpoint. Often at issue is Marxist, Weberian, or Durkheimian thinking
or their postmodern applications. These particular modifications notwithstanding, the ultimate
problem, of course, is the question of cultural imperialism.\(^{384}\)
Heim’s rather striking charge may be seen as being appropriate to PWE insofar as *humanum* can be traced back to secularist impartiality towards religions along the lines of Enlightenment social philosophy. Küng does not distance himself from modernism in order to avoid the charges that PWE is promoting Western secularist ethics, without giving sufficient reasons. Thus, the PWE view of mutual ethical congruence of world religions may be criticized for being unrealistic despite the conscious attempts of Küng to avoid this charge. The same applies to the more concrete principles derived from *humanum* as a general ethical criterion, ethical regulations that PWE calls universal maxims of fundamental humanity. In Küng as well as in the *Declaration*, these maxims are expressed in the form of individual commandments and one general principle.

As far as the more general maxims are concerned, Küng refers clearly to the golden rule. The golden rule, expressed in various forms, is no doubt found among the ethical teachings of the world’s great religions. It is still unclear whether its presence is of help in the construction of global ethics. The problem lies in the idea that the actual content of the golden rule is defined by individual and cultural preferences. A classic example used in this context is the masochist who, by following the golden rule, becomes a sadist. A more sophisticated expression of the problem is related precisely to global, inter-cultural contexts. What one wants to be done to oneself depends not simply on general human needs and desires, but also, at least indirectly, on cultural mores, including religious valuations. Here an example would be a rule regulating the use of a common television room in a housing association: leave things so that you yourself would be satisfied if you were the next user. However, it would be difficult to guide behavior successfully with this principle if the come from highly different cultures. The same applies to religions. Singer draws on the problems behind the golden rule when commenting on PWE in his example of the resolution of religiously derived conflicts. According to Singer, it is impossible to judge non-democratic societies on the basis of the golden rule if these societies are based on religious laws. Thus, while the golden rule may function as general guide for an ethical life, it will not help in defining the content of ethics, least of all in a global context.

It is interesting to see how Küng himself applies the golden rule. For instance, he contends that had the Catholic Church acted according to the golden rule, it would not have had so negative a stance toward its radical theologians. With this claim, however, Küng ignores the doctrinal preferences of the more conservative leadership in the Catholic Church. In fact,

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385 PW, 84; See also e.g. Ng, 15; WR, 23; TPE, 137, 138. Cf. e.g. Rockefeller 1997, 116–118, 121.


389 WW, 24.
one may even propose that the Church acted precisely according to the golden rule in controlling the teaching of its priests and theologians: even excommunication may be seen as an action intended for the best, not only for the members of the church, but also for the excommunicated person.390

Indeed, it is problematic to suppose, if this is what Küng is after,391 that global ethics drawn from the golden rule would successfully function as the content required for a general ethical principle of humanum in practical situations. It is true that there are interpretations of the golden rule that are designed to take into account the heterogeneity of preferences.392 The problem proposed by Singer, however, will not be solved even by these novel interpretations insofar as the question is about culturally conflicting preferences and values, especially when those values are of an absolute nature. One significant difficulty in this question is that Küng himself does not articulate clearly what interpretation of the golden rule he is after. Thus, one purpose of the next section is to construct models for a liberal concretization of the golden rule in terms of its content. Further, the content of the proposed global ethics in general will be explicated. The last portion of this study will touch upon the post-secular renderings of these concretizations.

In addition to such a general ideal as the golden rule, PWE invokes clear commandments that are said to be common to all religions.393 At first glance, it would seem that these commonalities are a considerably stronger argument for the realization of global ethics. It seems intuitively credible, for instance, to claim that a similar attitude toward an injunction against killing is strong proof of agreement among religions about elementary ethical codes. These considerations notwithstanding, the formality of PWE also with regard to individual commandments remains somewhat problematic. Only after concretizing the commandments within a certain pattern of action in a certain context is there enough evidence for evaluation. Küng, of course, is aware of this problem at a general level,394 but the question here is rather

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390 Cf. 1. Cor. 5: 5; 1. Tim. 1: 20.

391 PW, 84: “Religionen können Menschen eine oberste Gewissensnorm geben, jenen für die heutige Gesellschaft immens wichtigen kategorischen Imperativ, der in ganz anderer Tiefe und Grundsätzlichkeit verpflichtet. Denn alle grossen Religionen fordern ja so etwas wie eine ‘Goldene Regel’ – eine nicht nur hypotetische, bedingte, sondern eine kategorische, apodiktische, unbedingte Norm – durchaus praktikabel angesichts der höchst komplexen Situation, in der Einzelne oder auch Gruppen oft handeln müssen”; Ng, 14; D, 302. Cf. J, 477, 482; MS, 57; Casanova 1999, 29.


393 PW, 82: “Fünf grosse Gebote der Menschlichkeit . . . gelten in allen grossen Weltreligionen: (1) nicht töten; (2) nicht lügen; (3) nicht stehlen; (4) nicht Unzucht treiben; (5) die Eltern achten und die Kinder lieben.” Cf. Maailmanetikka-asiakirja, Ihmisvelvollisuksien yleinen selitys -asiakirja (H. Schmidt 1997a, 19–45.); SGW, 162; Ng; WR, 22; WW, 26, 27, 133; Kuschel 1999b, 159. Cf also e.g. TPE, 140–143.

394 Cf., however, PW, 83: “Nur in bestimmter Situation wird Verpflichtung konkret. Aber in einer bestimmten Situation, die freilich nur der betroffene selber zu beurteilen vermag, kann die Verpflichtung durchaus unbedingt werden. Das heisst: Unser Sollen ist immer situationsbezogen, aber in einer bestimmten Situation kann das sol-
about whether it is still possible to draw some concrete conclusions with respect to a common ethos workable in practice on the basis of the individual commandments invoked.

Neuhaus is pessimistic about this possibility. According to him, the factual ways of interpreting the commandments of PWE prove to be culture- and person-dependent. An illustration of this problem is the commandment related to adultery. Within a short time Western society has undergone a change with the result that the commandment concerning adultery may even be understood to mean the opposite of its former interpretation. Neuhaus mentions that still fifty years ago, what were considered the categorical moral norms of sexual behavior and marital fidelity are now widely held as immoral because they restrict the liberty of the human person. Conversely, Oliver O'Donovan notes that it is also problematic to suppose that when proponents of two different religions disapprove of stealing in all its forms, it is a sign of their agreement on the ethical norm of stealing. People may have completely different ethical premises upon which they base their views, even though sometimes these premises result in similar kinds of actions. The question is whether in acting similarly, such people are also showing similar ethical principles. According to O'Donovan, they cannot be said to act morally in the same way in such cases.

Neuhaus shows that the concrete realization of the commandments invoked by PWE also brings out intra-cultural heterogeneity with regard to interpretation. That a poor person steals bread from a baker may be justified by religious reasons. At the same time, the baker can justify the punishment of the thief. It is to be noted, though, that Küng’s view of ethics is not rigid in the sense that it would not be applicable to practically controversial situations in everyday life. Küng would thus probably accept the stealing of bread for one’s life. Yet the general problem remains; it is precisely in the context of practical situations that deep disagreements on the basic ethical principles are painfully evident – and it is above all practical workability, not only philosophical theory that is at stake in PWE. Küng’s argument still seems too formal in spite of, or actually just because of, its flexibility in terms of the explanation of not only the golden rule, but also of the more concrete commandments.

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397 Neuhaus 1999, 46–49. It is to be noted that this as such perhaps naïvely appearing example illustrates relatively well the tension prevailing between welfare society and libertarianism, see for example Sandel 1996, 3–24.
398 WWW, 106, 107; PW, 83.
400 Neuhaus 1999, 45–58. See also for example Bechmann 1992, 301. Cf. e.g. Hausmanninger 1994, 307, 308.
In other words, such norms as “Do not steal!” or “Respect life!” are not sufficiently informative inasmuch as they do not provide any unambiguous ethical content. Rather they express what moral behavior is in the first place; one might even say that the question is merely about linguistic consensus.\footnote{Saarinen 1999, 41.} On this interpretation, Küng’s analysis of the principles of humanity is more about meta-ethics than normative ethics. It seems to have similarities with, say, the Kantian categorical imperative. An abstract principle does not tell much about its workability in practice. Not surprisingly, Küng himself has to admit that concrete parts dealing with relevant ethical problems of our time are absent from the \textit{Declaration}, owing to the prevailing disagreement about their solutions among the parties behind the \textit{Declaration}.\footnote{WW, 31. Cf. Porter 2001, 113–121; WW, 122; VBD, 129.}

Still, to return to the question of the clash of civilizations, it was mentioned earlier that Samuel P. Huntington predicts an increase in inter-cultural antagonisms wherein religions naturally play a major role.\footnote{Huntington 1996. Cf. Boulding 1996. Rittberger and Hasenclever 1998; Bialas 1999d, 191–194.} Küng, of course, is much more optimistic about the possibility of a global \textit{ethos} and peace, and religions play a decisive part in that vision as well.\footnote{See e.g. Vw; CC, 302; J, 745; GEWP, 8–11; WW, 14–76; WE, 263–264; A, 134–141; Häring 1998, 338–341. On the other hand, see KWR, 21–27; GEE, 62, 63; WW, 76, 85, 93, 166; Kuschel 1998, 484. Cf. e.g. Félix 1996; Kuschel 1999a, 14, 15; 1999b, 158. See also for example Garstecki 1993.} Both Küng and Huntington are, after all, vulnerable to criticism concerning simplistic generalizations of different heterogenic cultures. What is more, in neither case is there an elaboration of the possible \textit{incommensurability} of the \textit{deep} understandings of different cultures.

There is a sense in which both Hegel and neo-Hegelians as well as both Huntington and Küng are vulnerable to Heideggerian critique. For Heidegger, the characterizing feature of metaphysics is its hope for one true interpretation of history. This concept of ‘History’, with a capital, corresponds to what Heidegger means by preoccupation with ‘being’, without a capital. In metaphysics ‘History’ threatens to blind us to ‘history’, without a capital, that is, to radically differentiated finitude with mutual incommensurability of meaning. Heidegger’s lasting contribution in this regard is that there is more to meaning than is apparent from direct empirical observation, namely, the deep history of ‘Being’.\footnote{Gillespie 1984, 149–164.} The ultimate vision that will emerge in considering ‘Being’ is one of radical finitude where, to say the least, individual words do not communicate the different deep understandings of ‘History’ across different cultures. It is possible to conjecture that Küng’s concept of \textit{humanum} refers to ‘being’ rather than to ‘Being’. At least, in light of the above criticism, it does not sufficiently address the relationship between the two. Given this lack of sophistication it also, unreflectively, offers a ‘History’ of religions culminating to \textit{humanum}. Whether or not the Heideggerian story is true, there is still reason to ask whether PWE embodies too much abstraction at the cost of reality.
To be sure, there is a huge difference between Leftist neo-Hegelians such as Feuerbach or Marx and Küng. Feuerbach and Marx reduce religious experience solely to a projection of human interest onto transcendence,\(^\text{406}\) whereas the Küng is determined to claim the interdependency of *humanum* and transcendence. All the same, it may be asked whether PWE still reflects at least some of the features, described by Wilson below, that gave rise to the realistic criticism of Feuerbach:

> [Feuerbach] criticizes “abstract, negative” concepts of God, a criticism also directed against Hegel. But Feuerbach too has his abstractions. The main subject of his philosophy is “humanity” or “the human spirit,” which is his appropriation of Hegel’s Allgemeine, the concept of the universal. Another Young Hegelian, Max Stirner, rejected Feuerbach’s “humanity” as just another abstraction; for Stirner there is no universal “humanity,” but only the individual ego, which should devote itself to its own interests.\(^\text{407}\)

While the positive alternative offered by Stirner is a question that will not be considered here, it nevertheless reflects the internal problem of Hegelianism: the self-refuting project of finding absolute rationality in empirical history by means of finite abstraction. This is what the Young Hegelians rightly recognized as the problem underlying Hegel’s thought, but they did not rid themselves of abstractions or selectivity either. My aim above has been to show that there is both philosophical and sociological critique that derives from the reality-oriented approach as opposed to the abstractions of the Hegelian type of historicism and which may also be applied to PWE.

\(^{406}\) Wilson 2007, 74.

\(^{407}\) Wilson 2007, 74, 75.
3. The Content of Global Ethics

As shown in the previous chapter, the very idea of “revitalizing” the present consensus on humanum among religions involves serious problems. The question is one of different meanings given to the same moral precepts in different religious contexts despite their surface unity. At stake is not any ethical element whatsoever, but the fundamental role of religious traditions in the formation of global ethics: do religions have a prior role in interpreting their own tradition? Dan-Erik Andersson puts it as follows:

The question is first of all, however, whether self-criticism [of particular religions] takes place with the help of internal or external criteria. According to Küng, the answer is that it is always with internal criteria, for humanum originally comes from the different religions. The question according to Küng is thus not about judging religions with the help of external criteria, but is instead an inner process. What I mean, however, is that Küng is not able to show credibly that humanum is an internal criterion in the first place. As he begins to present humanum’s three different contexts, he starts with a general ethical criterion and moves inward in order finally to take up the specific Christian one. Moreover, Küng claims that the history and the present of religions show that the limit between true and untrue religion is not between religions, but right within them. This also indicates that Küng sees humanum first of all as an external criterion in light of which religions cannot be expected every now and again to decide in their own right what is true religion.408

There are reasons to claim that PWE shows an unrealistic stance with respect to the substantiality of the differences between religions and civilizations. The primary danger in PWE thus interpreted is, of course, that the ethics of different religions and cultures is not viewed in a completely objective light, but rather tends to see convergence without sufficient evidence. Unrealism, in turn, leads to the criticism articulated by Heim – that PWE may ascribe particularly Western ethics indebted to the Enlightenment humanism to the world cultures in general and to religions in particular. Religions are in danger of being seen through humanum in order for humanum to be attributed to religions as their essential core. According to Küng, the general ethical criterion of PWE condemns imperialism.409 The major question now is, how is imperialism to be avoided if normative claims are still advanced from the perspective of a “secular” viewpoint external to particular cultures and religions. In fact, Küng acknowledges the problem lurking behind any universal ethical pattern, particularly in the global context.

Is it not that a kind of “superstructure” will be constructed above concrete religions, according to which religions are now to be evaluated, even judged? Is it not that “humanum” – the result of European humanism under Christian influence – is a typical Western criterion that does not fit the Eastern religions at all? Is not humanum as an ecumenically common criterion originally too va-


409 TA, 289.
gue to be binding on religions? And is that kind of argument not a vicious circle, Circulus vitiosus? 410

Nevertheless, Küng attempts to solve the problem by suggesting that there is no one-dimensional relationship between humanum and religion in PWE. Such would be the case if either humanum or religions were to identify the one right religion unilaterally. Küng uses the term “dialectical” to illuminate the relationship he is after. In his rejoinder to the self-critical reservation described above Küng writes:

Answer: not at all, though still – it must be confessed – a dialectical and interchangeable understanding. It must be stated as follows:

True humanity is a prerequisite for true religion! That means: Humanum (respect for human worth and basic values) is a minimal requirement for every religion; at least humanity (that is minimal criterion) must be there when one is to realize genuine religiosity. Yet why then religion?

True religion is a prerequisite for true humanity. That means: religion (as an expression of extensive meaning, highest values, unconditional obligation) is an optimal precondition for the realization of humanum; precisely religion (which is a maximal criterion) must be there whenever one wishes to realize and concretize humanity as a truly unconditional and universal obligation. 411

Küng does not elaborate further on this dialectical relationship. Yet the dialectical twist could have heuristic potential if it were considered more deeply. This indeed is the aim of this chapter, here in a liberal context. In the part III of this study the subject will be considered in the alternative context of postliberalism. The question behind the whole thing goes back to the first chapter: What to give reasons for morality? How do we justify ethics? What is religion’s role in defining ethics that would be globally plausible? It is hardly possible to say anything relevant on the ethical conflicts in today’s world of religious pluralism and western secularism without sincerely addressing this question. I have already shown the difficulty of finding coherent answers to these questions from PWE. At the same time, there are seeds of an answer in Küng’s fragile and even ambiguous statements. In the remaining chapters of this study these elements will be further worked out in order, finally, to see what global ethics


might look like more concretely, first in an Enlightenment constellation and then in an alternative context.

Indeed, there are basically two ways of defending the idea of a common ethical ground in a pluralistic situation. One is confined to religious exclusivism and the other is confined to “secular exclusivism.” The former is what I have called liberal; the latter I call postliberal. Both approaches are alternative ways to articulate further the dialectical appreciation of particular religious ethics on the one hand and universal elementary ethics on the other. The difference in these approaches is not that one of them would dissolve the Küngian dialectics presented above by ignoring one of its two components, *humanum* and religion. Rather the difference is in the balance of the proposed dialectics. From a liberal vantage point the design of concrete model for global ethics takes place within a framework independent of particular traditions, while the existence of these traditions is taken seriously. Indeed, the point of the whole design is to embrace the existing, religious or otherwise ideological, traditions within the needed final institutional model as far as possible. Within postliberal solution the emphasis is the reverse.

In this chapter the aim is to examine the liberal alternative after which the postliberal solution will be discussed. This means, in practice, that from here on one has to find even more constructive ways of elaborating on Küng’s project. First and foremost, the main attention is on the question of how to articulate Küng’s points in a way that effectively meets the relevant criticism in the contemporary discussion. Here the verb “articulate” also connotes “revise” in a sense. In other words, here PWE will be used as a basis for outlining a particular ethical model for globalization that endeavors to solve the conceptual and theoretical puzzles still more or less apparent in PWE. My intention is to point out further paths that PWE might take and test them. Put differently, the purpose is to explicate through a conceptual systematization exactly what more PWE might want to say. This is needed precisely because of the open-ended nature of PWE.

As the discussion moves forward to construct a more and more precise model, the consideration of other current theories of global ethics is also relevant. Meanwhile, along the way, the theoretical elements included in PWE will serve as a basis for this construction. The remaining chapters of this study will be a kind of selective, yet representative review of contemporary positions in global ethics in general, systematized in a general order. Indeed, owing to the all-embracing nature of PWE’s theoretical “multi-positionalism,” it is possible not only to present different theories of global ethics, but also to sort them out systematically according to ideological backgrounds. In this way the goal above all is to take seriously the challenge posed by critics who rightly see that PWE, while perhaps being a good starting point for discussion, still needs more substantial institutional articulation in order to have practical worth in the real world of pluralism. Casanova expresses his reservations along these lines:

Küng proposes what he calls “a new paradigm of politics, which combines a sober perception of interests with a basic ethical orientation,” a paradigm which he derives from Weber’s ethic of responsibility, as a virtuous middle way between two extremes. . . . Küng is unable to offer any concrete illustration of the workings of such a model of responsible politics in the real world. Küng is
well aware that even the appeal to “a sober perception of interests” is by no means unproblematic. Whose interests? Whose perception? Küng points out that “the ‘national’ interest (power politics in foreign policy) often does not coincide at all with ‘public’ interest (a reform policy in domestic politics).” But without a convincing theory of democratic politics, which is surprisingly absent from the book, Küng offers no formulation of the process through which the “national” and/or the “public” interest are or ought to be defined. Moreover, in an age of globalization, Küng argues, there is a need to replace, or at least to supplement, the old paradigms of geopolitics based on the modern system of competing sovereign territorial states with a new model of international politics which Küng terms, following Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, “world domestic policy.” What could such a model look like? It would not be fair to demand from Küng an elaborate realistic vision. But at least, if the reference to world domestic policy is to be taken seriously, one would expect some discussion of some of the implications of adopting such a radically novel perspective. It certainly complicates even further the problem of defining what “a sober perception of interests” would be.

The more elaborate articulation of required institutional arrangements is what we turn to next. This step, however, may require taking some distance from the precise formulations of PWE. After all, the point is to continue on the basis laid by PWE rather than to contradict its main ideas. Nevertheless, some readers familiar with PWE will no doubt have the impression that my advancing to more concrete articulations inevitably results both in using some elements of PWE and neglecting others. Such a result may be inevitable.

Keeping this question in mind, I will elaborate on two different ways of justifying common ethics in a pluralistic situation. The foundational figure of one is Kant. The other is Hegel. I have no intention of focusing on the authenticity of the description of the either of these traditions; it is not my purpose to determine, for instance, Kant’s real position in the sphere of Kant research. Instead, the two traditions will be used to determine what would be the right way to sketch a global ethical model for our time. As with Küng, it is even more relevant here that the method is reconstructive, or in other words, the intention is to use a rational construction of the Kantian tradition vis-à-vis the Hegelian for purposes other than a historical construction for its own sake. Additionally, the focus will be on the societal dimension of the two traditions, the obvious reason being the societal nature of the main subject of this study. Finally, it is important to see that what follows here is not an analysis of Küng’s texts in the same way as was given in the earlier two chapters. This is because, while the former chapters tried to outline the proposed common ethics advocated by PWE for religious and cultural traditions, the task of this section is to articulate the nature of this ethics more clearly than PWE does. This task derives from the problems that earlier were shown to remain unsolved in PWE’s interpretation. Above all, the ethical principle of *humanum* and the more specific precepts derived from it are still too formal to shed sufficient light on concrete ethical

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412 Casanova 1999, 33, 34.

413 About the method, see for example Sundman 1996, 15, 16. Cf. Pihlstöm 1997, 332. Of course, the fact that I will not engage directly in a historical construction of Kant and Hegel – an enterprise beyond the framework of this kind of study – probably makes my analysis of these philosophers more vulnerable to criticism, which is unfortunate. Nevertheless, the possible points of criticism with in regard do not really affect my purpose, which is to focus on contemporary discussion where my points on Kant and Hegel are restricted to using them as tools for understanding and systematizing this discussion.
conflicts in the world. From this chapter on my task will be to elaborate more precisely on how one is to interpret *humanum* so that it acquires a sufficiently stable meaning, despite different cultural contexts. This kind of philosophical elaboration is not found in PWE, but it is nevertheless needed in order to acquire practical effectiveness. In the remaining parts of this study I will introduce and assess the various possible interpretations of PWE’s *humanum* in order to determine the one most plausible for the inter-religious and inter-cultural global dialogue of our time.

3.1. The Rational Method: From Kant to Communitarianism

3.1.1. From Kant to Rawls’s Theory of Justice

Earlier it was showed that *humanum*, meaning what is human, along with its more concrete embodiments tends to remain too formal a principle to show the way for intercultural ethics with sufficient practical worth. In fact, it is not easy to know exactly what Küng means by this concept of *humanum*. One would need a broader definition of his ethical position to interpret the nature of *humanum* as a general ethical criterion for all religions and cultures. In the following quotation from PWE, Küng gives one important and heuristically fundamental vantage point:

But whatever projects one may plan for a better future of humanity, the ethical ground principle has to be: the human being – that is, from Kant on a formulation of the categorical imperative – must never be made into a mere instrument. The human being must be the final purpose, must always remain the goal and the criterion.\(^{414}\)

Here Küng refers to Kant’s second formulation of the categorical imperative. In this third chapter I will consider this Kantian principle and the problematic it entails as lending itself to dealing with the proposed formality of *humanum*. In other words, the second version of the categorical imperative may parallel with the golden rule and then be identified as expressing an inviolable axiom that is only to be formulated more concretely in the ethical injunction referred to in the Declaration. Thus it is appropriate to take the categorical imperative as the object of philosophical analysis. Broadly stated, the hypothesis of this chapter as a whole is that what is meant by the challenge of concretizing the content of *humanum* in fact refers to the challenge of all liberally-oriented political philosophy; the challenge appears in the form of how to give institutionally structured societal articulation to the fundamental ideal laid down by the second formulation of the categorical imperative. Kant was the first to define the problem explicitly, but he was of course, only one of the many who have attempted to solve it. The structure of this chapter is that Kant’s solution will first be considered. Then, by pointing out Kant’s deficiencies, there will be an attempt to improve the Kantian model by using one scholar after another. This self-corrective development proceeds through succeeding sec-

tions until the end of the chapter. My intention is to organize different basic positions in the liberally-oriented discourse of political philosophy with respect to the question of the institutional articulation of society based on the second formulation of the categorical imperative. The idea is to proceed gradually from a purely rational method to the positive method. One should nevertheless bear in mind that while it is true that this development toward positive method is supported by an increasingly experientially-oriented criticism of Kantian models, the argument also works in the other direction. In other words, the more individual positions distance themselves from Kant, the more the Kantian versions are in a position to criticize them from within their positions.

To start with the clearest rational argument, Küng placed the golden rule parallel to the categorical imperative. In the following Küng’s quotation the idea seems to be that it is precisely the unconditionality rather than any substantial content that religions have to offer the categorical imperative introduced by Kant:

Religions can give people the ultimate norm of conscience, the *categorical imperative* immensely important to society today, which binds in much greater depth and principledness. For after all, all great religions stipulate after all something like the ‘golden rule’ – a rule that is not only hypothetical, conditional, but also a categorical, apodictic, *unconditional norm* – which is thoroughly practical in the face of the most complex situations in which individuals or also groups must act.\(^\text{415}\)

Here it is worth remembering that in light of its affinities to Schleiermacher, PWE may indeed be considered to be consolidating Kantian liberalism. Liberalism as such can be traced back neither to the political right nor the political left. The paramount guiding principle of political liberalism referred to in this study is the idea of moral and political rights as a categorical upper framework of social and political action. Liberals hold the idea of the state and the public sphere as a neutral arena, in which proposing truth claims, for instance, exclusivist ethical or religious claims, is not allowed. In other words, it is possible to pursue particular moral or religious convictions only outside the public political discourse, for instance, within the churches or NGOs.\(^\text{416}\)

The most well-known contemporary proponents of this type of liberalism are John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and Robert Nozick.

In connection with the principle of a neutral political framework, there is a central rule: ‘the priority of right over the good’. This principle is best illustrated in juxtaposition with one major alternative moral theory concerning right and the good, namely, utilitarianism. The general idea of utilitarianism is that ethically the prior value is to attain happiness for the people. More precisely, utilitarianism holds that what is most valuable ethically is the action

\(^{415}\) PW, 84: “Religionen können Menschen eine oberste Gewissens geben, jenen für die heutige Gesellschaft immens wichtigen *kategorischen Imperativ*, der in ganz anderer Tiefe und Grundsätzlichkeit verpflichtet. Denn alle grossen Religionen fördern ja so etwas wie eine ‘*Goldene Regel*’ – eine nicht nur hypotetische, bedingte, sondern eine kategorische, apodiktische, *unbedingte Norm* – durchaus praktikabel angesichts der höchst komplexen Situation, in der Einzeln oder auch Gruppen oft handeln müssen.”

\(^{416}\) For a broader discussion of liberalism, see for example Rosenblum 2001.
that produces the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of people. In other words, society’s primordial ethical task is derived from the goal of fulfilling people’s good, a term often conceived as happiness. Utilitarian ethics is essentially consequentialist; the value of an action is defined by its effects. A problem arises, however, when one tries to live strictly according to the utilitarian principle. For there is no clear additional principle, according to which it would be possible to measure the amount of good or happiness one’s personal decisions and actions produce. This is because there is no unanimous agreement on what good or happiness would mean. Certainly, the ultimate happiness cannot just be some experience or hedonist feelings. It cannot even be to realize individual preferences, because there always remains the question of whether individuals have fully realized what is best for them.\footnote{\textit{Kymlicka 2002, 10–52. An example of a utilitarian enterprise on global ethics is Peter Singer 2002.}}

The obscurity of good in itself and the question of what is really the best final aim for individuals to strive for in life lead to the question of whether it is meaningful to consider the good as the starting point of ethics in the first place. Liberalism is born in great part as a response to the problem of utilitarianism. It is possible to discern two versions of the liberal theory, each of which argues for neutrality in a slightly different way. In classical liberalism or Kantian liberalism, the reasons for neutrality are derived from the antecedent claim that ethics necessarily requires two things, rationality and universality, of which the latter is implied by the former. By rationality is meant an idea that ethics cannot be constructed other than with the help of reason. From that it follows that ethics, to be ethics, has to be absolutely obliging; otherwise it would be more like taste or affection. The concept of universality in turn is derived from this deontological presupposition. It means that ethics has to concern all humans. Hence, ethics has to be valid independent of context and particular matters, that is, the varieties of cultures and religions as resources of different views of life and morality. Because of the related claim, namely, that there exists no rational basis for evaluating the truth or worth of cultural or religious claims, normative ethics has to be based on principles independent of these claims and be purely rational in nature.\footnote{\textit{Kant 1797, 40–45, 51.}}

Thus, religious and more comprehensive ethical views are merely contingent facts seen from the perspective of reason, because all humans are given completely different starting points for viewing the world and life, right and wrong. In the end, the only thing that can be said to be strictly categorical is an obligation to respect the freedom of other people to choose their own ends for their lives. All particular ethical demands, such as the prohibition against killing or stealing, are to be subordinated to the idea that no one may prohibit any other person from aspiring to whatever ends she chooses. Finally, the role of the state is simply to guarantee the right to choose one’s end in life, provided that one respects the same right for

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For purposes of this study it is essential to pay attention here to the Cartesian strain of Kant’s moral philosophy. Kant’s major motive for coming up with his rights-based ethics is the aspiration to certainty for what is morally right or wrong beyond all contingencies. In this he assumes that only reason freed from experiential factors is the way to a certainty immune from the criticism of relativism. Nor is there any such thing as realism in the case of ethics.

But along the Cartesian way of seeking certainty, it becomes clear that the moral subject has to be detached, abstracted from its concrete situation in life. In this very process of abstraction the only absolute ethical imperative is revealed to mean in practice not to take a stand as to what is good on behalf of others and to allow people to define their own comprehensive ethics, insofar as this is in accordance with the idea that the corresponding freedom of others is not being restricted. Thus, the rule of ‘priority of right over the good’ is indeed significant when it comes to the essential nature of ethics in Kantian classical liberalism. In the end there is no real connection between right and good in the ethical sense. The only thing that is morally relevant is the ensuring of freedom of choice. The real choices, which imply the more substantial views of the good and bad life, are not ethical at all in the real sense of the word. In the ethical sense, you cannot say that a person has chosen rightly or wrongly as long as he does not violate others’ freedom of choice. These personal decisions only refer to different conceptions of what is good, but never to the normative conception of what is right.

Applied to the religiously pluralistic global context of our time, the deontological method stresses the priority of rational inference as the basis for any ethical judgment. The main claim is that anything not subjected to the primordial judgment of reason is uncertain. Additionally, reason itself necessarily strives for certainty; in this sense rational knowledge is necessarily certain knowledge. Now, no one is able to know for sure that he knows the truth in religious matters as well as in ethical matters on the basis of pure reason. That is why freedom of choice is the only reliable alternative. And making freedom of choice possible for everyone discloses the sole basis for global ethics that is not driven by matters of an uncertain nature. Only the equal, universal right to choose freely and other ethical principles directly derived from this right are available for the construction of a global ethic. It is obvious that this ex-

419 Kant 1797, 62–67.
420 Kant 1797, 43.
421 Kant 1797, 55–67.
tremely rational position rules out any exclusive claim that demands other people adjust to religious or ethical ends that one happens to propose. On the other hand, it leaves open whether the the persuader is right after all in pursuing those ends herself. Solely for the reason that no one, including the agent herself, can be perfectly sure of this ends’ truthfulness from the rational point of view, it is not allowed for a person to apply it in order to judge others.

The pattern of thinking depicted above naturally leads to viewing a just society principally as a result of freely choosing individuals who come together to create rules voluntarily to co-exist for the sake of common interests, that is, as a social contract. In a Kantian society there are no commonly binding rules other than those derived in principle from the free consent of equal citizens. There is an ingredient related to the ethical legitimatization of societal laws in Küng’s argument that might be developed toward this kind of Kantian contractarianism. “The ethical acceptance of the laws . . . is the prerequisite of any political culture.”422 Consider in this light, for instance, the following statement by Kant: “This, then, is an original contract by means of which civil and thus completely lawful constitution and commonwealth can alone be established. . . . This is the test of the rightfulness of every public law. For if the law is such that a whole people could not possibly agree to it . . . it is unjust . . .”423 However, later on I will argue that this essential idea of Küng may also be interpreted so as to be used against contractarianism and individualist-oriented liberalism. Suffice it to say here that the affinity suggested now is too tentative to allow for significant juxtaposition.

But there are also other major affinities with liberal thinking in the idea of PWE. One significant Kantian feature in PWE, mentioned in the first chapter, is the universally categorical and deontological nature of humanum as a general ethical criterion. In this connection, there is a further resemblance in the close relationship between humanum and human rights. To be more precise, it often seems possible to regard the global ethics that Küng promotes simply as a way of consolidating the realization of human rights as the primordial common standard of global ethics. To be sure, human rights, as I will show in the later sections of this chapter, may also be promoted by means other than Kantian liberalism, which focuses on the ‘priority of right over the good’. However, as will also be shown, it is not often that these non-Kantian ways of defending basic rights are at ease with the idea of a universal moral standard independent of particular circumstances. This is a Kantian characteristic. It is necessary to deal with the liberal case further to find out not only whether PWE could be built on the fundamentals of liberalism in general, as is indeed hinted by the citations above, but also which form of liberalism would then come into question.

‘The priority of right over the good’ appears to be an inevitable conclusion of the rational method. This is inferred from the freedom of personal choice, which in turn is the


423 Kant 1793b, 79. Even though an extensive legitimatization of laws is not a realistic expectation for Kant, all the same he sees it as a principal precondition. See Kant 1793b, 78, 79.
axiom resulting form rational agnosticism. However, a point of criticism remains from the rational perspective itself, which conceives the Kantian method as being self-contradictory in one particular sense. The criticism does not concern the liberal principle itself, namely, ‘the priority of right over the good’, but rather the method by which one arrives at such a conclusion. Alasdair MacIntyre gives an exhaustive account of how Kant may be seen as the example of what is here called the rational method:

Practical reason, according to Kant, employs no criterion external to itself. It appeals to no content derived from experience; hence Kant’s independent arguments against the use of happiness or the invocation of God’s revealed will merely reinforce a position already entailed by the Kantian view of reason’s function and powers. It is of the essence of reason that it lays down principles which are universal, categorical and internally consistent. Hence a rational morality will lay down principles which both can and ought to be held by all men, independent of circumstances and conditions, and which could consistently be obeyed by every rational agent on every occasion. The test for a proposed maxim is then easily framed: can we or can we not consistently will that everyone should always act on it?424

I mentioned in the first chapter that Kant may be seen as advocating a kind of internal realism within ethics. In other words, the principle of universalization entailed in the categorical imperative shows that it is in fact impossible consistently to escape moral law with its specific injunctions. Neuhaus gave a Kantian example of lying in which the liar actually confirms the general validity of the moral law that forbids lying. This is primarily because it would be inconsistent for a liar to expect others not to lie, while himself lying to others. Now, this is precisely what MacIntyre questions. Taken logically, there is in fact no inconsistency whatsoever in wanting the universal rule to be such that it allows me to be an exception to the otherwise all-human injunction concerning lying. Other related peculiarities also remain unreflected in the formulation of the categorical imperative as the principle of ethical universality.

How are we to decide whether this attempt to formulate a decisive test for the maxims of morality is successful or not? Kant himself tries to show that such maxims as “Always tell the truth,” “Always keep promises,” “Be beneficent to those in need” and “Do not commit suicide” pass his test, while such maxims as “Only keep promises when it is convenient to you” fail. In fact however, even to approach a semblance of showing this, he has to use notoriously bad arguments, the climax of which is his assertion that any man who wills the maxim “To kill myself when the prospects of pain outweigh those of happiness” is inconsistent because such willing “contradicts” an impulse to life implanted in all of us. This is as if someone were to assert that any man who wills the maxim “Always to keep my hair cut short” is inconsistent because such willing “contradicts” an impulse to the growth of hair implanted in all of us. But it is not just that Kant’s own arguments involve large mistakes. It is very easy to see that many immoral and trivial non-moral maxims are vindicated by Kant’s test quite as convincingly – in some cases more convincingly – than the moral maxims which Kant aspires to uphold. So “Keep all your promises throughout your entire life except one,” “Persecute all those who hold false religious beliefs” and “Always eat mussels on Mondays in March” will all pass Kant’s test, for all can be consistently universalized.425

One may compare this problem with that of the golden rule presented earlier in connection with PWE. The golden rule, as it is interpreted in Kant’s categorical imperative, is too formal

424 MacIntyre 1985, 45.

425 MacIntyre 1985, 45, 46.
a principle to function as a norm for moral action. In truth, the golden rule tells nothing about the content of ethics. Consequently, the individual ethical injunctions that Kant claims are derived from the universalization principle (which is the categorical imperative) may in reality be derived from Kant’s particular, pietistic background.

From the viewpoint of the general aim in this chapter, MacIntyre gives a convincing reason why Kant himself did not see that his ethics based on the categorical imperative does not sufficiently demarcate the sphere of moral behavior. According to MacIntyre, Kant equated the universalization test with his second formulation of the categorical imperative: Always act so as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of others, as an end, and not as a means. MacIntyre obviously takes “treating humanity as an end” here, among other things, to connote the duty to give sufficient impersonal reasons for any moral persuasion of any human person.

In other words, Kant saw manipulation or instrumentalization of the human individual when a person was not given sufficient rationale for requiring something of her. Moreover, this rationale was to be such that it would satisfy the individual being persuaded, that is, the reasons offered would have to be sufficiently relevant by the person’s own standards. Such an interpretation of the categorical imperative certainly prevents any egoistic interpretations of the universalization test such as were presented above by MacIntyre. Characteristic of the perfectly rational method, Kant was determined to derive his second interpretation of the categorical imperative from the first in order to give a purely rational justification for endorsing inviolable human dignity. Yet the problem that MacIntyre addresses is precisely that there is no logical interdependence between the two formulations of the categorical imperative:

Kant gives us no good reason for holding [the second formulation of categorical imperative against manipulative persuasion]. I can without any inconsistency whatsoever [and hence perfectly in line with the rule provided by the first formulation] flout it; “Let everyone except me be treated as a means” may be immoral, but it is not inconsistent and there is not even inconsistency in willing a universe of egotists all of whom live by this maxim.

Here the problem of Kantian rationality presented moves in. In the first chapter I questioned Küng’s claim that Kantian morality is human-centered in such a way that it would rule out a possibility of moral authority over and against the interests of moral subject. Kant indeed has an understanding of the categorical imperative finding itself independent of personal calculations of interests in real life. The reason is that the categorical imperative is located on an immutable and transcendental (noumenal) level in contrast to the (phenomenal) world of contingent desires. The issue here is that ultimately, there are ultimately no abstract principles of reason that provide unequivocal justification for the universality of any concrete moral injunc-

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426 On the criticism of the formality of the categorical imperative, see also for example Apel 2000, 143.
427 On Kant’s background, see for example Greene 1960, xii–xxxi.
428 MacIntyre 1985, 9, 46.
429 MacIntyre 1985, 46.
tions. This statement also applies to the above-mentioned universality of individual rights. All the same, the second formulation of the categorical imperative seems to express something essential about morality and hence is perhaps worth defending in some other way. While the first formulation of the categorical imperative indeed does not provide any final guidance, one may try to derive the justification for the second formulation as well as its content from less abstract reasons, that is, from empirical considerations of how people de facto would endorse a certain kind of rights-based liberalism were they to be shown all the aspects relevant to their personal decision.

In that case, however, a criticism of Kantian ethics emerges that is contrary to Küng’s. This comes from the Kantian school itself, from contemporary liberalism, and particularly from John Rawls. Rawls’s theory is worth examining in its own right in this context, but a further motive is provided by PWE itself. Rawls is the figure to whom Küng explicitly refers when Küng tries to make his position generally more identifiable:

If the different world-views are to live together, it is precisely the pluralistic society that is in need of a fundamental consensus, to which the different world-views contribute, so that, not a “strict” or total, but rather an “Overlapping Consensus” (John Rawls) may be formed.430

Rawls’s theory of justice may be interpreted as a criticism of Kantian deontology in the following manner. Because of the idealist nature of the noumenal level, the principle of the ‘priority of right over the good’ is not on firm deontological ground according to Kant’s theory, for Kant is not human-centered enough. We cannot claim that a choice is free, if it is determined by the antecedent requirement of pure reason, as Kant maintains.431 The main reason is that there seems to be no pure noumenal and abstract rationality in the first place. Consequently, the choice has to take place solely on the initiative of an individual human being with a view of the concrete realities of life. If, and here Rawls is indeed in agreement with Kant, the real essence of ethics is to allow people to decide for themselves what good(s) they are to pursue, then we should not omit even this, the good of all goods, ‘the priority of right over the good’.432 In other words, this paramount principle ought to be the result of personal choice like the good in more particular cases, not some absolute voice from outside, independent of the interests of a moral subject.433 At first glance this idea seems to refute the liberal axiom in practice, simply because it now seems impossible to justify rationally even the priority of right; there is always the possibility that people do not choose this principle – and they are free to do that from the moral point of view as indeed they should be. However, Rawls

430 PW, 49: “Gerade die plurale Gesellschaft, wenn in ihr verschiedenen Weltanschauungen zusammenleben sollen, braucht einen grundlegenden Konsens, zu dem die verschiedenen Weltanschauungen beitragen, so dass sich zwar kein ‘strenger’ oder totaler, wohl aber ein ‘Overlapping Consensus’ (John Rawls) bilden kann.”

431 Kant 1797, 42.

432 Rawls 1972, 13.

presents a model that is supposed to meet both rational demands, the priority of right over the
good as a categorical and universal axiom and the individual choice as a source of that axiom,
no matter how pluralistic the concrete societal situation might be.

This is possible, he suggests, by supposing a hypothetical state of social decision by
those who are on a par with each other as far the contingent preconditions of life are con-
cerned; Rawls calls this thought test as a starting point for ethical inquiry the original posi-
tion. This means that people in a concrete social situation have to abstract themselves from
reality and ignore their material, mental, and spiritual states. The moral justification offered to
people for “moving behind” this so-called veil of ignorance is that the people have not ac-
tually chosen, in the deepest sense of the word, their present assets or convictions or in any
way deserve them; the antecedent social and physical factors independent of the merits of the
individuals themselves, such as the social status of the childhood home or innate physical or
intellectual capacities, have at least made people’s real-life earnings and commitments possi-
bile, or even directly determined them in the long run.

Thus, Rawls is in line with the Kantian resistance to contingency in the moral questions,
indeed conceiving this resistance more strictly than Kant himself and his liberalist successors,
for they do not usually require a person to remove himself from the material and mental con-
tingencies. The other difference from the Kantian model is expressed in the next step of
Rawls’s argument. When imagining oneself in the original position, the task is to arrive at a
mutual agreement on how the contingent assets are to be distributed on the other side of the
veil of ignorance, that is, in real life. This procedural nature of the Rawlsian ethics differs
from Kant in that Kant supposes something is given before there is any choice, that is, ‘the
priority of right over the good’ in the form of the categorical imperative, although also this
priority is found only through rational inquiry. In Rawls’s liberalism, the concept of justice is
characteristically the result of a voluntary social contract emerging from a process of fair
agreement. In other words, any principle in ethics is subjected to the free choice of individ-
uals in the original position. Next, Rawls proceeds to identify the principles derived from that
process. He assumes that people prefer to agree only on the kinds of principles beneficial to

436 Rawls 1972, 100–108.
desirable to detach the structure of Kant's doctrine from its background in transcendental idealism and to give it a
procedural interpretation by means of the construction of the original position. (This detachment is important if
for no other reason than that it should enable us to see how far a procedural interpretation of Kant’s view within
a reasonable empiricist framework is possible.)” The procedural face of Rawls does not exclude the other side of
the coin, namely, that Rawlsian justice is not meant to be “purely” or perfectly procedural. This question will be
re-examined later in the case of Habermas.
them in real life. On the other hand, it is impossible for them simply to strengthen their position in society, because they know neither the convictions nor the assets they are going to have.

Strikingly, Rawls now shows in a plausible manner that after sufficient rational inquiry, all parties will come to exactly the same conclusions on universal and categorical ethical axioms. These are the two principles of justice:

*First Principle*
Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

*Second Principle*
Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:
(a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with just savings principle, and
(b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

The first principle of justice is the primordial one and implies what was meant earlier by ‘the priority of right over the good’. The second principle is a distinctive dimension of Rawls with regard to classical liberalism: it offers a defense of something like a welfare-state model. It resembles the so-called maximin rule used in rational choice theory because people are supposed to choose an alternative, which then guarantees the highest *minimum* position, even though it might not bring about the highest *possible* benefit.

Thus, in Rawls’s model the justification and motivational reasons for adjusting oneself to ‘the priority of right over the good’ is derived from making people conscious that, given the original position, everybody chooses this principle voluntarily. This amounts to the claim that within Kant’s theory, people cannot be motivated to action, however not because Kant’s starting point was too human-centered, as Küng argues, but because it is not enough human-centered. It appears that Rawls claims that Kant was unfaithful to his own method at a certain point, which makes the theory deficient in a deontological sense. However, what Rawls attempts to prove is that this does not mean the refutation of the deontological ethical method as such. After a modification of the Rawlsian mode, it seems possible to defend liberalism and ‘the priority of right over the good’ as the right way to define the essence of ethics.

What is particularly relevant in Rawls’s version from the point of view of this study is that it manages to tackle the decisive question of the deontological project: liberalism holds

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438 Rawls 1972, 142.
440 Rawls 1972, 302.
441 It is noteworthy that Rawls is not exactly advocating a welfare state, but rather correcting it; see Pogge 1989, 215, N.5.
only if the ideal of ‘priority of right over the good’ itself as a universal axiom can be derived from the free choice of individuals. In other words, the self, that is, the moral subject, ought to be set above any ethical principle.

Whether Rawls succeeds in fulfilling this requirement himself is something else altogether. Although Rawls’s search for an alternative to Kantian deontology is innovative and to the point, the suggestion of a process behind the veil of ignorance will hardly correct the original flaws and enable a final victory for liberalism. The crucial question now is why people should choose to view their lives through the veil of ignorance. As has been said, the rough answer is that, just because people want to choose in the first place, they are in need of the original position. In other words, because every choice people make in real life is the result of contingent life conditions guiding their decisions, people need to ignore these contingencies in order to recognize the most authentic choices. While this insistence is no doubt consistent with the deontological position, there still remains the need to prove that, in the original position, there are really no contingent preconditions to guide the personal choices, meaning, the nature of the agreement to which the parties voluntarily adjust themselves. Unfortunately, on deeper inquiry, it appears that there are such preconditions. The two preconditions in the original position that are not consistent with the autonomy Rawls seeks to defend are (1) the assumption that people have antecedent preferences of a certain kind and (2) the assumption that society has a stake in the material resources arising from its members. These two premises are presumably taken for granted to the point that Rawls has failed to notice their impact on his argument. I will deal with the first condition below and return to the latter in the next section.

First, however, it is worth returning to some points at the end of the previous chapter for re-evaluation. There it was shown that, in the concept of humanum, there is an apparent Kantian echo, evident in at least three facts: in the universal deontological nature of ethics; in the categorical imperative as its result; and finally in the particular values – freedom, equality, rights, and so on – as attributes of humanum derived from the categorical imperative. Moreover, it was claimed that precisely because of these facts, PWE is susceptible to criticism by adherents of the positive method who see PWE as unrealistic, even imperialistic.

Now, it could be rejoined on the grounds of the radical neutrality of liberalism presented above that there is no danger of undermining the self-understanding of the (basic) ethical principles of individual religions. Striving after every imaginable kind of religious or ideological good is exactly what the categorical imperative makes possible. What the categorical imperative with its corollary of individual freedom aspires to is not simply some kind of “substantial” ethics, be it as minimal or as basic as possible, but rather the complete opposite, namely, the upper framework that allows every possible kind of interpretation of the good life.

An example is the golden rule. At the end of the previous chapter the golden rule was presented as an illustration of the formality and consequently, the non-workability of the categorical imperative in a pluralistic situation. Yet within Kantian thinking, the problem I pre-
sented in the context of the golden rule would not be a problem, but an illustration of the primordial status of the categorical imperative in a morally pluralistic situation. That is because the golden rule would mean simply that one has to take the preferences of others fully into account and act accordingly, irrespective of one’s own preferences, even of a moral nature, as long as the action does not violate other people’s freedom to act according to their preferences. And here we arrive at the core of liberalism wherein lies perhaps its greatest strength, but also its greatest weakness.

In his criticism of Rawls, Michael J. Sandel claims that the nature of the Kantian self leads to a contradiction. There is no way to know what a person really prefers, for the person is emptied of any such preferences. Strictly speaking, the golden rule, for example, would mean that one should do to others what one would like to have done to oneself in the position of the *noumenal* self or in the original position. But these very positions imply that the person in question is abstracted from all contingencies. Now, does a tendency to have self-interested preferences, as Rawls assumes things to be in the original position, not imply the existence of a contingency? *There is indeed no way of proving that this kind of human characteristic is not the result of certain preconditions of life.* On the contrary, it is even more to the point to conceive the idea of people having self-interested preferences as being the result of a certain view that favors a certain type of individualism. In any case, the correct corollary of Rawls’s ideals as to the nature of the original position would be that the parties would not have *any* preferences in the first place. But to return to the original problem, that is an odd position to start with if you have to prefer *something*. In its striving after autonomous choice, liberalism holds such a disempowered view of the moral subject that in the end, it is doomed to remain mute about anything that concerns moral agency in the first place.443

To put Sandel’s powerful charge somewhat differently, the ultimate deontological dilemma is that it makes no logical sense to stress rights as a precondition so that everyone could freely choose the ends they want in their lives. If every personal choice is the result of some antecedent contingent preconditions, is it really worth the effort to make these choices possible? To be sure, there are reasons for allowing people to choose, but the reasons cannot be the deontological ones with the ideal of autonomous choice. On the contrary, ‘the priority of right over the good’ prevents people from making autonomous choices and instead forces them to reaffirm their antecedent life conditions with their choices. However, liberalism has no escape from this contradiction, because to “filter out” the authentic person who would choose her ends in life instead of being guided by them in the choices being made makes no sense. This would require a person who has no preferences and consequently would not be able to choose.

I hinted above that there are non-liberal reasons for allowing people to choose. However, given that choices are never without preconditions, the reasons have to be derived from

social and religious factors antecedent of any personal decision, instead of by the choice itself. In other words, the reason for viewing personal choice as being ethically so important is that the choice implies good or bad moral action derived from and defined by some antecedent factors. This in turn means that there have to be factors that create ethical obligations for people independent of any choice they make. But if this is true, then from the ethical point of view it is not irrelevant what one chooses independent of whether one violates others’ corresponding freedoms of choice. There have to be certain views of the good life defining what is ethically valuable. With Sandel’s critique of Rawls we are in principle back in Hegel’s classical critique of Kantian civil society. The terminology of this classical controversy was about the dialectics between form (or procedure) and content. From now on, however, I will use Sandel’s terminology of right and good: the Kantian ‘priority of right over the good’ is, in some significant way, called into question.

The origins of the rational (self-)criticism of Kantianism are in fact found in the nature of its earliest formulations. It was shown by Alasdair MacIntyre that, logically, the categorical imperative itself is incapable of substantiating any concrete moral precepts, not even rights. Even today advocates of the language of universal rights are at pains to show its logical reasonableness – with meager results. So from where does the rights-argument emerge in the first place? MacIntyre argues that historically the ethical, non-judicial concept of right is a relatively recent phenomenon that can be traced back to the Enlightenment. Hence, Macintyre sees ethical deontology as a modern Western fiction, analogous to the concept of taboo in animist cultures. Both, he claims, may be fulfilled with any contents whatsoever without there being any rational reasons for this fulfillment. Thus he also criticizes the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

What is more, the Kantian view of morality not only implies a self-contradiction, but also presents an unrealistic view of the moral agent. I have suggested that if one does not want to collapse into nihilism, then it is logically necessary to suppose some views of the good life to be the true antecedent of any personal choice. Now, it must be added, this supposition corresponds to our moral experience as well. Here we observe the oddness in the vision of the self-contained agent merely on the basis of the subjective experience of moral matters. Normally people sense it to be natural to have moral ties antecedent of their decisions, whether

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444 MacIntyre (1985, 66–68) shows clearly that not only Kant, but also such a noteworthy contemporary as Gewirth have only quasi-arguments on their behalf. Gewirth tries to derive the justification of basic rights from the all-human need for personal action. Action in turn cannot be said to be authentic without personal freedom from outer constraints in that regard. While it is uncontroversial that action is both an inextricable human need and presupposes personal freedom by definition, MacIntyre’s objection questions the logical step from these assumptions to the conclusion concerning moral justification of rights. That a person has a need does not logically imply that he also has a (moral) right to fulfil his need. MacIntyre claims that Gewirth is incapable of accounting either for this precise logical connection or the further conclusion that from my personal right it follows that others should have similar rights.

religious or social. This idea is confirmed, albeit unconsciously, even by Rawls, with his idea of the original position. Here we get back to the second principle of justice in Rawls’s original theory, quoted above.

First of all, it is indeed plausible to claim that people do not own their assets in a strict sense. They have not earned them, because the merits by which they are entitled to hold these assets are not result of autonomous effort; everything they have is a result of antecedent preconditions in life. Second, however, Rawls supposes this to mean that the society has the final right to the assets. In other words, people are morally indebted to the community they live in to hand over their assets to the society, indeed even to submit their physical and mental capacities to the well-being of others in the same society, usually the least advantaged, when necessary. Perhaps Rawls would say that this is not the precondition, but a result of a voluntary agreement in the original position. But actually this is exactly what is not the case. One of the preconditions of the agreement itself, although one that has gone unmentioned, is that the society has a sovereign power to deliver the assets now detached from the individuals, however this be decided.\footnote{Sandel 1998, 66–103.} The idea that the assets are to be delivered to anyone in the first place and the fact that this presupposition is not given any special attention, reflect the self-evident ethical experience, namely, that antecedent social considerations have a primordial stake over the choices of individuals. Here Rawls has taken an important step, unnoticed, but still true in view of Sandel’s notions, away from the principles of Kantianism toward a kind of experiential understanding of justice and morality. The intuitive idea of a community having, at least to some degree, primordial status over the individual has entered the scene as opposed to the abstract principles of rationalism.

It is noteworthy that what Rawls opposes in Kant’s ethics is the latter’s idealism. In Kant’s theory, one is forced to disconnect from the concrete world and life and hover in the cloud of abstract principles. Kant may be right in principle, but the blunt truth is that the moral life is not lived through abstract rational “monads,” but by real persons in a certain historical context. In the words of Sidwick, Rawls maintains, “It seems to him that on Kant’s view the lives of the saint and the scoundrel are equally the outcome of a free choice (on the part of the noumenal self) and equally the subject of causal laws (as a phenomenal self).”\footnote{Rawls 1973, 254.} According to Rawls, the moral principles concerning both individual and society are found by paying attention to the concrete factors of life, instead of trying to ignore them. To avoid this criticism of liberalism and idealism Rawls has developed a way out of abstraction while trying to maintain the other side of Kantian ethics, freedom of choice.\footnote{Rawls 1973, 254–265.}

Although Rawls’s criticism of the experiential nature, which alludes to greater openness to the positive method than does Kant, correctly focuses on the crucial weakness in Kantian
theory, the construction of the original position does not offer a real alternative after all. The problem is that in adhering to the ‘priority of right over the good’, the ideal of autonomous personal choice in ethical matters, inevitably leads to an impoverished view of the moral subject. Sandel speaks of an odd dispossession of the individual’s moral attributes or ends whereby the self only has these attributes rather than identifies with them; they are mine but not me.

The [Rawlsian] dispossession involves the distancing of the end from the self whose end it once was. It becomes increasingly unclear in what sense this is my end rather than yours, or somebody else’s, or no one’s at all. The self is disempowered because dissociated from those ends and desires which, woven gradually together into a coherent whole, provide a fixity of purpose, form a plan of life, and so account for the continuity of the self with its ends. Where the self is regarded as given prior to its ends, its bounds fixed once and for all such that they are impermeable, invulnerable to transformation by experience, such continuity is perpetually and inherently problematic; the only way it can be affirmed is for the self to reach beyond itself, to grasp as an object of its will the ends it would possess, and hold them, as it always must, external to itself. Sandel sees the error of liberalism in the assumption that the human being is, by nature, a so-called ‘unencumbered self’. The term refers to a voluntaristic idea of the non-existence of any morally justified social ties encumbering any individual in society. In other words, the individual is not viewed as having any sort of relations, without or antecedent to the subjective choices she has voluntarily made, to other persons, groups, or society as a whole, such that ethical duties emerge from those relations. However, the idea of the ‘unencumbered self’, Sandel argues, corresponds poorly to our experience of the nature of ethics and morality. It is problematic, for instance, to think that a child has no responsibilities toward its parents or vice versa, or alternatively that the state does not have any ethically justified expectations, even demands, of its citizens, or a religious group of its members, and so on, as long as individuals themselves do not want to yield to such demands voluntarily. It seems much more likely that often, even usually, the moral duties of an individual are born independent of the personal choices made in the family or society.

3.1.2. From Pogge’s Cosmopolitanism to Rawls’s Political Liberalism

Inasmuch as Sandel’s criticism strikes us by its pervasiveness and clarity, it might be thought that there is no way of proceeding along Kantian lines toward a plausible explication of PWE’s humanum. However, Thomas W. Pogge has offered an important defense of Rawlsian liberalism. Pogge’s aim is to offer a strong counter-argument to Sandel’s interpretation of the liberal self, which Pogge takes as having had a disproportionate effect in the contemporary decline of Rawls’s academic popularity. Beyond this counter-criticism, Pogge actually wants to apply Rawls’s theory even more broadly than Rawls himself. This means, first, giving a Rawlsian account of positive social rights, and, second, globalizing Rawls’s two prin-


451 Pogge 1989, 2, 3.
ciples of justice. Because both of these enterprises are clearly close to the intentions of Küng as well, they are all the more relevant here. It is worth underscoring the significance of these two dimensions even more strongly: it is in fact positive rights and the global scope of ethics that will be the focus in each of the alternative positions offered in this chapter. It is around Pogge’s two-fold revision of Rawls that much of my ethical and political philosophical discussion will take place. I will deal with each Pogge’s three aims in turn – the counter-critique of Sandel, the scope of rights in particular, and the scope of ethics in general – and thereafter assess his arguments critically.

To begin with the defense of Rawls’s main ideas vis-à-vis Sandel’s criticism, I will first take up Sandel’s notions of the second principle of justice, considered at the end of the previous section. Thereafter, I will proceed to Pogge’s defense of the first principle of justice and consider it in light of Sandel’s criticism. Pogge claims that Sandel has misunderstood Rawls in taking that Rawls would expect society to have primary control over individual natural endowments. Against this idea, Pogge carefully elaborates on the distinction between different personal endowments as such and the morally arbitrary distribution of them in Rawls’s theory. Thereby Pogge shows, plausibly, that while it is true that the arbitrariness of the distribution of natural endowments does have an effect on how their use is rewarded by society, there is no need for Rawls to hold that the endowments themselves would be undeserved or that individuals would not have their morally justified ownership proper. Although Rawls does say that the distribution of natural endowments is morally arbitrary, he does not have to claim that for this reason people do not have a justified possession of their endowments. Indeed, they have them de facto, independent of any of our considerations.

The following example will perhaps make the question more concrete. The social value and reward of mathematical productivity is a social contingency; hence, it is a moral question to design a society so that it does not reward this skill any more than, say, working on an assembly line. At the same time, this is not to say that mathematicians would not own their talents so that they exclusively have the moral right to do whatever they like – or to do nothing – with their talents. The societal intervention is used only indirectly: only when the mathematician expects to receive something from others, that is, from society, for (using) his endowments do moral considerations arise of what and how much this something should be. It is important to note that all evaluations or devaluations of natural endowments are always determined by social contingencies. Hence, the difference principle, for instance, does not add anything to society’s dominion or take anything away from individuals.452

In light of these ideas put forth by Pogge it is not quite true that Rawls deviates from classical liberalism with its stress on individual immunity from the society or the state. However, Sandel still has one question. What is actually the reason to keep the individual right to one’s natural endowments intact from society? This is a somewhat reverse problem, because

452 Pogge 1989, 63–106.
now we ask with Sandel why not indeed consolidate the status of the society at the cost of the individual exactly on the basis of Rawls. Is it not that if Rawls has shown the arbitrariness of the endowments’ individual distribution, then this actually does have an effect on revising the view of their possession? What if it is in fact morally right for others to oblige the mathematically talented individuals to use their skills for the greater good of society, particularly if these other members of society are suffering in the “least advantaged” position? Presumably, the Rawlsian rejoinder would be that it is more natural to allow endowments to “lie where they fall.” But this assumption is explicitly criticized by Sandel – and strikingly, ignored by Pogge – when Sandel considers Robert Nozick’s entitlement theory. The fact that someone owns something does not mean that someone is morally entitled to that ownership. Thus, Sandel’s assessment of Rawls should be seen as more corrective and less interpretive than Pogge takes it to be. From the fact that the distribution of natural endowments is morally arbitrary, the claim that persons are not unquestionably and sovereignly morally entitled to own and control their endowments should logically follow. Moreover, in light of the difference principle, Sandel argues that a Rawlsian in fact even provides society with the ultimate ownership and control of these endowments. This Sandel does by differentiating between different levels of ownership: “For the difference principle must presuppose the second description – that I am the guardian of assets to which the community as a whole has some prior title or claim.”

Indeed, this seems to be a respectable view considered that the separation between guardianship and ultimate ownership does not downplay the apparent fact that individuals themselves naturally own their talents on a practical level. However, it is not so easy to justify Sandel’s claim, which is integrated to his criticism of the entitlement theory: that society has the fundamental ownership of natural endowments which individuals lack. This is indeed a problematic claim, given Sandel’s own insight into the entitlement theory: that individuals are not unquestionably entitled to their endowments does not mean that society is entitled to own these endowments. Thus the controversy between the two interpretations of possession remains unresolved by the resources offered by either Rawls, Pogge, or Sandel. The question of the individual’s claim on individual endowments vis-à-vis society’s claim is after all of fundamental importance in this study, and it will recur as we proceed to Pogge’s further treatment of Rawls vis-à-vis Sandel’s.

Pogge’s other counter-criticism concerns Sandel’s treatment of Rawls’s first principle of justice. I want to show that both sides are partly right. In the previous section it was shown that Sandel has good reason to view the liberal self as incapable of serious moral reasoning in

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453 Pogge 1989, 75.
455 Sandel 1998, 97, italics added.
general. This was owing to the liberal ideal of the so-called ‘unencumbered self’, prior to any social ties that could define its identity, that is, what it is in a “thick,” constitutive sense.

Pogge is seemingly reluctant to adopt this claim: one is not supposed to distance oneself from one’s attributes, for these do constitute a person’s identity. Rawls’s view that ends are “mine” does not exclude the obvious fact that they are also “me” in a constitutive sense of the person. In fact, Pogge gives some credit to Sandel’s view of Rawls, but only to clarify Rawls’s real intentions:

Thus a person’s deepest loyalties, commitments, and self-understandings do not affect his status as participant in the basic structure – his basic rights and duties and so forth. And this statement is compatible with citizens’ having deep self-understandings and convictions even of a political sort. Citizens may understand themselves as political feminists or may have strong convictions about the common good. To be sure, all such constitutive commitments are subject to a categorical sense of justice . . . , and some political and nonpolitical convictions will be excluded by Rawls’s conception of justice fully spelled out. But many of the political convictions most deeply held today can be equally deeply held in a well-ordered Rawlsian society . . . . Given their categorical sense of justice, persons will have a sufficient moral motive to comply with even those outcomes of this process that go against their deeply held convictions. This does not mean that they have no such convictions, that they won’t deeply identify with some political cause and continue the attempt to convince others of its merits.

However, this does not do away with the ultimate problem in Rawls: even though we were speaking only about moral attributes of the self – as Pogge claims versus Sandel – it is still self-refuting to think that one may have (moral) ends and at the same time expect that one is always to reflect unconditionally the acceptability of these ends behind the ‘veil of ignorance’. Rawls displays the Kantian intention to subordinate categorically all contingent ends to principles that are derived by abstracting oneself from them. But then again, the end remaining after this a priori move is not a real end, that is, an end “in the constitutive sense.” It is difficult to speak of ends in the first place inasmuch as Rawls retains the priority of right over the good. Persons by definition are actually not supposed to have ends. To that extent, for Rawls “my moral attributes are mine but not me,” as Sandel claimed.

Once again it is important that Sandel’s criticism focuses on the antagonistic relation of Rawls’s liberalism to contingency: persons’ ends are not relevant from the moral point of view, because these ends are distributed arbitrarily by socially determined conditions. This claim seems to go against the natural (experiential) concept of morality, indeed, to destroy it. This dimension of Sandel’s critique is to be understood as experiential criticism of the Kantian rational method in general, while his critique of the second principle of justice falls within the inner criticism of the rational method. Here one seeks no rational justification or certainty nor any abstract clarity, but rather a realistic conception of the structure and functioning of the moral subject.

Conversely, not only does the abstracted view function as a superior test and a restriction on the individual ends of people, but this Rawlsian method also leaves persons without

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456 Pogge 1989, 89, 90.

457 Pogge 1989, 91.
any guidance in the moral decisions they face after this test-by-abstraction has been made. In other words, the very requirement that one may not decide between ends before the test-by-abstraction, as the ends are arbitrary from the moral point of view, means that one cannot decide between the ends left permissible after this test for the very same reason. The problem is that in reality the only available moral criteria for guidance are provided by the formal principles of justice – and this is no doubt a very barren picture of the nature of every-day moral life. Naturally, the only coherent response to this criticism would seem to be that ends, needs, and so on do have moral significance before the abstraction test, that is, they are not arbitrary from the moral point of view. But, importantly, this move would also downplay the categorical role of the formal principles with the result that they do not have the status to determine which ends are significant and which are morally arbitrary. This corollary, in turn, results in the fact that, from the moral point of view, one need not - indeed one may not - separate oneself from the ends one has by abstraction to the original position, but should assess the ends in question simply by themselves.

Yet at one point Pogge seems to invoke a strong counter-argument to Sandel when he asks, how deviation from the formal principles of justice does not result in devastating recurrences of National Socialism, Stalinism, or other horrors of the past.458 While this question is justified, at the same time Sandel would have a response: it depends upon the ends in question. So the focus is again returned to the sphere of the ends themselves. Pogge’s notion could still be presented in a different form: if one is not to distance oneself from the social embeddedness, then there is no possibility to assess critically any of the particular ends for that matter, while the whole point of morality is about assessing social conventions. But Sandel is actually not denying the possibility for critical reflection; indeed, he prefers it to any kind of conventionalism. For him then, the only way left to distance oneself critically from the community would appear to be self-reflection by some kind of individual intuition:

The second kind of dispossession disempowers in another way. Here, the problem is not to overcome the distance created by the drift of the end from the self, but rather to recover and preserve a space that increasingly threatens to collapse. Crowded by the claims and pressures of various possible purposes and ends, all impinging indiscriminately on my identity, I am unable to sort them out, unable to mark out the limits or the boundaries of my self, incapable of saying where my identity ends and the world of attributes, aims, and desires begins. I am disempowered in the sense of lacking any clear grip on who, in particular, I am. Too much is too essential to my identity.459

For the self whose identity is constituted in the light of ends already before it, agency consists less in summoning the will than in seeking self-understanding. The relevant question is not what ends to choose, for my problem is precisely that the answer to this question is already given, but rather who I am, how I am to discern in this clutter of possible ends what is me from what is mine. Here, the bounds of the self are not fixtures but possibilities, their contours no longer self-evident but at least partly unformed. Rendering them clear, and defining the bounds of my identity are one and the same. The self-command that is measured in the first case in terms of the scope and reach of my will is determined in the second by the depth and clarity of my self-awareness.460

458 Pogge 1989, 94.
After all, for Sandel it remains to be shown how this kind of “cognitive” clarity and certainty of one’s identity against its disruptions is to be attained. Recourse to intuitive reflection may be, in some remarkable sense, a sign of lack of authentic critical assessment. This is precisely the last and most convincing charge of the Kantian type of rationalism of any experientially-oriented views. But the possibility that Sandel would not, in the final analysis, be able to show a sufficient alternative to the Kantian line of thought once again reflects not the final victory of Rawls, but rather the mutually refuting character of both perspectives. This notion reflects the same fundamentally important moral tension between individual and community that was taken up above in analyzing the second principle of justice, and it will be taken into further consideration at some later points in this chapter as more resources for a reassessment are available.

While one finds no noteworthy defense of Rawls in the face of Sandel’s notions of the self, it is still possible to imagine a defense of liberalism that would be of more help. Pogge rightly urges Sandel to state exactly what the more substantial public end would be. He is also right in supposing that the introduction of such an end would inevitably lead to radical – and probably insoluble – conflicts over its general moral acceptability. Furthermore, Pogge might think it is not a problem to accept the inevitability of the antecedently given contingent ends, while retaining the central ideas about the original position. The argument that, in this understanding, would defend Rawlsian liberalism would merely be the fact of the radical pluralism in contemporary societies.

However, it is important that with the appeal to pluralism as the focal point of liberalist argument, the whole view of liberalism has changed from Rawls’s original idea. Now the solution for liberalism calls for a retreat to political liberalism. The term is taken from the more recent version of Rawls’s theory, which he spelled out fully only after Pogge had made his claims outlined above, but which I think Pogge had good reason to take advantage of in interpreting the earlier Rawls.

In his later version, called political liberalism, Rawls manages to avoid the difficulties in the *Theory of Justice* criticized by Sandel. What is peculiar to political liberalism is that Rawls now articulates the principle of the ‘priority of right over the good’ in a more political manner and at the same time in an ethically more moderate manner. This means that Rawls

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461 Pogge 1989, 92.

462 Pogge 1989, 92.
does not take a stand on the question of whether particular religions or ethical views are more truthful or of greater moral worth than others. According to political liberalism, it is indeed possible to imagine that a certain view of life would either be better than all others or even be the only true one. Thus, the original Kantian view of the good being cast in a secondary position owing to its being ethically irrelevant has given way to a more modest interpretation. The comprehensive doctrines of religions, for instance, on how one ought to live would not deal with ethically minor, not to speak of irrelevant, things. Now the priority of right, according to Rawls, is derived from the empirical fact that people are obviously not able to reach overall agreement on a specific definition of the good. Hence, it is also impossible to agree on which particular good societal decision-making and action should be governed. The only option is to have recourse to a political solution such that every particular view of life is given equal attention. Rawls calls this political agreement derived from the common interests of proponents of different, perhaps mutually incommensurable, ethical or religious views an ‘overlapping consensus’. The only general agreement that is possible in a pluralistic society is found in the political axiom that all people and every group are given complete freedom to make decisions concerning the choice of good provided that they do not violate the corresponding freedom of others. From this political understanding of the ‘priority of right over the good’ the ideal of the purely political neutrality of the state logically follows. The state is not supposed to take a stand, even on the question of whether the ‘priority of right over the good’ is morally justified. The state merely sees this liberal principle as a political necessity in a pluralistic situation.463

Articulating liberalism in terms that refer to overlapping political consensus is the path that Pogge may take to develop Rawls’s theory. Assuming that Pogge does this, we may now turn to the two modifications he, all the same, considers necessary for the internal coherence of the Rawlsian method. The first concerns positive rights, and the second is intended to globalize the scope of Rawls’s theory of justice. In the first question I will show that Pogge deviates crucially from the fundamental vantage point of the Kantian method; in the second question I will show that Pogge finds Rawls to be the deviant.

It is widely recognized that Rawls wants to confine the validity of justice to negative rights, that is, rights that provide people with essential freedom from external intervention, but which still do not concentrate on endowing them with certain social advantages. Rawls has recently been more open to a broader understanding of rights, but as Martha Nussbaum remarks,

Although this commitment to human rights marks clear progress beyond *TJ*, it is important to notice how thin the list of rights is: it explicitly omits more than half the rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration, including full equality under law (since unequal liberty is permitted), the

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463 Rawls 1993, 58–66; 1999a. Rawls (1999b, 174, N.91) emphasizes that the term political should not be used as a synonym for non-normative or non-ethical. The position of political liberalism would thus be defined so that on the one hand, the setting of the original position requires a moral commitment to its principles, yet on the other hand, the more particular ends are not arbitrary from the moral point of view.
freedom of speech and opinion, the freedom of assembly, the free choice of employment, the right
to equal pay for equal work, and the right to education.\textsuperscript{464}

Pogge makes a very persuasive case that Rawls, in his rendering of justice, presents it in the
right spirit, yet still adheres to too formal an interpretation to accomplish it in reality. The
question here concerns the basic rights that are to be protected on the grounds of the first the
principle of justice. Rawls sees the danger in the formality of these rights. If they are not ef-
effectively protected in practice, then they are jeopardized and will likely remain nominal as far
as society is concerned. Yet Pogge argues that Rawls does not follow his conjecture far
enough, but confines the implementation of the first principle only to the legal protection of
rights. It often happens that, even though rights are protected, there are still those who cannot
make use of their rights. This is usually because basic physical and social needs (food, educa-
tion, and the like) are not met, and these individuals will not have the energy or the ability to
avail themselves of the social institutions that would support their interests. Worse, they may
not even be in a position to know what their interests are. In order to fulfill the requirements
of the first principle of justice, namely, that people should \textit{have} their individual rights, people
ought to be able to \textit{enjoy} these rights as well. This involves satisfying the basic socio-
economic needs of all citizens.\textsuperscript{465}

This is not to claim that the second principle of justice, including the general compensa-
tion of social assets for the disadvantaged, should be incorporated into the first principle as an
equally valuable ideal. Indeed, Pogge wants to retain the fundamental idea of liberalism ver-
sus utilitarianism, by which inalienable individual rights are more valuable than improving
the overall good of society’s members. Pogge sees the problem of utilitarianism in much the
same way as Rawls: it leads to downplaying individuals’ real preferences for the sake of the
dominant definition of good. Pogge’s proposal is that the redistribution of socio-economic
goods applies only to the extent that people’s minimal respective needs may be met in order
that the goods offered by the first principle of justice are authentically at humans’ disposal
independent of any considerations of second principle goods, such as the well-being of the
least advantaged citizens. In other words, restrictions on the rights of basic individual liberties
are justified only in order to improve the overall realization of these liberties.\textsuperscript{466}

Although noncontroversial in itself, Pogge’s amendment of the first principle to achieve
more effective social justice is yet a further deviation from the ultimate intention of Kantian
liberalism compared to Rawls. Indeed, Rawls would have an equally strong counter-argument
against the proposed incorporation of basic socio-economic goods into the first principle. Pogge
seems to recognize this as well:

\textsuperscript{464} Nussbaum 2006, 247, 248.

\textsuperscript{465} Pogge 1989, 126–134.

\textsuperscript{466} Pogge 1989, 159, 160.
Even if Rawls’s proposal, so amended, achieves the initial aim in a convincing way, it still faces a number of problems. Among these are, in weakened form, some of the difficulties raised in the preceding section, as well as questions about which civil and political liberties to include and how to specify them. These problems cannot be neatly resolved; there is no hope that one might “derive” the maximin solution to the problem of social justice from the description of the original position, given that the parties’ aversion to risk favors various competing desiderata. The preferred criterion should have a content that expresses concern for the least advantaged, should engender stability when satisfied, should be clear and straightforward so that it can serve as a public criterion, should be determinate so as to make definite demands upon existing social institutions, and so forth. The problems raised in §11 were formulated primarily by appeal to the first concern, but taking all concerns together, there may be no solution that is clearly superior to the two principles with the amended list of first-principle goods. In any case, seeing the complexities involved, it may be well to follow the fourth strategy. Once the initial aim is achieved, we view this list “as a starting point that can be improved by finding a second list such that the parties in the original position would agree to the two principles with the second list rather than the two principles with the initial list” (BLP 7). We would proceed analogously for all other difficulties and improvements—concerning the second principle, the priority rules, the general conception, or the delimitation of the domains of the general and special conceptions.467

Although Pogge acknowledges the problem, he still seems to underestimate the fundamentality and actuality of the resulting conflicts and the desperate need for ranking different socio-economic needs. Michael Walzer has an example of nutritional and religious interpretations of bread and a possible conflict of these interpretations in reality:

... there is a limited sense in which the first of these [interpretations of bread] is primary, so that if there were twenty people in the world and just enough bread to feed the twenty, the primacy of bread-as-staff-of-life would yield a sufficient distributive principle. But that is the only circumstance in which it would do so; and even there, we can’t be sure. If the religious uses of the bread were in conflict with its nutritional uses – if the gods demanded that bread be baked and burned rather than eaten – it is by no means clear which use would be primary.468

To take another example, preconditions for using one’s religious freedom effectively might, from the perspective of the individual religion, require a predominant status for this particular religion in, say, education, because of the assumption of sin. Without eradicating or mitigating sin or its effects on man, the proponents of this religion would argue, one cannot authentically make use of man’s essential freedom. In light of these and other examples, without a comprehensive account of the good, there is in fact no objective criterion with which it would be possible to assess the mutual value of conflicting, basic socio-economic needs.469 Because the Kantian prerequisite for serious ethics is always objective certainty through rational inference, it is necessary for Rawls to refrain from taking a stand on any of these puzzles involving comprehensive world views and consequently incorporating the need question into his first principle of justice. Similarly, these problems multiply when trying to define who and what group is the least advantaged in a particular society and this may well be the reason why

467 Pogge 1989, 147, 148.

468 Walzer 1983, 8. I am indebted to Kopperi (1998, 56) in taking up Walzer’s insightful notion.

469 Kopperi 1998, 56.
Rawls is reluctant to incorporate his second principle of justice into his constitution of a society.\textsuperscript{470}

Pogge’s second amendment to Rawls’s principles of justice addresses its global scope. Rawls has already taken a position on this question in his \textit{Theory of Justice}. Pogge shows that Rawls draws on the traditional idea of the law of nations whereby nations are self-sufficient operators on the global political scene and that on these grounds Rawls proposes a two-stage original position, whereby the first concerns the principles of domestic policy, while the second concerns the subjects that are represented behind the veil of ignorance as nations of the world instead of individuals.\textsuperscript{471} Pogge shows why the original position should concern each individual in the whole of human society from the beginning. Indeed, at first glance it is somewhat confusing why Rawls has been so firmly committed to individual nations rather than to persons, whom he views as the primary subjects in the original position in the global application of his theory. Pogge argues convincingly that in Rawls the two basic Kantian ideals, individualism and universalism, are not adequately applied, because the first original position actually concerns the sphere of Western society in the form of basic liberties, but the same liberties are not categorically demanded of all societies in the world.\textsuperscript{472}

Pogge’s overall aim in globalizing the original position once and for all is strikingly similar to that of PWE. Both want to promote a value-based global world order as opposed to realpolitik which merely fosters the self-interest of nations. This is for the sake of moral legitimation of some elementary values. On the other hand, both want to respect the prevailing pluralism of values as opposed to ideal politics that longs for a “thick” moral agreement. This is for the sake of authentic and realistic attainability of any common values in the first place.\textsuperscript{473} What Küng advocated as a “thin” overlapping consensus among religions of the world – approximately a year after the publication of Pogge’s proposal – is very congenial to Pogge’s basic idea.

It is highly significant that, after Sandel’s criticism of Rawls’s earlier version, a political ‘overlapping consensus’ is at stake. Rawls’s political version of liberalism was supposed to correct the weaknesses that make the original liberal theory internally inconsistent. One of the central problems with traditional ethical liberalism is that it cannot meet the deontological demands it sets for itself. Consequently, the more modest version of liberalism has been presented above as a corrective in order to save the general liberal project. This modesty finds its expression in the politically justified theory of the ‘priority of right over the good’.

Sandel, however, also shows that in trying to meet the criticism of traditional deontology, other problems emerge. In other words, it is problematic to give priority to right over the

\textsuperscript{470} Pogge (1989, 158, 159) does not appear to appreciate this fundamental problem thoroughly.

\textsuperscript{471} Pogge 1989, 240–246.

\textsuperscript{472} Pogge 1989, 156–159.

\textsuperscript{473} Pogge 1989, 231.
good on the grounds of political realities. This is because often it is first necessary to deter-
mine the ultimate end, the good, that society is supposed to strive for before dealing with the
question of how to react politically to pluralism. That means it has to be known if the particu-
lar views of life are true or false, before the question of whether it is right to leave people on
their own, free to decide what ends they are to pursue, can be answered. One of the examples
Sandel uses in this context is the nineteenth-century debate about American slavery. The
leader of the southern states held the opinion that every state should be given the right to de-
cide independently whether the institution of slavery would be criminalized. On behalf of the
northern states, Abraham Lincoln rejected this means of solving the national conflict on the
basis of the opposing claim, namely, that it is not possible to speak of rights in the first place
as long as there was no right solution to the question of whether slavery itself is right or
wrong. According to Lincoln, it was wrong to grant rights to anyone in a matter that in itself
is morally wrong, even in the name of freedom of choice.  

As far as Pogge’s version of Rawls is concerned, the problems appear to be even more
painful, because the cultural differences tend to multiply in a global context. A rather recent
example of the inner inconsistency of the liberal project appeared in the debate over the de-
piction of the prophet Muhammad. The Muslim world reacted strongly to the few Western
newspapers that published pictures of the leader of Islam. What is remarkable about the prob-
lem is that the western world itself cannot show a plausible way out of such a dilemma. That
is because both parties in question, the Muslims and the journalists behind the drawings, have
arguments in line with liberal hegemony. Both arguments concern rights, in one case the right
to freedom of speech and expression and in the other case the right not to be demeaned by
others when it comes to religious sentiments, commitments, and sacred figures. It is obvious
that the dilemma will not be solved either by the ethical version of liberalism or by the politi-
cal one. This example shows the dark side of the ethical and political atmosphere that domi-
nates in Western societies. This atmosphere is liberal to the extent that there are no deeper
ideas about how conflicts of this kind, which arise from an ethically and religiously pluralistic
situation, may be resolved. In depicting the prophet Muhammad there should be an answer to
the question of which of the two violations of rights is more fundamental. But here one would
need at least some concept of the good in order to define the hierarchy of the rights in ques-
tion. This is just what liberalism lacks, indeed even neglects. The examples of the American
slavery debate and of the Muhammad cartoons represent a purely rational criticism of liberal-
ism and in that, they also reflect how the Kantian line of thought, in trying to redress itself in
Rawls, is still not able to offer a consistent ethical alternative to social, let alone global, ethi-
cal issues.

Besides the rational rescue project of the Kantian social view, Rawls’s political liberalism
may also be seen as a rejoinder to Sandel’s experientially slanted notions that liberalism

cannot realistically account for the socially embedded, ‘encumbered’ self. Now, Rawls admits that it is indeed possible and even natural to suppose that persons have moral ties to the communities to which they belong antecedent of the choices they make as to what good they are willing to pursue. What Rawls insists on in his modified version, however, is that for the sake of being able to live together in the same overall society in the first place, it is necessary to forget these personal ties, ethically binding though they are on the individual. In practice, this means that people ought to ignore the factors connected with religious or other convictions whenever they are involved in any process in which the general matters of state are to be dealt with, either as political or other public actors and decision-makers or as voters in elections, and so on. Issues of conviction should not, according to Rawls, have any stake when people reflect on how a democratic society is to be ruled. The only governing principle for reflection and decision-making in public affairs is the liberal one, the ‘priority of right over the good’, which in itself rules out any convictional argument – but this time solely as a political necessity and not because the opposing conviction would be ethically arbitrary.475

However, despite the apparent attraction of political liberalism, in addition to the fact that it cannot withstand the deontological charges of being self-contradictory (see above), political liberalism is also vulnerable to criticism of a more experiential nature. From this perspective, the political version of liberalism cannot save the principle of the ‘priority of right over the good’, because it offers an impoverished way of pursuing politics; a way that does not satisfy the overt needs of human social life. This experiential type of criticism based on realism is best illustrated by Sandel in the following words:

But democratic politics cannot long abide a public life as abstract and decorous, as detached from moral purposes, as Supreme Court are supposed to be. A politics that brackets morality and religion too thoroughly soon generates disenchantment. Where political discourse lacks moral resonance, the yearning for a public life of larger meanings finds undesirable expressions. Groups like the “moral majority” and the Christian right seek to clothe the naked public square with narrow, intolerant moralisms. Fundamentalists rush in where liberals fear to tread. The disenchantment also assumes more secular forms. Absent a political agenda that addresses the moral dimension of public questions, public attention becomes riveted on the private vices of public officials. Public discourse becomes increasingly preoccupied with the scandalous, the sensational, and the confessional as purveyed by tabloids, talk shows, and eventually the mainstream media as well.

It cannot be said that the public philosophy of political liberalism is wholly responsible for these tendencies. But its vision of public reason is too spare to contain the moral energies of a vital democratic life. It thus creates a moral void that opens the way for the intolerant, the trivial, and other misguided moralisms.476

Alasdair MacIntyre claims that the liberalist tendency of the “privatization of the good” is in fact about to devastate completely the people’s sense of what morality actually means. He does not see any alternative other than to rediscover the original, pre-enlightenment understanding of ethics and politics. Until modern times the realization of the good was seen above all as a common task. Without consciousness on one’s place in society, it was not even think-


able that one could know what morally right action is. According to MacIntyre, because ethics always finds its definition in a certain social and historical context, no one expected to argue for morality on the basis of rights; it was seen as irrelevant if not impossible, to cite any universal principles, such as rights, for ethics. On the contrary, according to the classical view of ethics deriving from Aristotle, every individual had a particular social network, which created different demands on different persons. The leader of the polis had duties that differed from those of the parents of a family or from children. From this Aristotelian perspective, it is essential to recognize people’s social roles (characters), which control their ethical life. MacIntyre’s criticism contrasts the ideal of the ‘unencumbered self’ with the classical definition of the moral subject as an encumbered social agent, and in this it may be called a communitarian critique of liberalism.477

Both Sandel’s and MacIntyre’s criticisms of liberalism point to the same fundamental fact against the Kantian mode of liberalism: a person’s ethical obligations cannot be reduced to rights. Instead, people are viewed as having antecedent moral ties, usually according to the nature of the social groupings to which they belong. Humans are simply not able to know how to act morally if they do not recognize themselves as members of certain societies. Only after considering the ends established by these social instances does the ethical life become reasonable and meaningful. But it is this dimension of morality that makes it impossible to make the ‘priority of right over the good’ a plausible starting point that would work in the pluralistic situation in which we find ourselves struggling for global ethics.

While even political liberalism proves to be both inconsistent in theory and unrealistic in practice as a solution for the ethical problems of our world, there might still be some hope for Kantian liberalism to prove its indispensability after all. This requires, first, an acceptance of the claim that whether the proposed liberal principle should be realized is dependent on the free consent of particular comprehensive doctrines. Now the liberal claim would be that it is possible to recognize the already existing practical agreement on the liberal principle – or recognize that this agreement is attainable in the future without any moral guidance from outside the particular comprehensive doctrines. Second, it would also mean accepting that the liberal principle for a social life might substantially lack political vividness and even generate disenchantment with its unhoped-for political implications. Nevertheless, so the argument would run, all things considered, this loss is inevitable, because there are simply no other ways to cope with radical pluralism – at least peacefully. Pogge maintains plausibly that it is precisely the characteristic of the minimalist type of political liberalism that is crucial when designing the realistic model of justice for the global community; this mode of liberalism is capable of accounting for the radical pluralism of world-views.

“There is an appeal to intuition at the very basis of the theory of justice” (TJ 124-125). Rawls does not speak of intuitions in the traditional sense, however, as a priori and shared by all rational beings. He recognizes that our moral consciousness evolves historically and ontogenetically and that

477 MacIntyre 1999.
its fixed points, though we have nothing else to go on, lack any ultimate foundation—rational or empirical (cf. JFPM 235). Rawls’s explicit strategy is therefore to convince others of the criterion he proposes by bringing their own considered judgments to bear upon the issue of social institutions. The idea of globalizing Rawls’s conception of justice is then challenged by the great international diversity of considered judgments, which rules out any “appeal to intuition” in the global setting.

But I don’t think this problem defeats the idea of globalization, at least when the “search for reasonable grounds for reaching agreement . . . replaces the search for moral truth,” and “the practical social task is primary” (KCMT 519). To attain this practical goal on the global plane, an agreement need not specify a particular derivation of or rationale for the criterion of justice; “there can, in fact, be considerable differences in citizens’ conceptions of justice provided that these conceptions lead to similar political judgments. And this is possible, since different premises can yield the same conclusion. In this case there exists what we may refer to as overlapping rather than strict consensus” (TJ 387-88; cf. JFPM 246-51; IOC). What counts, then, regardless of the considered judgments and other reasons that may motivate a particular person, is convergence upon the criterion itself. The present objection to the globalization of Rawls’s criterion must then show more than cultural diversity; it must at least show that agreement on such a criterion of global justice is out of reach.478

This is a rather uncontroversial argument in principle. It is another question as to whether it is sufficient in practice solely to resort to an already existing agreement. Here it is necessary to turn to Rawls’s last work, The Law of Peoples, in which he addresses the question of the precise global application of his political liberalism.

It has been mentioned that for both Küng and Pogge, the main idea of their respective global ethical proposals is the reconciliation between real- and idealpolitik. Now, in Rawls the meaning of this middle position becomes even clearer. Rawls uses the term “realistic utopia” to illustrate the same idea as shown in Pogge, but he elaborates on it to an important degree:

\[\ldots \text{my idea of a realistic utopia doesn’t settle for a compromise between power and political right and justice, but sets limits to the reasonable exercise of power. Otherwise, power itself determines what the compromise should be . . .}479\]

The interests which move peoples (and which distinguish them from states) are reasonable interests guided by and congruent with a fair equality and a due respect for all peoples. As I will note later, it is these reasonable interests that make democratic peace possible, and the lack thereof causes peace between states to be at best a \emph{modus vivendi}, a stable balance of forces only for the time being. . . . We also conjecture, second, that the just society of liberal peoples would be stable for the right reasons, meaning that its stability is not a mere \emph{modus vivendi} but rests in part on an allegiance to the Law of Peoples itself.480

In other words, despite any amendments of Rawls with respect to original Kantianism and its “thick” moral norms, the underlying idea of Rawlsian liberalism is its hostility to the \emph{modus vivendi}, that is, to the position that allows a nonfixed institutional basis for a society being transformed according to the power relations of different comprehensive doctrines and interest groups. The intended stability is gained precisely through the liberal principle of ‘right over the good’. There is an acknowledgment of the common societal good, but only in a special sense: “Well-ordered societies with liberal conceptions of political justice also have a common good conception in this sense: namely, the common good of achieving political jus-

\begin{itemize}
  \item Pogge 1989, 268, 269.
  \item Rawls 1999b, 6 note 8.
  \item Rawls 1999b, 44, 45.
\end{itemize}
tice for all its citizens over time and preserving the free culture that justice allows.” In other words the liberal principle itself is the good prior to any other goods in the society and tantamount to the ‘priority of right over the good’. This kind of a foundational opposition to political *modus vivendi* together with the above-mentioned realistic appeal for minimal global agreement would then count as a characteristically Rawlsian rendering of PWE’s middle-way between political realism and moral idealism. But the question still remains whether this agreement on denouncing *modus vivendi* is indeed a realistic aim, at least at the global level.

But in order to work out this problem Rawls goes directly against Pogge’s proposal of assuming a global original position once and for all: “. . . we are to begin with the social contract idea of the liberal political conception of a constitutionally democratic regime and then extend it by introducing a second original position at the second level, so to speak, in which the representatives of liberal peoples make an agreement with other liberal peoples.” The further idea is to create an inter-governmental Law of Peoples on the basis of the agreement in the second original position. The resulting Society of Peoples includes not only the liberal regimes, which have consented to accept the mutual results of the second original position, but also some part of the “decent non-liberal regimes.” This interpretation not only raises the question of whether it is correct to define the principles of justice among individual liberal regimes only after the domestic design of the original position, but it also raises the question of the status of the regimes that are not liberal in the first place. Both questions should in principle be answered on the same basis in the Law of Peoples.

Some may say that there is no need for the Law of Peoples to develop such an idea of toleration. The reason they might give is that citizens in a liberal society should judge other societies by how closely their ideals and institutions express and realize a reasonable liberal political conception. Given the fact of pluralism, citizens in a liberal society affirm a family of reasonable political conceptions of justice and will differ as to which conception is the most reasonable. But they agree that nonliberal societies fail to treat persons who possess all the powers of reason, intellect, and moral feeling as truly free and equal, and therefore, they say, nonliberal societies are always properly subject to some form of sanction – political, economic, or even military – depending on the case. On this view the guiding principle of liberal foreign policy is gradually to shape all not yet liberal societies in a liberal direction, until eventually (in the ideal case) all societies are liberal.

The italicized “therefore” several lines back marks, however, an inference that begs the following question: how do we know, before trying to work out a reasonable Law of Peoples, that nonliberal societies are always, other things being equal, the proper object of political sanctions? As we have seen in discussing the arguments in the second original position in which the principles of the Law of Peoples are selected for liberal peoples, the parties are the representatives of equal peoples, and equal peoples will want to maintain this equality with each other.

The political version of Rawls’s liberalism does not include absolute and universal moral reasons for abiding by the rules following from the original position. If there is no factual agreement on the original position among the regimes, then there is no way for liberals to condemn

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482 Rawls 1999b, 10.
483 Rawls 1999b, 61–78.
484 Rawls 1999b, 60.
the situation. From this perspective it is easy to understand that Pogge’s proposal for one single original position is not acceptable after the call for this moderate liberalism. Rawls criticizes Pogge and other cosmopolitanists explicitly on this point.

Some think that any liberal Law of Peoples, particularly any social contract such as law, should begin first by taking up the question of liberal cosmopolitan or global justice for all persons. . . . From this starting point they go on to imagine a global original position with its veil of ignorance behind which all parties are situated symmetrically. Following the kind of reasoning familiar in the original position for the domestic case, the parties would then adopt a first principle that all persons have equal basic rights and liberties. . . . But this foreign policy simply assumes that only a liberal democratic society can be acceptable. Without trying to work out a reasonable liberal Law of Peoples, we cannot know that nonliberal societies cannot be acceptable. The possibility of global original position does not show that, and we can’t merely assume it.

These two long quotations do not need further comment. They offer a powerful criticism of Pogge’s cosmopolitanist proposal from the perspective of political liberalism. However, there are still moral ingredients, albeit substantially mitigated, in the Law of Peoples, that call for elaboration and justification in light of these considerations. Why is it that only “decent” regimes and not all nonliberal regimes are accepted in the Society of Peoples? Is it not that Rawls wants to refrain from taking a moral stand on any nonliberal political cultures? Rawls clarifies his purposes as follows:

To repeat, I am not saying that a decent hierarchical society is as reasonable and just as a liberal society. For judged by the principles of a liberal democratic society, a decent hierarchical society clearly does not treat its members equally. A decent society does, however, have a common good political conception of justice (§8.2), and this conception is honored in its decent consultation hierarchy (§9.1). Moreover, it honors a reasonable and just Law of Peoples, the same law that liberal peoples do. That law applies to how peoples treat each other as peoples. How peoples treat each other and how they treat their own members are, it is important to recognize, two different things. A decent hierarchical society honors a reasonable and just Law of Peoples even though it does not treat its own members reasonably or justly as free and equal citizens, since it lacks the liberal idea of citizenship.

Behind this clarification is the idea that liberal peoples are not indifferent to all nonliberal regimes owing to their self-interests; the point in not accepting some regimes into the Society of Peoples is not that liberals would be willing to moralize about any nonliberals. Decent peoples are those who, by definition, have agreed to partake in the second original position, but not the first, because they want to subordinate the liberal principles of justice to their own comprehensive understanding of good. Still, this refrain from participating in the domestic original position has been done relatively willingly, that is, without suffocating the major dissenting groups in this respect. Now, significantly, this so-called decent consultation hierarchy is not the focus; rather it offers a necessary guarantee that these nonliberal societies are authentically abiding by the rules of the second original position, that is, they consider other collective members of the Society of Peoples equal in their interactions. This indeed is what

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485 Rawls 1999b, 82, 83.

486 Rawls 1999b, 83.
liberal societies are justified in ensuring, because it is not a question of moralizing about others, but of keeping one’s own culture safe from hostile interventions.\textsuperscript{487} Perhaps the natural further corollary of Rawls’s considerations would be that the question of nondecent, nonliberal peoples is left completely open, except that they are clearly not included in the Society of Peoples. This is not quite the conclusion that Rawls draws, however. Indeed, he has something to say about this last group of peoples, dividing them into two categories: outlaw states and burdened societies. What is characteristic of outlaw states is that, besides being nondecent as such, they “think a sufficient reason to engage in war is that war advances, or might advance, the regime’s rational (not reasonable) interests.”\textsuperscript{488} Second, burdened societies, while they are not expansive or aggressive, lack the political and cultural traditions, the human capital and know-how, and, often, the material and technological resources needed to be well-ordered. The long-term goal of (relatively) well-ordered societies should be to bring burdened societies, like outlaw states, into the Society of well-ordered Peoples. Well-ordered peoples have a duty to assist burdened societies. It does not follow, however, that the only way, or the best way, to carry out this duty of assistance is by following a principle of distributive justice to regulate economic and social inequalities among societies.\textsuperscript{489}

The list of human rights honoured by both liberal and decent hierarchical regimes should be understood as universal rights in the following sense: they are intrinsic to the Law of Peoples and have a political (moral) effect whether or not they are supported locally. That is, their political (moral) force extends to all societies, including outlaw states. An outlaw state that violates these rights is to be condemned and in grave cases may be subjected to forceful sanctions and even to intervention.\textsuperscript{490}

It is not problematic to exclude burdened societies and outlaw states from the Society of Peoples. But as Rawls is prepared to impose some further sanctions on them besides this point, he indeed has the burden of justification. Alas, he offers no sufficient reasons; in fact, he offers almost no reasons whatsoever. Consider, for instance, the burdened societies suffering from “unfavorable” conditions. It is not at all clear that the assistance they are expected to receive from liberal and decent peoples is really to be tolerated. It depends on the perspective: from the standpoint of the liberally-oriented members of the burdened societies, the “assistance” is considered justified. But the other parties, which \textit{de facto} are the reason for these societies being in a “nondecent” condition, will surely not see these actions as positive. On the contrary, they will view them as imperialistic. As was the case with decent nonliberal societies versus the views of cosmopolitanism, the same applies here: political liberalism offers no \textit{grounds} for judging which of the two internal parties in burdened societies, the liberals/decents or the nondecents, should actually be assisted.

Rawls does say that the Society of Peoples may justifiably impose claims in the event that others expect to interact in a way akin to what is true in the Society of Peoples. But he

\textsuperscript{487} Rawls 1999b, 9, 10, 83.
\textsuperscript{488} Rawls 1999b, 90.
\textsuperscript{489} Rawls 1999b, 106.
\textsuperscript{490} Rawls 1999b, 80.
clearly does not restrict his claims to this. Though he does not propose any kind of original position for the nondecent peoples to adopt, he nevertheless justifies undertakings that intervene in the internal matters of those societies, the factual nature of their mutual inter-state interaction notwithstanding. But because reasons for these interventions do not follow from applying the idea of the original position, it is difficult to see what other reasons there could be within the Rawlsian model.

Rawls’s finally remaining moral substance is a factor that needs a more open elaboration, which in fact Pogge tries to provide within his own model:

However narrow a moral overlap we may aim for, I admit we won’t get it. There are bound to be persons who disagree with us, in good faith, even about the very first steps of institutional reform. To them, the Rawlsian framework poses a challenge to work out their own conception of justice or at least to expound the grounds of their disagreement . . .

Even if disagreement persists, we may still conclude that a competing position is wrong, and we may then work for a juter world without or even against our opponents, insofar as doing so is morally permissible by our lights. This is what happened in the American Revolution, in the Civil War, and in the New Deal. Social institutions derive no special moral sanctity from the mere fact that they now exist. If we are convinced on reflection that they are unjust, then we ought to work toward feasible improvements, even if some genuine moral disagreements cannot now be resolved. The fact of disagreement is no reason not to act in light of whatever (factual and) moral beliefs we now think are best supported. Our considered judgments support a conception of justice whose scope is universal, even though its present appeal is not. 491

Poggean cosmopolitanism no doubt appreciates the moral dimension more openly than Rawls. Pogge wants to offer at least some feasible rationale for morality – a necessary move to rescue liberalism from pure intuition or conventionalism so hostile to Kantian principles. But at the same time, in order to do this, one needs to extend the role of morality over what is proposed in the Law of Peoples. One either has to include clearly moral elements in the global overlapping consensus or else surrender the Kantian quest for a rational justification of Rawlsian justice. Pogge tries to do the former. Herein lies a crucial difference between both Pogge and Küng on the one hand and late Rawls on the other. It is indeed worth remembering that it is a moral project in the global context that Pogge is promoting much in the same way as Küng argues for PWE. However, one may pose precisely the same question of Pogge as of Küng: whence this moral basis for demanding that every cultural tradition on the globe abide by the rules of Rawlsian justice after Pogge has displayed a political rationale for these rules instead?

Pogge endeavors to reconcile this tension by invoking an insightful illustration of the dynamics of societal interaction. In the event the parties in the original position were not expected to have an antecedent moral commitment to the principles of justice that will emerge through the process of agreement behind the veil of ignorance, the realization of the principles, after the veil is removed, would betray the initial intention of the agreement in practice. Without a moral commitment, instead of robust principles, there will obtain a modus vivendi in which the more powerful parties will try to change the terms of the original agree-

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491 Pogge 1989, 270.
ment for the benefit of their own interests. But it is exactly the unequal effect of the power relations that the Rawlsian model seeks to dismantle.

Pogge apparently seeks to give practical reasons to parties adopting the antecedent moral commitment by referring to the problem of assurance: without a moral commitment to Rawlsian justice the parties will not themselves be able to make sure that the principles of the original agreement will not be transformed against their own interests in the long run. This is because the interpretation of the original terms of the contract tends to shift according to the prevailing power relations. Hence, the reasons for an additional moral element from the start is not so much a normative claim upon the parties as a necessary means to prevent the possibility to be deceived, as it were.\(^492\) This is no doubt a reason congenial to the practical aims of political liberalism.

The features characterizing a just basic structure can be preserved only if each major group within the social system will support them even when it is in a position to exact new terms more favorable to itself. A truly enduring just scheme presupposes a widespread and deep moral allegiance to its basic terms, so that each of at least the influential social groups can be relied on to honor them even when they significantly conflict with its moral or religious convictions or with its political or economic interests. Only in this way can all be assured that the terms of the scheme will not be unjustly shifted against them, that they will not be forced into a declining spiral of fading power and deteriorating terms of participation. Such assurance, in turn, radically reduces the temptation to seek unjustly to shift the scheme’s terms in one’s favor . . . \(^493\)

Note, however, that although Pogge here uses value-laden terms such as “justice” and “injustice,” he is now expected to give reasons for using these terms in the first place, that is, for parties to accept the moral status of the principles that belong to the essence of the original position. But here Pogge has only shown that moral commitment is necessary to achieve authentic and sustainable agreement and thereby eliminate the fundamental assurance problem. He would still have to show the contemporary cultural parties that the agreement itself is (morally) worth sustaining — and this on account of their individual political interests rather than universal morality. The fundamental point, of course, is not that the parties should find the best ways to safeguard their comprehensive doctrines once they are involved in making the agreement, but rather that they should identify these safeguards on pondering the question of whether it is worthwhile entering into making an agreement in the first place. Some, perhaps even many, of these parties will not only gain assurance for the future stability of that agreement, but also have to surrender their natural moral commitments that certain ills must be prevented and certain goods be fostered by the society seen from their point of view. This surrender would mean that future generations of the proponents of the respective comprehensive doctrines will be educated so that they will no longer have this problem, because they have learned that it is morally wrong to prevent these ills and foster these goods publicly independent of their influence on society. The original parties will then reflect on whether it is

\(^{492}\) Pogge 99–104.

\(^{493}\) Pogge 1989, 101, 102.
worthwhile to “freeze” their nonliberal doctrines in the private sphere forever according to principles of liberalism as opposed to some of the principles of their comprehensive doctrines.

This is an accountability which will almost certainly appear too heavy to bear for representatives of many comprehensive doctrines, and for at least three reasons. First, the commitment that will certainly have to be surrendered under circumstances of liberalism, namely, the public identity of the respective comprehensive doctrine and any further commitments following from that, is often a fundamentally constitutive ingredient of those doctrines. Second, what is often primarily at stake for the parties is not the strategic safeguarding of their doctrines, but rather the comprehensive fidelity to them, independent of any results. Third, even though for some comprehensive doctrines the public identity is not so fundamental and strategic reasons play some role, only the irreversibility of the Rawlsian agreement, namely, that some of the sub-doctrines will have to be abolished forever, would most probably be sufficient reason to withdraw from the agreement, given that concrete results of this abolishment in future societal lives are impossible to estimate responsibly.

Hence, Pogge’s proposed practical reasons may not override the moral reasons offered by ends that go against the possibility of adjusting to Rawls’s principles of justice. It is possible, however, that some parties may still want to adjust to those principles owing to the contemporary highly pluralistic situation in which liberalism may be seen as the only realistic alternative. Yet in most cases the reason for this adjustment is merely the necessity in the face of contemporary political power relations, and the mode of adjustment will probably be nothing more than the modus vivendi. This, however, goes against the intention of Rawlsian liberalism in any of its forms.

It appears then that the moral substance of Rawls’s arguments is indeed necessary in order for liberals to advance their proposals in today’s ideologically pluralistic world. In Rawlsian thinking, particularly in its Poggean global version, we arrive at the same problem with PWE: there is no clear distinction between descriptive and prescriptive arguments for global agreement. The promoted agreement would never be attained only by appealing to the existing agreement or to tactical reasons urging parties to give up those aspects of their comprehensive doctrines that prevent the needed agreement to emerge. But, to apply Sandel’s notions freely, it surely depends upon those precise comprehensive doctrines and upon their significance for the parties as to whether the tactical appeal is really appealing. Unfortunately, in the contemporary global – and even national – situation the tactical has little appeal. What else could explain why the fundamental need and use of moral claims has penetrated the Rawlsian argumentation? Given the lack of an existing commitment, the fact that the Rawlsian goal of consensus requires a moral commitment to its starting points actually requires giving up the goal itself, instead of counseling the citizens on their morals.

In the final analysis this is probably precisely what Rawls has set out to argue. He is fully committed to a freestanding theory that does not take a stand on the moral truth of any particular view. The strength of arguing along these lines is that the moral emphasis remaining in Political Liberalism – locally as well as globally – does not even try to be a philosophical argument, but rather an attempt to articulate the ethos of existing constitutional democracies. This being the case, Rawls can only suggest or hope that his is a truthful reflection of the moral atmosphere. He hopes to express in analytical form what citizens under constitutional liberalism already think. Obviously, this is openly to deny any philosophical rationale for imposing any universal liberal doctrines globally, such as human rights. For one thing, the reasons that the Society of Peoples does not accept nondecent peoples as members are descriptive rather than normative: the Society of Peoples thus guarantees its own safety. Second, Rawls’s justification for not tolerating fully the nondecent countries generally is merely that the Society of Peoples wants to adhere to liberal principle. Rawls does not explain why the intolerance is justified. This is primarily owing to the descriptive nature of the whole project of political liberalism. Already in Political Liberalism, the prevailing moral substance of liberalism is assumed rather than argued, as Thomas Bridges observes of virtually every central element in it:

PL is written in a peculiar style, with abstract nouns predominating as agents and the passive voice given an overwhelming presence. Justice as fairness “adopts” an idea of social cooperation, a family of concepts has been “worked up,” citizens “are viewed” as free and equal, ideas “are introduced,” a principle of justice “is constructed” . . . It seems that political concepts simply unfold, that principles construct themselves, and that the reader is little more than a witness to these magical and anonymous conceptual processes.

Thus, most strikingly, the relativism lurking behind political liberalism is not restricted even to inter-cultural or international sphere. As Jeffrey Reiman puts it:

The problem here is that if the concept of the reasonable is for those who share a democratic culture, then those who do not share that culture – though they live within its midst as say, Ku Klux Klanners or other extremists – cannot be said to be unreasonable, only different. Then, the upholders of democratic liberal politics cannot say that the dissenters are wrong, only different. And that means that the relation between the democratic liberal state and the dissenters, particularly when the state uses force to repress the dissenters’ “principled” violence, is strictly a power relation rather than a moral one. The dissenters cannot be said to have failed in an obligation owed to the democratic liberal citizens, since the claim for that obligation goes no further than the shared beliefs of those citizens.

Put more generally, a liberal political theory that aims to be “political not metaphysical” cannot generate a moral obligation for those who do not share its liberal political culture. Indeed, even those who do share that political culture only believe they are obligated. They are truly obligated only if liberal political values are truly worthy of allegiance independent of any comprehensive doctrine and/or if the comprehensive doctrines that teach them that liberal values are worthy are true. However, as a political doctrine, Rawls’s theory eschews appeal to, or even judgment about, its own truth (Rawls will only call it reasonable) or the truth of the comprehensive doctrines held by citizens. Thus, political liberalism cannot generate a moral obligation to its own liberal values. It must rest content with the hope that the citizens will fill this in for themselves.

495 Bridges 1997, 61. I am indebted to Kopperi (1998, 105, N.62) for this quotation.

496 Reiman 1999, 319.
In this light it is not hard to see the weakness of political liberalism, and yet Reiman’s interpretation seems to sketch the essence of political liberalism as a freestanding theory. Indeed, by giving up on the idea to argue for his theory philosophically, Rawls may retain the chance to include moral elements within it. This is merely to suggest that for the people who have adopted the ethos of constitutional democracy, his would be a consistent view to endorse—partly because it does not downplay morality. ‘Justice as fairness’ essentially is a moral instead of merely a strategic or tactical concept. This interpretation of political liberalism would suggest that Sandel’s interpretation as a kind of strategic compromise of comprehensive doctrines would not be really precise. Nonetheless, if Sandel’s objection to political liberalism is met in this way, then his original criticism of the Theory of Justice reappears. In other words, even though the two principles of justice and the original position leading to them might reflect the collective ethos of constitutional democracies, which is doubtful in practice, they are shown to draw on a flawed view of the self; it is not plausible to require people normatively to surrender their comprehensive views of the good to the process of abstraction resulting in and reflecting the primordial status of right over the good, because this kind of extreme individualism is undermined by real-life ethical projects. None of the expected factual tendencies of Western societies that proceed in a Rawlsian way in this issue does away with these notions. Rather the consistent corollary of all this is that the more popular are these tendencies, the more they ought to be opposed.

3.1.3. From Habermas’s Discourse Ethics to Taylor’s Communitarianism

It is useful to take discourse ethics and particularly Jürgen Habermas as a point of comparison here, because in a way Habermas tries to respond to both of these devastating difficulties in Rawls’s philosophy. Habermas tries to meet the problem of argumentative reflection versus descriptive reflection by constructing a principle of universalization on the basis of communicative action. According to this theory, an implicit assumption of rationality underlies human communication. In terms of morality, this amounts to the claim that anyone who persuades any other being to a certain moral view implicitly acknowledges the validity of a presupposition that such persuasion should be accepted on general reasons. “General” refers to reasons, which every other person would be prepared to subscribe to universally and antecedent to any specific persuasion. In other words, the general reasons required should not be derived from any particular ethical view, but rather from an impartial point of reference.

Thus, Habermas arrives at a rather substantial statement in the form of the principle of universalization (U). “[E]very valid norm has to fulfill the following condition: (U) All affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of everyone’s interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation).”

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497 Ferrara 2002, 122. See also Benhabib 1999, 200.

498 Habermas 1990, 65.
Now, this kind of ‘linguistic turn’ in Habermas appears to have an added value for Rawls in that it displays a universal justification, which is lacking, indeed renounced, in Rawls. Nevertheless, this is not its only contribution. Since the general vantage point of Habermas is communication with a rather Hegelian flavor, instead of finding ultimate principles as in Rawls’s more analytical vein, Habermas claims to endorse more a procedural rendering of justice than Rawls. For Habermas, principles of justice are found again and again in the historical processes of democratic discourse where antecedently petrified rules ultimately have no decisive say. This contrasts with the substantive version of liberalism by Rawls. One of the major advocates of discourse ethics, Seyla Benhabib, sees discourse ethics rightly as a basic characteristic of democracy.

Basic human civil and political rights, as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution and as embodied in the constitution of most democratic governments, are never really “off the agenda” of public discussion and debate. They are simply constitutive and regulative institutional norms of debate in democratic societies that cannot be transformed and abrogated by simple majority decisions. The language of keeping these rights off the agenda mischaracterizes the nature of democratic debate in our kinds of societies: although we cannot change these rights without extremely elaborate political and juridical procedures, we are always disputing their meaning, their extent, and their jurisdiction. Democratic debate is like a ball game where there is no umpire to interpret the rules of the game and their application definitively. Rather, in the game of democracy the rules of the game no less than their interpretation and even the position of the umpire are essentially contestable.

In this respect the Habermasian alternative actually includes both the question concerning the problematic scope of social justice in liberalism and the question concerning the problematic view of the self in liberal individualism. As for the second question, Habermas’s citizens are not asked to adhere to some abstract principles independent of their particular values. Rather they are asked to use the general point of view whenever arguing for these values; the question is more about articulation. In essence it is real-life subjects who engage in the public discussion instead of parties in the original position. In this way Habermas endeavors to connect private and public autonomy inherently with each other: different generations must authentically recognize the constitution of the society as the result of their own creation; at the same time individual liberties also have to be secured in order to guarantee that all citizens recognize the laws as their own throughout generations.

Moreover, the procedural emphasis in discourse ethics is related to Habermas’s third contribution which concerns the question of social justice. Given the ultimate moral ideal, the ‘ideal speech situation’ is the one in which purely rational, that is, general, arguments are used and in which every citizen’s views are taken equally into account. The task of social criticism is thus to unmask those discourses that, openly or secretly, are based on power and oppression in order to empower those marginalized citizens and discourses that in an ideal situation, have

499 Benhabib 1999, 203–204.

500 Habermas 1990, 203.

501 Habermas 1999, 185–186.
an equal share in forming public opinion. This is a continuous challenge, which cannot be sufficiently guaranteed once and for all by any kind of constitutional liberties of individuals. Rather concentration on negative rights often fosters social exclusion by normalizing and thus petrifying certain moral ideals as hegemony as opposed to interpretations in the margins of mainstream discourse.\textsuperscript{502}

What would be the stance of PWE with regard to discourse ethics? The theories of Rawls and Pogge presented above are clearly adaptations of Kant, with the result that they seem to stress antecedent principles more than procedure. It is this feature that distinguishes them from both Küng and Habermas. As I mentioned in the first part of this study, Küng strongly emphasizes the significance of dialogue as a “method” of striving toward global ethics. To be sure, this dialogue is not supposed to take place behind the veil of ignorance or any other imaginative context, but in the real life of different religious traditions. As Küng observes:

In short, we need a dialogue in mutual responsibility and an awareness that we do not yet possess all the truth, but are on the way to “ever greater” truth.\textsuperscript{503}

Here too, the question is not about a superficial and selective observation of a foreign religion . . . but about serious intercultural information, reciprocal challenge and mutual transformation . . . in a process, which, to be sure, cannot be decided by any religious or political instances, but which must and will grow gradually “from below.”\textsuperscript{504}

At the outset, on the basis of PWE’s notions about the golden rule, the aim of this chapter was to articulate the meaning of the second version of the Kantian categorical imperative as a guiding principle for global ethics. Kantian tradition was shown to articulate this idea with Kant’s first formulation of the categorical imperative as universalizability attained through abstraction of an individual’s moral inference from any contingent aspects. Now, the discourse ethics may be seen as aspiring to the same universalizability but by way of interpersonal deliberation instead of individualist “a priorism.” Thus, Alessandro Ferrara rightly says that Habermas embodies the “proposition that ethical universalism is best understood as resting on postmetaphysical, dialogical revisitation of Kant’s view of moral validity as generali-
zability." Still, Kant’s formalism with respect to the morally justified interpretation of the golden rule in general is confirmed. This Kantian formalism connected with a Hegelian emphasis on concrete social interaction has its clear affinities with PWE’s combination of a general ethical criterion and inter-religious dialogue embodied in *humanum*.

Having briefly sketched the main idea behind discourse ethics, I will now take up some critical points. First of all, Habermas’s justification of liberalism by way of invoking universal communicative presuppositions of language is not sufficient inasmuch as he confines himself to analyzing a philosophical type of language. No doubt any philosophical argument – in the sense we have used the term in modern societies – indeed endorses an implicit commitment to the principle of generalizability as a necessary condition of the argument’s truthfulness. But the problem lies in that it still remains to be shown that one ought to use a philosophical type of argument in the first place when persuading others in moral matters. As Jeffrey Reiman puts it,

Habermas maintains that anyone who engages in rational justification to others implicitly accepts rational argument’s commitment to uncoerced and informed assent from its audience. On these grounds, Habermas contends that the arguer is committed to treating the other according to norms to which the other can uncoercedly and informedly assent. The problem, however, is that, even if the arguer presupposes commitment to persuasion by uncoerced consent, *nothing requires him to shape his actions by the conditions of interpersonal argument*. Put otherwise, even if there are morally laden commitments built into justification to others, these commitments do not require people (a) to engage in justification in the first place or (b) to conform their actions to their justifications if they do so engage. Requirements (a) and (b) are separate substantive moral requirements, not provided for by the conditions of justification themselves. Thus Habermas’s theory can have no moral claim on anyone who does not believe that he must justify his actions to others before acting or that he must act only in ways that he can justify to others.

In fact, Habermas has acknowledged this problem in principle. He has therefore revised his position in much the same way as did Rawls. Habermas has given up on the quasi-transcendental justification of universal morality on the basis of his theory of communicative action. Instead, he now puts strong emphasis on the post-conventional culture of pluralism in modern societies as a descriptive fact, and discourse ethics is meant to be the best theory to meet the values already present in these societies.

Yet with this move the universalization principle (U) is not saved so much as it is emptied of its natural meaning as a universal validity test of moral principles. Of course, the corollary of this revision is that discourse ethics is unable to offer a substantial contribution to the criticism presented above concerning principal relativism in political liberalism. This is the main reason why Küng too ultimately denounces both paths: they cannot account for the

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507 Reiman 1999, 318.
508 Ferrara 2002, 125.
absoluteness of morality in any sense required for morality to be authentically binding.\footnote{PW, 65.} In any case, Habermas still attempts to justify the universalization principle (U) by more moderately rendering it as a \textit{compromise} in radical pluralistic societies in which there are no common criteria for rational argument. The reason why (U) should be adopted is that it embodies equally fair terms of this compromise from the perspective of every party concerned. However, in introducing this concept of “equal fairness,” Habermas arrives at difficulties similar to Pogge’s in attempting to give tactical reasons for adopting Rawls’s principles as morally binding: it is impossible to speak of the “equality” or “fairness” of the compromise in the first place when the common point of moral reference is lacking.\footnote{Ferrara 2002, 126. See also PW, 64: “Doch gerade für eine “Diskursethik” (Apel, Habermas), die mit Recht die Bedeutung des rationalen Diskurses und Konsenses betont, stellt sich das Problem: Warum Diskurs und Konsens bevorzugen und nicht die gewaltsame Auseinandersetzung? Und impliziert der Diskurs wirklich Moral und nicht nur Taktik? Soll die Vernunft nicht die Unbedingtheit und Universität ihrer Normen begründen? Wie aber kann sie das, nachdem sie nicht mehr auf einen quasi angeborenen “kategorischen Imperativ” (Kant) zurückgreifen kann? Bisher, so scheint es, sind philosophische Begründungen unbedingt verbindlicher und allgemeingültiger Normen kaum über problematische Verallgemeinerungen und transzendent-al-pragmatische oder utilitaristisch-pragmatische Modelle hinausgekommen. Sie berufen sich zwar (mangels einer übergreifenden Autorität) auf eine ideale Kommunikationsgemeinschaft, bleiben jedoch nicht nur für den Durchschnittsmenschen in der Regel abstrakt und unverbindlich. Trotz behaupteter transzendentaler “Letztverbindlichkeit” scheinen sie keine allgemein einleuchtende unbedingte Verbindlichkeit aufzuweisen. Warum schon soll ich unbedingt, und warum soll gerade ich? Wer auf ein transzendentes Prinzip verzichten will, muss einen weiten Weg horizontaler Kommunikation gehen, um am Ende möglicherweise festzustellen er sei nur im Kreis herum gegan- gen.”}

As for Habermas’s second contribution, namely, procedurally emphasized liberalism, it is difficult to find substantial difference between discourse ethics and political liberalism in the final analysis. The idea that basic principles of justice emerge only after public deliberation is problematic in any form of liberalism. As Rawls observes of Habermas:

He recognizes that once idealizations are attributed to the discourse procedure, elements of content are thereby embedded in it (FG 18). Moreover, the ideal procedure so formed is essential in his account of democracy, since a basic thought is that the process of public discussion can be guaranteed to have reasonable outcomes only to the extent that it realizes the conditions of ideal discourse. The more equal and impartial, the more open that process is and the less participants are coerced; also, the more they will be ready to be guided by the force of the better argument. Then it is more likely that truly generalizable interests will be accepted by all persons relevantly affected. Here are five values that offhand seem to be values of the procedure – impartiality and equality, openness (no one and no relevant information is excluded) and lack of coercion, and unanimity – which in combination guide discussion to generalizable interests to the agreement of all participants. This outcome is certainly substantive, since it refers to a situation in which citizens’ generalizable interests are fulfilled. Moreover, any of the previous five values are related to substantive judgments once the reason those values are included as part of the procedure is that they are necessary to render the outcomes just or reasonable. In that case, we have shaped the procedure to accord with our judgment of those outcomes.

Further, Habermas holds that the outcomes of public reason working through democratic procedures are reasonable and legitimate. For example, he says that equal distribution of the liberties can be fulfilled by a democratic procedure supporting the assumption that the “outcomes of political will formation are reasonable” . . . This said, he presupposes an idea of reasonableness to assess those outcomes, and his view is substantive. It is common oversight (which I do not say he
makes) to think that procedural legitimacy (or justice) tries for less and can stand on its own without substantive justice: it cannot.\(^{511}\)

However, the difference between Habermas and Rawls could still be said to be about on the balance between individual and political autonomy. On the one hand, there is indeed a substantive element in discourse ethics. As Charles Larmore, like Rawls, observes, political autonomy is necessarily based on individual autonomy because only the existence of the basic individual liberties enables public deliberation to be free from downplaying any view in the discourse or excluding any relevant party.\(^{512}\) Yet on the other hand, discourse ethics also points in the other direction, namely, that political autonomy is relevant for the sake of individual autonomy. This turns us to the third supposed contribution of discourse ethics, to political liberalism. It reflects the criticism of Rawls already taken up by Pogge: individual liberties are not properly realized without a more positive concept of rights that accounts for people’s needs, the articulation of the positive rights being the result of the procedural use of public political autonomy. Thus, the contribution of discourse ethics would not be to replace the primordial status of individual autonomy with political autonomy but rather to balance the two in a dialectical co-existence. “Thus private and public autonomy mutually presuppose each other in such a way that neither human rights nor popular sovereignty can claim primacy over its counterpart.”\(^{513}\)

Yet, this is in no way to articulate a substantial difference between Habermas and Rawls. Rawls’s first principle of justice introduces a positive concept of rights in the formulation of fair opportunities, and Rawls rightly objects to Habermas’s critique on the grounds that it fulfills the idea of mutual co-existence of the two autonomies.\(^{514}\) The main question here then is how far are positive rights being applied, and in particular, is the application of a positive concept of rights in principle allowed to undermine the ‘priority of right over the good’. Only when Habermas allows people’s morally relevant needs to be articulated substantially such that fulfilling them would override at least some inviolable rights from the individual perspective will there be a difference between discourse ethics and political liberalism.

After all, if discourse ethics is to be substantially distinguished from political liberalism as a corrective improvement, then Habermas would have to resort to articulations of his own model such that he would hardly want to endorse. The ultimate problem unresolved within Habermasian discourse ethics as an alternative to, say, Rawls is well expressed by Ferrara, who offers two mutually exclusive ways to interpret the principle of universalization (U)

\(^{511}\) Rawls 1993, 425.

\(^{512}\) Larmore 1999.

\(^{513}\) Habermas 1999, 185.

\(^{514}\) Rawls 1993, 419, 418.
which Habermas later articulated generally as: “Just those norms are valid to which all those possibly affected could agree as participants in rational discourses.”

First, some of the relevant terms can be easily interpreted. The word “all,” expressing the generality of the principle, no doubt refers comprehensively to members of the global society. The “rationality” of the discourse is already heavily moderated by Habermas’s retreat from the quasi-transcendental universality requirement of the earlier norm. There remains one key term to interpret carefully – the word “agree.” According to Ferrara, in principle, there are two mutually exclusive ways to explain the intention behind “agree.” One is simply to claim that the norm must include all current preferences of the people in the world. This interpretation, however, reflects an overly optimistic view of the current conflict of preferences in world society today. Moreover, it downplays the additional concept in the definition, namely, “discourse.” As Ferrara notes, acquiring knowledge of individuals’ preferences would not count as discourse, but at best as translation and comparison; nothing substantially new emerges in the discourse, only the existing preferences and their compatibility to the (results of the general observance of the) proposed norm may require some explication.

The Habermasian contribution to liberalism as antecedently non-determined intersubjective dialogue, instead of merely informative events, is retained only when the principle given above is interpreted in such a way that the term “agree” does not refer to people’s preferences as such, as they now happen to be.

According to this alternative reading, to say that a norm is fair, impartial or just means that it has passed a generalization test conceived as the mental experiment of aggregating the foreseeable consequences and side-effects of the general observance of the norm into a synthetic and holistic image of “the way the world would look like” and then asking each and every moral actor whether the way in which things would go, the state of the world, would be such that all of us – qua citizens of a hypothetic world-republic – would still recognize in it the image of who we want to be, of the life that we want to lead together. To affirm that a norm is valid means, from the standpoint of a principle of generalization reinterpreted along these lines, that everyone can want to live in a world shaped, among other things, by the norm in question – that we all would still recognize this world as “our own” and not as an “alien” one.

To be sure, this holistic interpretation is more realistic than the effort to embrace all individual preferences within one overall moral norm. However, this rendering of (U) dismantles the formality of the procedure presupposed by Habermas and calls into question the ‘priority of right over the good’. It means that the validity of a moral norm should be evaluated in light of its outcome as a part of the comprehensive view of good life. The ultimate aim then is to articulate the end of all ends as “the global good” – the good which all world citizens would recognize as corresponding to their intuitions of how the world should be. This requires such intersubjective reflection that cannot be reduced to formal principles of general justice, but instead embodies a scheme in which substantive views of the good are evaluated on the basis

515 Ferrara 2002, 130.
517 Ferrara 2002, 132, 133.
of ethical intuition as *phronesis*. This kind of articulation would amount to discourse more than translation, because the globally acceptable views of the good cannot be derived directly from existing individual preferences. Indeed, by definition the latter are supposed to be transformed by the former which, in turn, are to be found through intersubjective reflection, the result of which cannot be known beforehand. Here we have come to the ultimate demarcation line of what I call the rational method on the one hand and the positive method on the other: one has to renounce the ‘principle of right over the good’ and turn it around in order to avoid the fundamental problems encountered in our analysis of the Kantian legacy.

Having shown how both Rawlsian and Habermasian correctives to Kant have failed to reach sufficiently consistent alternatives, this chapter will close with the following general claim about liberalism. Liberalism should either (1) give up the Kantian quest for abstract rational justification of liberalism as well as the ‘priority of right over the good’ as its embodiment or (2) abandon the normative universal scope of its moral claims. Examples of Rawls and Habermas to the contrary, it might still be possible, while accepting the first conclusion, to denounce the second. This solution would mean deviating substantially from the Kantian project, since in the Kantian line of thought there is a logical interdependence between the two. Nonetheless, there would still remain the attempt to resist relativism. The justification of liberalism that is now needed is not abstract, but contingent, and Kantian universalism would be replaced by particularism without at least a thorough relativism. The vantage point of all morality is now a substantive view of the good.

How are the elements of social justice to be justified? The only way to answer this question plausibly is to have recourse to some degree of communitarianism, whereby the socially determined good has a priority over any right. But how is it then possible to opt for liberal protection of any rights whatsoever as inalienable, if the ‘priority of right over the good’ is abolished? There is indeed no rationale for any absolute rights except this strict and comprehensive liberal principle – and it is impartial and non-selective with respect to the overall spectrum of rights.

This is the reason why most so-called communitarians hesitate to eschew the ‘priority of right over the good’. Indeed, those in communitarianism who take the deontological counter-criticism most seriously openly admit the prominence of the liberal principle and want to advance it as well. However, they do it in a way that leaves open the possibility for experiential realism. Thus, the two opposite approaches, those I have determined the rational and the positive methods, are practically combined. This leads the proponents of such a theory to a peculiar conclusion: there has to be a model by which it is possible to advocate the principle of the ‘priority of right over the good’ by the principle of the priority of the good over the right.

Human rights also can be advanced by a more teleological view than Kantian or Rawlsian liberalism. However, the role of rights is significantly different within this mode of think-

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518 I will examine this non-Kantian method in the next section.
ing. Here rights refer to a more substantial telos, reflecting only one possible way of expressing this telos, namely, in the form of a rights language. In fact, there are interpretations in which PWE may also be seen to express some sort of common telos of humankind in a communitarian contra Kantian manner. Such interpretations might be true, but in that case the rights language used in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is far too formal. This is because the validity of rights is far more restricted in openly teleological models than in Kantian liberalism. In other words, rights cannot connote the idea that every human being, not even every citizen in a particular society is treated impartially in terms of, say, religion or an ethical way of living. And this restriction does not mean simply the prohibition against violating the corresponding absolute rights of others as is the case in liberalism’s only “restriction” on rights.

It is worth noting that a so-called telos defined in liberal terms of universal neutrality toward particular ends and expressed as inalienable human rights makes no essential difference as to what Kantian liberalism already says, be it Rawlsian or Habermasian. It is not enough to offer a telos to refute the liberal doctrine. One has to be wary not to confuse the liberal “teleology” of the ‘priority of right over the good’ with the anti-liberal teleology of the priority of the good over right. However, all this means that within non-Kantian liberalism it is possible to advance only those rights that are submitted to a particular telos determined by the given social and political factors and that consequently exclude the existing rival ethical conceptions of the dissenters. Further, while there is no primordial conception of negative rights as “trump cards” of individuals against a community, people are even required to live along the ethical and political principles determined by the demands set by the ‘common good’. Here the most relevant question is not whether anyone refrains from or subscribes to violating the freedom of others.

While there is no possibility of distancing oneself from the ongoing socio-political contingent situation, we have seen that it is not possible to lay out any constitutional principles through a process of rational abstraction. But this also means, as the defenders of liberalism have plausibly shown, that there is no guarantee for impartial treatment of every individual in the sense in which human rights are usually conceived. This kind of problematic discrepancy is very often the case with communitarian views, as they usually oppose liberalism on the one hand, while supporting human rights on the other.

More specifically, it has to be said that the problem of the contemporary social study of religions is often that there is a problematic fusion of the two philosophical methods. First of all, the retreat of religions to the private sphere is more and more seen as enhancing the

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519 Slotte 2005.
520 Hereafter I will use the abbreviation UDHR when referring to this charter.
522 See for example May 2000.
totalitarianism of the marketplace as the substitute religion of the public arena. The typical solution is that religions ought to be allowed to enter the public sphere, which allows the societal critical potential of religions to challenge the power of neo-liberalism’s instrumentalist economy. The potential of religions is seen to be ethical in contrast to the purely tactical laws of the marketplace. But when it comes to the question of what the ethic brought by religions is like, often the answerers offer a kind of typical liberal neutral way of securing individual rights universally – or at least this is offered alongside more communitarian expressions of ethics.

One of the most interesting philosophical articulations of this problematic effort to date is Habermas’s. Influenced by the de-secularization thesis of Peter Berger, Habermas appreciates that it does not come naturally to religious people, to distinguish between public and religious identity. To address this problem Habermas calls for an open dialogue in which both the religious and the secular may be open to transformation. He thereby hopes to avoid the asymmetrical assumption that only the religious sphere is believed to be in need of transformation vis-à-vis the secular one, but not the other way around. Thus, Habermas’s novel contribution is related to the new emphasis on the responsibilities of the secular interpreters of religious doctrines to internalize and translate these doctrines into a secular language instead of neglecting them from the start simply by being religious. Here liberal society will have a burden that corresponds to the equal burden of religious citizens to adjust themselves principally to the values of liberalism.

Habermas’s contribution – more than Rawlsian liberalism, for instance – intends to acknowledge the factual diversity, given that it is impossible to dissolve the factual tensions between liberalism and its counter-forces in a real world without the secularist side being more positively inclined towards the religious and actively trying to reconcile religious views to secularism’s own liberal language. Such mutual dialogue is more procedural and gradual in practice than is Rawls’s. It points toward a harder reality compared to the simpler way of theory. Hence, Habermas is also capable of emphasizing the authenticity of the transformation of certain religious ethical doctrines into the secular ones. The (public) re-articulation of religions should be rather sensitive to the (public) self-identification of their proponents.

Nevertheless, there are at least two difficulties Habermas has left untouched. The first concerns the religious doctrines that are not even in principle to be reconciled with the liberal theory. The problem is that, owing to the internal incoherences within the liberal theory itself, which has by and large been the subject of this chapter, the secular side is in no firm position to offer convincing reasons for adopting the liberal pattern in the first place. This was shown to be primarily the result of the insufficient reasons with which Rawls and Habermas argue

523 Against the former mainstream concept in sociology that goes by the name of secularization thesis, the de-secularization thesis claims that the role of religions has not diminished in the public sphere, but instead increased along with the modernization of societies. (Berger 1999.)

524 Habermas 2006.
for universally valid liberalism within the rational method. This is why the rational method appears to be characteristically self-refuting among authors belonging to what I call positive method:

We thus differentiate ourselves (already internally differentiated) from the Habermasian effort to discover or conjure a pre-established universality as the presupposition of the speech act, a universality which is said to pertain to a rational feature of “man,” a substantive conception of universality which equates it with a knowable and predictable determination, and a procedural form which presumes that the political field is constituted by rational actors.525

Judith Butler poses a related question of critical theory: “In what does the critical authority of the critical theorists consist? Are our own claims subject to an autocritique, and how does that appear at the level of rhetoric?”526

The liberal rejoinder might well be that even though it is true that the liberal argument is not fully coherent, liberalism is the best factual solution anyone can find in our current pluralistic situation. This would then be the reason offered even to religious citizens who are in principle not prepared to liberalize their views. In any case the main problem still remains: religions are not allowed to foster authentically their own virtues, because in the final analysis they are “harnessed” to serve a liberal type of public neutralism. In that case, the public role of religions is virtually reduced to serve secularism and there remains an essential “asymmetry” between the religious side and the secularist hegemonic culture.527

The remaining asymmetry in Habermas’s novel contribution, which he himself may not wish to deny, reflects a more general problem, namely, that it is not possible to hold liberal rights and anti-liberal ethics within the same theory. Habermas may indeed ultimately acknowledge this point. While the private–public distinction may indeed enhance the public power of the marketplace, it is still the case that the ideal of impartiality in terms of individual rights independent of social, political, religious, ethical, and related questions is to enhance the privatization of the respective questions in the mode of liberalism. It is impossible, indeed unintelligible, to retain the primary liberal motive of impartiality in order to prevent its implications.

It appears that this is also the problem with PWE. Although Küng strives to transcend the rights-language by emphasizing the importance of universal human duties in addition to rights, there seem to be few clear indications that these duties are more than the duties that follow from the rights themselves in the sense of mere correspondence: the duties seem to be so formal that their only task is to reinforce the demand for individual rights.528 This is precisely the Kantian way of defining duties, merely as “the other side of the coin” of which the rights are the main side. On the other hand, compared with the political liberalism of Rawls,

525 Butler, Laclau, and Zizek, 2000, 3.
526 Butler 2000, 7.
527 I am indebted to Jensen 2007 for this statement.
for instance, the “communitarian” and in that sense non-Kantian interpretations of PWE would be far more intolerant models as these would not provide rights with the same superior meaning and status as does the deontological approach at the cost of positive or effective liberties of individuals.

Charles Taylor wants to show that there is still another path on which to proceed coherently along liberal lines. That is to make a distinction between the scope of liberalism and its justification. While the former may be more authentically indebted to the deontological tradition, the latter may not. In principle, this is to insist that the liberal society with its ‘priority of right over the good’ is actually justified by a superior principle of good, which in the end is prior to any right. In other words, the ‘priority of right over the good’ is itself a substantive telos or good. Additionally, this results in the idea that the nature of rights is no longer as strictly abstracted from social ties as is the deontological version of liberalism. Indeed, it is possible to determine what forms and interpretations the liberal principle of right over the good may be given from the perspective of the superior good – a possibility which is totally unavailable in the deontological liberalism with its rule of right as socially independent a priori.529

With this kind of “communitarian liberalism” Taylor articulates a position that the liberal principle itself is a substantive rendering of the good. In other words, the rationale for persuading people to accept the liberal principle of right over the good is that this principle itself accounts for the best possible end to pursue. But it is not enough to stop with some thin account of the good. The liberal principle has to reflect, not just some preliminary end, but the final and comprehensive end, which answers every possible question about the best way to lead one’s life. However, as the content of this comprehensive good is still that there have to be many possible comprehensive goods for people to choose from, the liberal principle itself has to be not an a priori, but rather an intuitively justifiable good for the members of the society. To put it differently, because the good is always contextually determined and, according to the deontological method, contextually determined factors should not produce any categorical or absolute moral claims on people, liberalism and its rights-based principles connote no absolute moral claim either. This is in fact something Rawls and Habermas have already approached when advocating deontological liberalism by resorting to the intuitions of citizens in democratic societies. What is still clearly lacking, however, is their acknowledgment of the priority of the good over the right. The question concerning this very priority may be seen as the ultimate demarcation between the rational and the positive methods. This is what the Hegelian type of liberalism has to offer over the Kantian one. In the next section it will be taken into further consideration.

3.2. The Positive Method: From Hegel to Deconstructionism

3.2.1. From Hegel to Dewey's Pragmatism

We return here to Hegel’s classical criticism of Kantian ethics, which was introduced in the first chapter and which has now been shown to be an essential ingredient in the more contemporary communitarian critique of Rawlsian liberalism, made largely by Sandel. Let me briefly recapitulate the Hegelian stages of this critique. First, it was Hegel who drew devastating conclusions from the idea that the Kantian abstract universal rendering of the categorical imperative leads to the emptiness of any moral principle. There is simply no way of defining the rightness of any concrete action on the basis of Kant’s universalization test. In this respect the post-idealist type of Kantianism advanced by Rawls or Habermas is more credible than their Vorbild. Second, to deny the morally primary character of antecedently given social ties of individuals embedded in one or more communities for the sake of autonomous individual choice for one’s personal ends is to offer an untruthful definition of the moral self. Finally, related to this, the Kantian tendency to reduce particular moral obligations, such as those deriving from concrete ties to one’s own family, to abstract and universal principles of justice offers a poor and flawed account of the nature of moral life in general. These are the fundamental elements in Hegel’s criticism of Kantian liberalism.530

The two last problems are those which even the post-idealist liberalism of Rawls and Habermas, for instance, is not able to meet sufficiently. Thus, it is natural to suppose that Hegelian tradition is in a better position to offer a more plausible account of alternative morality to the one based on the Kantian rendering of the categorical imperative than those who are primarily indebted to Kant today. This supposition will be tested in this section, given the ultimate aim to find a plausible articulation of PWE’s humanum as an application of the second formulation of the categorical imperative. No doubt, Terry Pinkard has good reason to call Küng characteristically a Hegelian.531 Yet in order to sketch a more substantially Hegelian social argument instead of merely criticizing the Kantian tradition, the more positive substance of Hegel’s own model has to be taken into serious consideration as well. One ingredient in Hegel’s own model is the metaphysical philosophy of history. It is evident, however, that Hegel’s own metaphysical model ends up in serious difficulty with its absolute rational validity.532

530 Pinkard 1986, 264, 265. See also Rawls 1993, 285, 286 and Rawls 1999, 72, 73.
531 Pinkard 1986, 266.
532 Often these types of problems in Hegel are associated with his main work, Wissenschaftliche Logik, in contrast to his earlier work, Phänomenologie des Geistes. (See for example Tillich 1967, 123, 124.) According to the usual interpretation, the problem with Hegel’s ethical objectivism is its inattention to phenomenological differences in society; every antagonism with respect to “comprehensive doctrines” and societal contest are to be treated as finally leading to thorough reconciliation through these very antagonisms at the level of spirit: “... [Hegel] did not even discuss the particulars, but he believed he knew the general process as such. He constructed history as the actualization of the eternal essences or potentialities which are the divine life in their inner dialec-
In the first chapter it was shown that Hegel has a strong corrective in Heidegger, and at the end of the previous chapter this claim gained force as the unrealism of the Hegelian method was brought to light. One solution to the formality of morality was the revised Kantian one, which in a Kantian manner attempts to offer radical freedom to any particular interpretation of *humanum*, assuming only minimal reciprocal equality. Now that it is obvious that Kantian rationality is unable to solve the problem authentically, the liberal project may seem to be without any further answers. But it is precisely the Heideggerian Hegel who can still defend liberalism. This is because this Hegel *accepts* the historical authenticity, phenomenology, as an inextricable ingredient of philosophical reflection. As this is brought to the sphere of societal matters, the apparently conflicted moral views of different cultures pose no such tensions as in Hegel’s metaphysics. This kind of “neo-Hegelian” view is all the more attractive in our time as there is little demand for metaphysics, generally speaking. In any case it is plausible to think that PWE would also want to avoid the problems of Kant and Hegel with the help of this neo-Hegelian scheme.

This being said, it is important that the Heideggerian interpretation of Hegel should amount to yielding the premise of progress altogether, although this result was not the original solution of neo-Hegelianism. Rather the Young Hegelians wanted to retain the idea of progress, but moderate the progress and reduce it to phenomenological world without metaphysics or abstractions. Here society itself, not the spirit, becomes the ultimate arena for coping with societal differences and conflicts. This kind of reality-oriented political Hegelianism may be seen as the alternative offered by the positive method. The Classical embodiment of this kind of neo-Hegelian social paradigm is, of course, Karl Marx.

The point now is to “change the world,” not to keep on reinterpreting it, as philosophy has done in the past. Not only religion but also philosophy has typically dealt with reality through the fantasy of imagination. It has produced “ideologies” (idea systems) that, as Marx says, turn the relationship between ideas and reality “upside down.” The dominant social group, which is the beneficiary of the social environment, creates – or finds already given – support for this environment in a dominant religious and/or philosophical ideology. “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the
tical movement, the play of God within himself, so to speak. Here he developed the trinitarian symbolism within the divine life. These eternal essences are actualized in the historical process in time and space. But how are they actualized? Here Hegel’s almost tragic feeling in regard to history comes out in a way usually overlooked by his interpreters. He said history is not the place for the happiness of the individual. The individual cannot be happy in history. History does not care about the individual. History goes its grand way from one idea or essence or potentiality within the divine life, actualizing itself, to the others. The bearers of these ideas are the social groups, the nations, and the states. Each nation, each cultural group, has its time in which a particular eternal idea, as it has been spelled out in Hegel’s logic, becomes actual in time and space.” (Tillich 1967, 132.) I have no intention of taking an exhaustive stand on this issue; I will only note that according to Kolb’s interpretation, presented in the first chapter of this study, the particular and historical stages of the movement of the Spirit are seen as more elementary parts of Hegel’s logic than is claimed by ontological interpretations on which Tillich also seems to rely.
ideal expression of the dominant material relations.” Now this relationship must be reversed: “real-
ity must itself strive toward thought,” that is, the truth of reality exposed by criticism must produce
a new way of thinking. “The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest be-
ing for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a de-
based, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being.”

For Marx, realism amounts to the “horizontal” level, that is, downplaying any metaphysics. In
other words, Marx is on the second formulation of Kant’s categorical imperative. What Marx
adds to the Kantian scheme is the Hegelian idea of Vorstellung. As a combination of these
two aspects, Marx, along the lines of Feuerbach, wants to “secularize” thoroughly the concept
of representation: now it is people’s “earthly” needs that are represented in societal and cul-
tural hegemonies instead of the Absolute Idea. But Marx’s account of representation is much
more multifaceted than Feuerbach’s, because it also covers non-religious oppression, extend-
ing to a vision of a communist society free of economic alienation. It is not, however, clear
whether in the final analysis Marx appreciated the diversity of forms of representation suffi-
ciently. As Wilson says:

Marx finally has no absolute vision of a non-alienated communist society. The Communist Mani-
ifesto (1848) is rather typical in that it contains only criticism of existing conditions and political
parties. The nonalienated society is apparently to be planned and replanned in view of the concrete
situations but always with utopian ideals of what human life should be.

. . . In his later publications he rather forgets his interest in the philosophy of nature and con-
centrates entirely on political economics. His most famous work, Capital, is intended to be an ob-
jective science with a high degree of certitude. The “dialectical materialism” presumably authored
by Marx’s coworker, Friedrich Engels, makes political economics the key to universal history; and
in doing so falls into speculative constructions typical of histories that organize the totality of eve-
rything for the purpose of arriving at the desired outcome. Especially “dialectical materialism”
forms the transition to the systems of Soviet communism, systems in which Marx’s original hu-
nitarian ideals were completely obscured.

As we have seen, there is also another kind of neo-Hegelianism that, while drawing on Marx,
is in a position to take Heideggerian challenge to Hegel into account; this view was discussed
in the context of PWE’s application of Kuhn’s paradigm theory and its comparison with Ko-
jève’s historical philosophy. But as became evident, the problems resulting from unrealism in
Hegel’s proposed progressive interpretation of society play, if possible, an even more decisive
role in neo-Hegelianism, not only of Marx, but also of Kojève despite the fact that the latter
so strongly dissociated himself from Marx and indeed wanted to incorporate the Heideggerian
phenomenological element into both Marx’s and Hegel’s views. The basic criticism of the
neo-Hegelian tradition presented in Marx and Kojève is what Tillich contends of Hegel him-
self:

There is another important point in Hegel’s interpretation of history, of the world process, and
even of the inner dialectics of the divine life. It is the principle of negativity. . . . there is Hegel’s
idea of the negative element in every life process. The negation drives the positive out of itself and
reveals its inner potentialities. This, of course, is another idea taken up by existentialism. The

533 Wilson 2007, 76.
534 Wilson 2007, 74–76.
problem of nonbeing in existentialism and in Heidegger is already in Hegel. The difference is that in Hegel the negative is not the continuous threat against the positive, but is overcome in the fulfilled synthesis. Here again Hegel is sitting on the throne of providence, always knowing the outcome. This is the *hybris* which brought Hegel’s synthesis, despite its greatness, to its final dissolution. According to Hegel no life is possible without negativity, otherwise the positive would remain within itself in dead identity. Without alteration there is no life. The continuous process of life which goes out of itself and tries to return to itself has in itself the principle of negativity.  

Here, as a point of comparison with Kojève, it is worth taking up a closer contemporary of Heidegger than Marx, namely, John Dewey, and his pragmatism. Like Kojève, Dewey appears to draw on the substance of earlier Marx and thus correct Marx’s later determinism. James H. Nichols sketches Dewey’s relationship to Hegel in the following manner:

Dewey’s position stemmed from his acceptance and application of Darwinian evolutionary science, which questions whether there is any definite human nature that one can know, and Hegelian historical philosophy, which teaches that the human world and all its ideas, institutions, and practices change fundamentally in the course of history. Accordingly, what is good or true politically, even on the level of the most fundamental principle, is different in different historical epochs. German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel believed that he had understood history through grasping its movement toward a final synthesis. Dewey rejected any such conception of a final outcome. *He kept a notion of progress – but an open-ended one* – accordingly, Dewey could praise the ideas of, say, Founder Thomas Jefferson as good and progressive in 1776, while holding that these same ideas in the twentieth century obstructed further progress or even served as reactionary slogans.

Below, the Hegelian alternative to Kant’s political philosophy as seen through Dewey’s radically revised version will be presented as one important point of reference for all the contemporary neo-Hegelian social paradigms that will be examined in the remaining chapters in this section.

Kant’s Copernican Revolution came as a response to Hume’s radicalization of the Cartesian challenge: how to acquire sure knowledge of the world, not to speak of ethical values, as we obviously do not have any way of evaluating the truthfulness of our experiences, subjective as they are, with regard to reality. Kant’s solution to the Humean rendering of the Cartesian dilemma was thus the separation of reason and experience, theory and practice. If we are not sure of the good life and objective values, we are absolutely conditioned to adhere to the purely (that is, thoroughly non-experiential) rational frameworks within which we are to lead ethical lives. After all, it has to be asked whether this outline of the transcendental preconditions of the mind really addresses the real dilemma. This is because we would naturally invoke our moral experience to verify whether reason addresses the real thing in the first

536 Tillich 1967, 133. Cf. again Kolb’s opposite and friendlier account when it comes to the interpreting Hegel himself: “Hegel is an a priori philosopher in the sense that he wants to find necessity in many features of the world. But he is not a predictive philosopher. He never claimed to be able to deduce concrete content from some first principles. If we tried to make the universal or the concept or the idea a first principle, take it in isolation, and gaze into it to see what we could deduce from it, we would find it empty. . . . History must have developed structurally to the point where it both exemplifies and allows us to perceive the logical forms in their completeness. The concrete totality in which we come to presence is already differentiated by the time when we can conceive the task of tracing its differentiations; we do not have to think up or think out the differentiated content on our own,” Kolb 1986, 89.

place. While it is obvious that we end up with the categorical imperative through purely rational inference in ethical matters, it is all the more obscure, for instance, how one should organize the time spent in working and with our families in ways that would be ethically acceptable. And now it is not only the subjective desire of the respective agent that is at stake, but also all the experiential needs of other people, which, taken together, naturally create a set of duties to be put ranked in a certain way. In any case it simply appears to be contrary to the nature of moral inquiry to stress only the categorical imperative and to say that ethically it makes no difference how one solves the puzzle. Consequently, we need to resort to our experience in the process of clearing up what is morally rational in a certain situation. But here the balance between reason and experience has shifted completely. Now it is not reason that directs experience as in Kant’s model, but the other way round. Finally, it has to be asked, why bother to take such pains to secure ethical knowledge in a theoretical sense if this results in a hollow axiom without sufficient practical applicability? Why not just open our eyes to reality here and now and use reason as a practical instrument in order to get through the concrete puzzles of life in an ethically satisfactory manner, not as a priori authority to reach out for some absolute essence of things or objective information about abstract values?

The Greek verb theoréo connotes “seeing” and thus relates to the idea of spectatorship. According to Dewey, emphasizing theoretical knowledge began in the days of Plato and Aristotle, continuing in the scholastic tradition and finally culminating in two opposite schools of modern times, rationalism and empiricism. Kant sought to combine the two schools, but in spite of his efforts, or perhaps precisely because of them, Kant represents for Dewey is the prototype of the proponent of what Dewey called the ‘spectator theory of knowledge’. What Dewey may be seen from the formal sentence, “Knowing is a relation between a subject S and an object O, that can be characterized as a passive beholding or viewing of O by S . . . In knowing O, S need not change O.” Here knowledge is perceived as passive observation, “watching,” of external reality. Dewey finds it necessary to renounce this mode of thought. Kant regarded his theory on the subjectively constructed external world as a Copernican revolution in philosophy. Likewise, Dewey presents his own Copernican revolution to counter Kant’s principles. Introspectively penetrated separation of theory and practice, the aspiration to absolute knowledge abstracted from practice, has to be abolished. Dewey’s intention is to eradicate the dualistic division between subject and object in such a way that both are seen as one and the same dynamic whole. This becomes possible when knowledge and truth are not conceived as antecedently given or as pure correspondence with objective reality – similar to anti-representationalism, pragmatism usually rejects the correspondence theory of truth – but rather as controlling the reality in practical situations, changing it, but also adapting to it. The decisive step from the ideas of Kant’s Copernican revolution as the ‘spectator theory of

538 Kulp 1992, 11, 12.
knowledge’ to Dewey’s means that the quest for theoretical certainty gives way to a practical struggle for useful probabilities concerning the external reality.\textsuperscript{540}

Dewey’s alternative was indeed revolutionary. He declared the death of metaphysics in all its traditional forms. If answers to final questions are not found from heaven, as in theology, nor from within humans, as in rationalism, it is time to look around and focus on the surrounding reality. This implies the naturalistic thread in Dewey’s pragmatism, but what is particularly characteristic of him is that his pragmatism is not confined to the material, but includes a strong emphasis on social reality treated from a scientific point of view.

The roots of Dewey’s naturalism are found in evolutionary theory. William James applied the theory to pragmatism in a way that also influenced Dewey.\textsuperscript{541} There are two dimensions in Dewey’s version that can be seen as deriving from evolutionary thinking. First, he neglects the aspiration to absolute and universal doctrines, replacing them with questions of how to adjust oneself successfully to the conditions set by nature and how to change them. Like August Comte, Dewey also means the social environment and societal life. Society is to be conceived as an organism tantamount to material nature. Thus the societal view moves to the center, and the focus is on the workability of communal life and its changeability in ever more effective directions. As an organism of physical nature, society functions in a certain way; man has the opportunity to change society and develop its growth through the evolutionary scheme.\textsuperscript{542} This is realized through the scientific method. In societal life it is essential, according to Dewey, to employ a strict research method similar to the natural sciences. This attitude not only concerns sociologists and political decision makers, but also other members of a society, all of whom should have a stake in developing the society. The state or society is a kind of massive scientific community, searching for practical solutions to recurring dilemmas and developing more and more self-correctively toward a growth without limits. All this—and here we go still deeper into political philosophy—requires realization of equality and democracy. Otherwise, it is impossible to make use of the whole capacity of the all-embracing “research community” for new innovations as well as for evaluation of the results attained. This is generally in line with the principles of natural sciences as is also the additional principle of objectivity, which in a societal context connotes surrendering personal motives to the needs of the community. In Dewey, ethics becomes moral science, which further generates ideas such as humanism and state neutrality.\textsuperscript{543}

\textsuperscript{540} Dewey 1929, 249-252.

\textsuperscript{541} Miettinen 1990, 37.

\textsuperscript{542} Campbell 1995, 26-38.

\textsuperscript{543} Campbell 1999, 99-123. It is interesting to juxtapose the Deweyan view with the Kantian one: “Die Vernunft muss mit ihren Principien, nach denen allein übereinkommende Erscheinungen für Gesetzte gelten können, in einer Hand, und mit dem Experiment, das sie nach jenen ausdachte, in der anderen, an die Natur gehen, zwar um von ihr belehrt zu werden, aber \textit{nicht} in der Qualität eines \textit{Schülers}, der sich alles vorsagen lässt, was der Lehrer
Dewey’s view of the goal of education is continuous or life-long education: “...the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education...” This means that the aim is not an external, but an internal criterion. The reasons Dewey proposed this idea is that, when it comes to action, the aim always has to be liberating in contrast to preventive. Man does not set his goals with the intention of attaining a kind of static state, but to make some further action possible; even the most passive-appearing aim is action-oriented.

What is essential in the context of this study is that Dewey’s concept of life-long education implies the role of education with respect to its aims. Here the internal nature of the educational aim is crucial; according to Dewey, there can be no aims for education other than the internal one. In other words, the aim is never defined by external criteria. “In our search for aims in education, we are not concerned, therefore, with finding an end outside of the educative process to which education is subordinate.”

One source of basic ideas for Dewey is Darwinism. Dewey gives reasons for life-long learning with examples from nature. In nature Dewey discerns results on the one hand and ends on the other. Results are functionally independent of their cause, for instance, when the wind blows sand into the air. It is also possible to speak of side effects in a determinate Deweyan context. The second, educationally more interesting concept for Dewey is the ends. These refer to something not only related causally, but also related functionally to its cause, such as when bees collect honey: from the bees’ actions a hive emerges in which there are several aims, the final one being to produce honey. Thus, the aim is always derived from the action itself.

On the other hand, the aim may also be a guiding tool for action. Hence, the aim is not a theoretical statement or observation. “We intervene to bring about this result or that.” This leads to Dewey’s additional principle in education, namely, functional learning. Dewey views life, thinking, and learning, correctly understood, as intervening in the surrounding nature. The characteristic feature of humans is to bring about change in the environment in order to improve life circumstances. Conversely, it is also a question of adjusting oneself to the limits imposed by nature. The reason that humans are the most successful of all the species in this task has to do with the kind of intelligence required. For Dewey intelligence is different from abstractly-oriented rationality, which connotes logical strictness in planning the right solu-

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544 Dewey 1916, 100.
545 Dewey 1916, 105.
546 Dewey 1916, 100.
547 Miettinen 1990, 37.
tions for concrete situations. In Dewey’s pragmatism the reflection of different alternatives is called for as well as an ability to predict their impact on the environment. Intelligence is, as it were, a practice of efforts and errors in a predictive manner in order that the realization of action would be most useful. Intelligence is action-orientatedness.\footnote{Dewey 1916, 103, 104.}

The discussion above outlines Dewey’s definition of aim as an end on a general level. The fundamental interdependence of aim and end affects some assumptions about the nature of the end. First of all, the end has to emerge from the existing circumstances. The situational characteristic of the end results from its practicality. Because the end arises from the action, the possibilities and restrictions imposed by the individual situation must be taken into consideration. Intelligence is essentially particular in nature. If this is not accepted, then the concept of intelligence becomes one-sided rather than broad, for it implies blind obligation to externally set rules. Second, the end ought to be flexible. Precisely because the intelligent person takes into account the frameworks established by nature, she is ready to adjust both actions and ends to these conditions. This sort of constant readiness for complete revision is also applicable to education. “A good aim surveys the present state of experience of pupils, and forming a tentative plan of treatment, keeps the plan constantly in view and yet modifies it as conditions develop.”\footnote{Dewey 1916, 104, 105.} Hence, for Dewey, education as a general definition has no particular aim. There really exists no general aim abstracted from the individual situation. “An educational aim must be founded upon the intrinsic activities and needs . . . of the given individual to be educated.”\footnote{Dewey 1916, 107-110.}

Dewey’s moral philosophy could be said to be an effort to revise the classical Aristotelian naturalistic ethic for purposes of the modern condition.\footnote{Chambliss 1993, 249.} As shown above, Dewey sees the ends above all as internal aims in contrast to external ones. This is also in line with the Aristotelian model. Aristotle did not distinguish the ends and the instruments by which the ends are pursued. MacIntyre illustrates this feature of Aristotelian ethic through the example of a child learning to play chess. The child may be motivated to this practice by the offer of external rewards, for instance, the promise of sweets. However, now the child does not however play chess for the sake of the game, but because of the external reward. If the child learns to enjoy playing chess so much that he enjoys the game without any sweets, he has attained the internal end of the game. This illustrates the Aristotelian view that the use of an instrument, that is, virtue (areté), is also the realization of the end, which is supposed to be the aim of the virtuous action. In other words, the end of the human being is to be a virtuous person,
and he is virtuous when carrying out virtuous deeds, while virtuous deeds mean pursuing the end; this pursuit is itself the realization of the end.\textsuperscript{553}

Aristotle’s naturalist virtue-ethic means that a person fulfills the end he is naturally given. The place for the realization of virtues is society, and the instrument by means of which a person leads a virtuous life is practical reason, called \textit{phronēsis} in Greek. The practicality of reason implies the nonexistence of any theoretical abstract principles, in light of which the morally right action could be evaluated. The realization of virtues is essentially situational. The criteria for the evaluation of virtues are aspects related to the societal role. “The concept of \textit{what anyone filling such-and-such role ought to do} is prior to the concept of virtue; the latter concept has application only via the former.”\textsuperscript{554} In other words, the evaluation of virtuousness is carried out by reflecting on how the individual is expected to act in a particular societal role in different practical situations. The connotation of \textit{phronēsis} is thus in a sense contrary to Kantian practical reason, because no antecedently given universal principles are at hand for ethical evaluation.\textsuperscript{555}

There are remarkable affinities between Dewey and Marx. Among them is the idea of societal progress and human work as creative, effective action being an end in itself. Indeed, Dewey’s relation to the early Marx without historical determinism would seem to be a highly considerable articulation of the positive method in a neo-Hegelianist vein. From the perspective of the discussion below, however, the most important convergence between the two thinkers is the nature of critical reflection. The point in the positive method is the objective view of reality that is gained through \textit{direct} engagement with that reality. The critical potential of the positive method is the dismantling of any \textit{indirect} accounts of reality that are attained through abstraction from the real situation and only thereafter and within that light treated as phenomena as such. It is easy to see that this is quite contrary to Kant, who holds that direct experience must always be kept in check by reason’s ability to take some critical distance from the concrete, thus enabling a critical view. All the same, what makes the positive method a liberal one in this study is its focus on direct observation, above all, at the “horizontal” level, that is, the realization of human treatment whereby the individual is an end in itself instead of a means. Indeed, I will show, at least indirectly, what it is that makes Dewey’s position and others’ within the positive method liberal in a significant sense, namely, their preoccupation with the idea behind Kant’s second formulation of the categorical imperative, despite their denunciation of its first formulation to a greater or lesser extent.

From the combination of the definitions “positive” and “liberal,” there follows a constant effort to enhance the \textit{real} liberty of individuals versus emerging distortions of these liberties in the form of “false consciousness” or hegemonic oppression. This is what has been

\textsuperscript{553} MacIntyre 1985, 184-188.

\textsuperscript{554} MacIntyre 1985, 184.

\textsuperscript{555} MacIntyre 1985, 182, 184.
stated programmatically by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as the up-to-date Marxist mission, and it is also confirmed by the Deweyan critique of rational or metaphysical certainty at all levels of life, although at a more general level. The positive liberal method also embodies critical potential, but uses it from the perspective of and for the sake of the real. This attention to the real has been increasingly evident in the ideas articulated all the way from Rawls through Pogge to Habermas in their emphasises on positive rights and the authentic use of rights by the oppressed or the marginalized. In this, as in all other respects, the positive method classically articulated by such figures as Hegel and Dewey signal no substantial break in the continuum of different liberalist positions. There is one exception: within the positive method the quest for the Real has come to amount to renouncing the principle of the ‘priority of right over the good’. We have arrived at the point at which the ‘common good’ has overridden individual freedom and negative rights as individuals’ trump card against society, albeit without doing away with the quest for promoting the idea behind Kant’s second formulation of the categorical imperative.

It was mentioned above that Dewey transformed the metaphysically emphasized Hegelian social view into an immanent and heavily open-ended political view. Early Marx and Dewey function together as good points of comparison with respect to the following sections, in which the contemporary neo-Hegelian models will be discussed as philosophical articulations of PWE’s humanum. The contemporary neo-Hegelian agenda is usefully summarized by Seyla Benhabib when she explains the basic intention behind the Habermasian concept of “reconstruction:”

The methodology of philosophical “reconstruction” differs from “ethnocentric liberalism” (Richard Rorty) as well as from more a prioristic forms of Kantianism. As distinguished from certain kinds of Kantianism, I would like to acknowledge the historical and sociological specificity of the project of democracy while, against ethnocentric liberalism, I would like to insist that the practical rationality embodied in democratic institutions has a culture-transcending validity claim. This form of practical reason has become the collective and anonymous property of cultures, institutions, and traditions as a result of the experiments and experiences, both ancient and modern, with democratic rule over the course of human history. The insights and perhaps illusions resulting from these experiments and experiences are sedimented in diverse constitutions, institutional arrangements, and procedural specifics. When one thinks through the form of practical rationality at the core of democratic rule, Hegel’s concept of “objective Spirit” (objektiver Geist) appears to me particularly appropriate. To make this concept useful today we have to think of it without recourse to the metaphorical presence of a supersubject; we have to desubstantilize the model of a thinking and acting supersubject that still governs Hegelian philosophy. Without this metaphor of the subject implicitly governing it, the term “objective spirit” would refer to those anonymous yet intelligible collective rules, procedures, and practices that form a way of life. It is the rationality intrinsic to these anonymous yet intelligible rules, procedures and practices that any attempt aiming at the reconstruction of the logic of democracies must focus upon.

Discourse ethics in this sense presupposes the reciprocal moral recognition of one another’s claims to be participants in the moral-political dialogue. I am still enough of a Hegelian to maintain, however, that such reciprocal recognition of one another’s rights to moral personality is a result of a

556 Laclau and Mouffe 2001.
557 Benhabib 1999, 198–199.
These sketches of a neo-Hegelian social paradigm include four important ingredients: (1) liberal democracy ultimately as "a way of life," that is, the common good; (2) the historical and intuitive nature of ethics, the scope of which is nonetheless global; (3) mutual recognition of another’s rights to a moral personality in the (global) society; and (4) social conflicts as the only context for value-making in society. Thus articulated, the neo-Hegelian model offers a clear alternative to the Kantian one and addresses the problems that Rawls and Habermas, for instance, have left unanswered. Next, I will turn to some different models that have been advocated along neo-Hegelian lines and show how they succeed in offering an alternative. The first author to be examined emphasizes the first three aspects of neo-Hegelianism above, while the others are increasingly preoccupied with the fourth aspect.

3.2.2. From Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach to Walzer’s Multiculturalism

One of the major questions in assessing the positive method vis-à-vis the rational method is how to escape the problem of relativism if morality is so dependent on context. Even though the question of relativism would not be an argument against the method, it is still both inevitable and painful as far as the scope and motive of PWE are concerned; the relativist standpoint demolishes any aspiration to global ethics. From the positive method’s point of view, this is above all a problem of practical justification: even though the claim of ethical relativism might be true in principle, it makes it too difficult for humans all over the world to find any common good, which would give reasons to pursue ethical ideals as well as determine their substance.

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558 Benhabib 1999, 203.

559 Hannah Arendt is a useful general point of reference in this tradition, because her contribution is strongly recognizable below, both in Nussbaum, on the one hand, and in Walzer and Gray, on the other. Nussbaum’s indebtedness to Arendt is related to Arendt’s concept of natality as the fundamental basis of human rights and the ensuing emphasis on capabilities vs. contractarian justice (praxis vs. poiesis; power vs. will and sovereignty). Walzer in turn reflects Arendt’s intention to use the cognate idea of empowerment to prioritize strong societal pluralism (as the testing ground for the ‘enlargement of the mind’) over societal unity, which runs counter to Nussbaum, as I will show. Gray even takes this idea of pluralism one step further away from Nussbaum. Finally, in light of Derrida’s discussion, the event of natality – which could be more or less a potential basis for all three figures (Nussbau, Walzer, and Gray) with their experientially-oriented models – would itself become radically relativized. On Hannah Arendt, see Birmingham 2006.


561 PW, 57: “Gewiss: alle Staaten der Welt haben eine Wirtschafts- und Rechtsordnung, aber in keinem Staat der Welt wird sie funktionieren ohne einen ethischen Konsens, ohne em Ethos ihrer Staatsburger/innen, aus dem der
A related problem is the limited sphere that the experiential type of ethics naturally covers. This is particularly characteristic of communitarianism. Even though there may be some relatively objective content for morality across different communities and cultures, there is still the question of whether one is to practice this morality universally or mainly for the good of one’s closer social networks, that is, for one’s family, relatives, society, and cultural community. Indeed, the unquestionable answer seems to be for the closer social networks – at least as far as the ancient version of communitarianism is concerned. The virtues are supposed to be practiced only for the good of the members of one’s own community. Usually a particular city-state, polis, is considered self-sufficient such that its members’ social ties and consequently, their ethical duties do not transcend the borders of the polis. In ancient times it was not actually virtuous to show virtue to a foreigner, because Athens did not have the same telos as Sparta; what might benefit one was often irrelevant or even unfavorable to the other.\(^{562}\)

This second element of communitarianism prompts two additional questions. The first is related to the nationalism – or at least the ethnocentrism – of ancient polis-centeredness: given the communal embeddedness of ethical values, how is one to care for “outsiders” in a meaningful way? The second question is even more fundamental: does not every social and cultural community have its own network of meanings and moral ends so that in today’s radically pluralistic situation – even within the borders of a single national society – it is not possible to judge objectively which of these communally or culturally constructed ends are better than others? Is not the only way to judge objectively which of these communally or culturally constructed ends are better than others? Is not the only way to judge people to evaluate whether their ethical lives reflect
their own community’s understanding of *telos* faithfully enough; but this does not answer the question of whether one *telos* is better than any other *telos*.

There is, after all, a strong argument that appears to enable one to remain within the anti-Kantian mode of viewing ethics according to the positive methodology, while at the same time preventing collapse into ethical relativism. Simply put, the argument is that all humans live in some manner in the same community. True, this community is a particular one in the same way as all communities are, that is, it is not possible to abstract any general ethical principles independent of the specific community. But this fact is no obstacle to a *global*, instead of an abstractly *universal*, ethic. We live in a global village in which it is possible to sketch a common *telos* for all mankind. This is a globalized communitarian claim in contrast to the ancient *polis*-centered virtue-ethics. This is exactly how the section on the rational method ended in the case of Habermas. As the ‘priority of right over the good’ also has to be replaced with the reverse order, for instance, with Rawls, the same notion that Ferrara here makes with respect to Habermas virtually applies to all rational methods, including Pogge’s cosmopolitanism. Ferrara observes:

...the Habermasian dichotomy which opposes the particularism of ethical judgment, always inextricably linked with a context and a concrete identity, to the universal or context – transcending quality of moral judgment, collapses. If we understand the validity of a moral norm as based on intuitions concerning the good for humanity, the context-transcending quality of moral judgment takes on a different meaning. It appears to be the result of responsiveness to a special context – the historically changing horizon of humanity in its entirety – which, among other things, has the unique property of being the largest conceivable context – one which cannot further be included into any broader context. The so-called “view from nowhere” reveals to be indeed a view “from somewhere.” For the standpoint of the good for humankind changes. It is not a formula, an abstract principle of reciprocity or consistency, but a horizon of shared meanings that changes historically. It was substantively different in the era before nuclear weapons, in the era when the total aggregate output of the production processes still posed a limited threat to the integrity of the natural environment, or when science was in no position to interfere with genetic processes, or in the time when population growth posed no threat to the survival of the species. The moral point of view, understood as the standpoint of the good for humanity, remains anchored in history and experience, even if in a history and a collective experience incomparably larger in scope than any other. The qualitative distinction drawn by Habermas between justice and the good from this perspective becomes only a difference of degree, of scope. 563

An example of what is meant by cosmopolitanism within the framework of the positive method is provided by Martha C. Nussbaum. Nussbaum draws heavily on Aristotelianism. She aspires to revive the importance of the good, which the deontological mainstream has long neglected as the basis of any meaningful ethical consideration. This leads her, first and foremost, to jettison the distinction of right and good as rendered in the Kantian liberal theory, whereby the right is seen to deal with ethics and the good is irrelevant or secondary from the ethical point of view.

I shall, in fact, try to avoid not only the Kantian moral/non-moral distinction, but all versions of that distinction... The Greek texts make no such distinction. They begin from the general question. “How should we live?” and consider the claim of all human values to be constituent parts of

Nussbaum’s communitarian interest stems from the notion that the structure of ethics is teleological. That means conclusively that the moral agent cannot be abstracted from the individual’s social embeddedness, as deontological liberalists claim. The community one lives in naturally makes certain demands on the individual prior to any subjective choices with respect to a personal way of life — and rightly so. Nussbaum’s position has clear elements of the positive method. The central question is what makes ethics meaningful from the experiential point of view. It is in accordance with the human moral experience of a moral subject that one has to organize personal choices according to a prior overall good, ethical and communal by nature, which also includes certain duties to the members of the community according to their needs and interests.

Moreover, from the Aristotelian vantage point there follows a specific rendering of liberalism within the positive approach with an essential emphasis on distributive justice. This was already found in Rawls, but whereas he aspired to retain the deontological status for his theory as far as possible, with Nussbaum the weight is more radically on the side of social justice. Before commenting more on this dimension, I will explore further the nature of the good life that Nussbaum is promoting in her quotation above.

Nussbaum seems to be in search of the all-encompassing essence of ethical telos, a search fully in line with Aristotelianism. There is practically no sphere of life that could be left outside of moral inference. The question of how we should live indeed covers more than just the rights of free individuals. It requires us to take a stand on many things concerning habits, forgiveness, loving relationships, even jokes, which friends to choose, and what books to read. Nussbaum’s solution is to articulate some undisputed elementary ingredients as preconditions for any good life whatsoever, labeling these ingredients as human good, and distinguishing them from the more detailed and varying aspects of a good life based on the possibilities offered by these rather elementary preconditions.

Thus, although it is no doubt important to name a superior telos over rights in order to understand ethics in the first place, in Nussbaum’s thinking this does not mean that the telos in question has to be so detailed that it does not cover all humanity. On the other hand, although the telos for every individual also has to be relatively detailed in how one is to lead one’s life, this does not mean that this detailed telos has to be the one that covers all humanity. In other words, there may well be two dimensions of the moral telos, one which is elementary and all-human and one which is more detailed and varies according to different cultural world-views. Thus, it is possible to retain the teleological nature of ethics in all its contextual

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564 Nussbaum 1986, 5. See also Nussbaum 1990, 25.

565 See for example Nussbaum 2006, 33, 139.

embeddedness and still plausibly opt for global ethics. One could also speak of overlapping consensus in the manner of Rawls’s political liberalism, but now referring to the Aristotelian version. All people’s goods overlap in the sense that if they could not be provided with basic goods, then there would not be any chance to lead a good life in a more detailed sense. Nussbaum seems to acknowledge the theoretical possibility of tension between the two dimensions, but she considers this to be an apparent problem in reality.

But we have also insisted that there is much family relatedness and much overlap among societies. And certain areas of relatively greater universality can be specified here, on which we should insist as we proceed to areas that are more varied in their cultural expression. Not without a sensitive awareness that we are speaking of something that is experienced differently in different contexts, we can nonetheless identify certain features of our common humanity.

Nussbaum presents eight common areas of humanity as points of definition for universal ethics: mortality, body, pleasure and pain, cognitive capability, practical reason, early infant development, affiliation, and humor. The ethical principles are derived from the concrete and universal human needs related to these areas. They are not a point of departure for some detailed ethics or reflections on what food one ought to eat or what kind of friends one ought to choose, but a point of departure for common elementary ethics, namely, that every human being should be given the opportunity to satisfy these needs in the first place.

On this basis Nussbaum has more recently formulated a comprehensive political theory, which she calls the capabilities approach. The term refers to the basic goods as capabilities to which all humans are primarily entitled from the moral point of view and which belong to the responsibilities of the global community to assure for the sake of human dignity. In this light it is natural that Nussbaum views the capabilities approach as a philosophical articulation of the human rights approach.

Nussbaum gives the basic capabilities as follows:

1. **Life.** Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one’s life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. **Bodily Health.** Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. **Bodily Integrity.** Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. **Senses, Imagination, and Thought.** Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training.
5. **Emotions.** Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger.

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568 Nussbaum 1987, 26, 27.
569 Nussbaum 1987, 26, 27.
570 Nussbaum 2006, 78.
6. Practical Reason. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)

7. Affiliation.

A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction . . . (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech.)

B. Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.

8. Other Species. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. Play. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. Control over One’s Environment.

A. Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.\(^{571}\)

There seem to be clearly experiential reasons for Nussbaum’s distinction between culturally-specified meanings of basic goods and the culturally-independent essence of those basic goods – and for the fact that she ascribes priority to the latter.\(^{572}\)

The experience of the body is culturally influenced; but the body itself, prior to such experience, provides limits and parameters that ensure a great deal of overlap in what is going to be experienced, where hunger, thirst, desire, the five senses are concerned \(^{573}\) [italics added].

Here, although Nussbaum opposes subjective desires as criteria for ethics, she nevertheless implies some kind of “objective experience,” that is, human need is taken to be more vital than, for instance, some spiritual needs. This type of argument suggests an example of how the moral experience within the mainstream of the positive method is to be understood. It is not merely a subjective feeling, but refers to an idea that all humans can observe something to be universal with the help of their experiences, both of themselves and of others. Ethical experientiality within the framework of the positive method is something “experimental:” something concerning human needs that can be verified objectively through common experience.

In light of this “experimentalism,” it is clear that despite the critical attitude toward the liberalism of rational method, the positive method does not imply a critical attitude toward rights as such. Nussbaum’s, for instance, is a major re-endorsement of human rights. My question rather concerns the nature of these rights. More precisely, the question of the capabilities approach as an alternative to the deontological method is related to a controversy between human rights based on the principle of choice on the one hand and on the principle of need on the other. In other words, should the meaning and effect of rights be to protect indi-

\(^{571}\) Nussbaum 2006, 76–78.

\(^{572}\) Kopperi 1998, 58.

\(^{573}\) Nussbaum 1987, 27.
viduals’ free choice with respect to how they lead their lives – this is the deontological position – or should it fulfill their basic needs? The proponents of the former view claim that a requirement to fulfill others’ needs restricts the freedom of others and forces individuals to undertake responsibilities that they should not have from an ethical point of view. For instance, poor people have claims on rich people’s property, although the rich people may have justly earned the property. The proponents of need-based liberalism also opt for basic freedoms, even freedom of choice, and do not want these freedoms to be violated. Yet they see that the disabled members of society have in fact not reached the state of freedom in the real sense of the word, owing to the oppressive structures of the society. For instance, poor people may not be able to choose their educational future at all because they are given such poor material resources from the outset – through no fault of their own. Thus, the need principle is advocated within the positive method because only by first fulfilling the basic needs of the least advantaged members of society does the equal possibility of free choice emerge in the first place. 

This is to say that deontological liberalism is not true to its own vision of freedom. By modifying the concept of the right toward the meaning of social justice, one is able to give a more consistent account of what freedom really is. However, as was already mentioned, the deontological camp sees this position as a restriction of basic inviolable freedoms whenever a society grasps a stake in individuals’ entitlements fairly acquired. Despite this fundamental controversy, one cannot help noting that there is a fundamental juncture between Rawls’s liberalism and Nussbaum’s. Both present a need-based understanding of rights, that is, social versus individual justice. With Rawls this is evident in the rendering of the difference principle; he clearly replaces the traditional deontological view with a more social understanding of freedom. In this respect Rawls’s Kantianism has lost its “purity.”

Likewise, one could also claim that because Nussbaum’s approach takes the shape of securing the universal availability of elementary needs or interests of humankind, and this even as a criterion for assessing the more detailed views of the good, her added value to that of, say, Rawls and Habermas, may seem questionable. Understandably, there might in principle be some reservations about Nussbaum’s position and whether she actually distances her position far enough from the deontological method to be able to criticize it. Indeed, one could compare Nussbaum’s distinction between basic human needs and more comprehensive or substantial goods with Rawls’s, who distinguishes clearly primary goods from more substantial goods and connects the former with his account of basic liberties and opportunities:

\[\ldots\text{we should note the assumption that the primary goods can be accounted for by the thin theory of the good. That is, I suppose that it is rational to want these goods whatever else is wanted, since they are in general necessary for the framing and the execution of a rational plan of life. The persons in the original position are assumed to accept this conception of the good.}\ldots\]

\[\text{574 Sundman 1996, 39–43.}\]

\[\text{575 Cf. Kopperi 1998, 67.}\]
That liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and above all self-respect are primary goods must indeed be explained by the thin theory. The constraints of the principles of justice cannot be used to draw up the list of primary goods that serves as part of the description of the initial situation. The reason is, of course, that this list is one of the premises from which the choice of the principle of right is derived. To cite these principles in explaining the list would be a circular argument. We must assume, then, that the list of primary goods can be accounted for by the conception of goodness as rationality in conjunction with the general facts about human wants and abilities, their characteristic phases and requirements of nurture, the Aristotelian Principle, and the necessities of social interdependence. At no point can we appeal to the constraints of justice. But once we are satisfied that the list of primary goods can be arrived at this way, then in all further applications of the definition of good the constraints of right may be freely invoked. I shall not argue the case for the list of primary goods here, since their claims seem evident enough.

In this light it is difficult at first to see the difference between Rawls’s and Nussbaum’s accounts of primary goods. And yet there is a difference, if not in quality, then at least in degree. It concerns the scope of primary goods and the related principles of justice. It was already mentioned that Nussbaum criticizes Rawls’s obvious confinement to some negative rights in the UDHR, omitting the articles more relevant to social rights. Indeed, according to Nussbaum, Rawls pays attention only to strictly economic aspects of positive rights in his account of the principles of justice and the related primary goods; for him, both equality of opportunity and the situation of the least well-off in society are to be measured only by economic factors along with the packages of more negative liberties. Rawls’s egalitarian rendering of liberalism is thus not sufficient; while Rawls even incorporates such non-economic primary goods as self-respect into the list of primary goods, he nevertheless hesitates to give those kinds of capabilities an independent value in his theory. Nussbaum’s criticism is akin to the one already presented in the case of both Pogge and Habermas. All three in principle reflect a stronger emphasis on the experiential reality of effective liberties in the manner similar to the positive method. In his criticism of Rawls, a close ally of Nussbaum, Amartya Sen, makes the case as follows (here given in Nussbaum’s words):

Sen’s more radical proposal, which we have briefly examined, is that the entire list of primary goods should be seen as a list of capabilities rather than a list of things. His analysis starts from the fact that Rawls’s list of primary goods is already quite heterogenous in its structure. Some of the components are thing-like items such as income and wealth; but some are more like human capabilities to function in various ways: the liberties, opportunities, and powers, and also the social basis of self-respect. This change would not only enable us to deal better with people’s needs for various types of love and care as elements of the list, but would also answer the point that Sen has repeatedly made all along about the unreliability of income and wealth as indices of well-being. The relative social positions will now be measured not by the sheer amount of income and wealth they have, but by the degree to which they have the various capabilities on the list. One may be well off in terms of income and wealth, and yet unable to function well in the workplace, because of burdens of care giving at home.

Rawls’s rejoinder is found in his note on Amartya Sen:

576 Rawls 1972, 433, 434.
579 Nussbaum 2006, 141, 142.
[Sen’s] thought is that society must look to the distribution of citizens’ effective basic freedoms, as these are more fundamental for their lives than what they possess in primary goods, since citizens have different capabilities and skills in using those goods to achieve desirable ways of living their lives. The reply from the side of primary goods is to grant this claim – indeed any use of primary goods must make certain simplifying assumptions about citizens’ capabilities – but also to answer that to apply the idea of effective basic capabilities without those or similar assumptions calls for more information than political society can conceivably acquire and sensibly apply. Instead, by embedding primary goods into the specification of the principles of justice and ordering the basic structure of society accordingly, we may come as close as we can in practice to a just distribution of Sen’s effective freedoms. His idea is essential because it is needed to explain the propriety of the use of primary goods.  

Still, this does not do away with the fact that those multiple and heterogenous capabilities are such important ingredients of life that a theory that does not address them is insufficient. In fact, Rawls admits this in principle; but at the same time he is confident that any theory must be insufficient in that respect. It is this last contention that Nussbaum is reluctant to subscribe to, and this is related to her different view on ethics in general. Nussbaum observes that her principal difference from Rawls lies in the difference between proceduralism and the “outcome-oriented” political view. While for Rawls the chief question of finding principles of justice is to design a fair procedure leading to those principles, Nussbaum goes straight to the outcome.

Liberalist proceduralism is closely related to the rational method, in which the fair procedure takes a characteristic form of a (hypothetical) social contract, because every member of society is supposed to have an equal share in framing the public good. Even more, no contract would ever be written if it were not based on the mutual advantage of the parties to the contract. This account of proceduralism reflects the all-important nature of individual choice in rationally interpreting liberalism. The outcome-oriented approach, in turn, does not assess the rightness of the ethical or political principles on the basis of the rightness of the antecedent procedure, but the other way round: the moral rightness of any political principle is to be evaluated in its own right. Thereafter, political procedures securing those morally right principles are to be designed accordingly. Although in Rawls there are strong elements of the outcome-oriented approach, he still wants to adhere to proceduralism with the result that the questions most relevant to multiple and heterogenous capabilities ensuring the effective use of liberties are downplayed. This is because it is not considered fair procedure to demand the partakers of a social contract to contribute more to the common good than others, for example, disabled citizens.

A simplistic division between need-based and choice-based liberalism is not applicable to such Kantians as Rawls. However, Nussbaum’s main criticism of Kantianism, Rawls in-

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581 Nussbaum 2006, 176.
582 Rawls 1999, 127.
583 Nussbaum 2006, 81–84.
cluded, is its conception of the moral self as a rational and autonomous subject and the related tradition of contractarianism within political philosophy.

It is in virtue of our capacity for moral rationality, and that alone, that we rise above that realm and exist, as well, in a realm of ends. Therefore, for Kant, human dignity and our moral capacity, dignity’s source, are radically separate from the natural world. Insofar as we exist merely in the realm of nature, we are not ends in ourselves and do not have a dignity; things in that realm simply have a price (as Kant puts it, pretium usus). Insofar as we enter the realm of ends, thus far, and thus far alone, we have dignity and transcend price. Morality certainly has the task of providing for human neediness, but the person, seen as the rational/moral aspects of the human being, is the goal of these ministrations.584

While Rawls strives to retain in his framework the strongest possible emphasis on the classical liberal meaning of the freedom of choice, Nussbaum wants to extend the meaning of rights far more in the direction of social control. She rightly observes that Rawls’s position is based on ignoring the manifold nature of social oppression. His improvement in the classical theory of liberalism is only economic. What is still needed is a theory that addresses all other modes of oppressions and ensures the distribution of primary goods to the disabled members of society. The other dimension that Nussbaum, again rightly, sees as needing further extension is Rawls’s close adherence to the national level only. Nussbaum herself wants to present a theory that also acknowledges cross-cultural and transnational social ties from the ethical point of view. Here she follows, as it were, the cosmopolitan-communitarian idea that the sphere of social justice and common good prior to any personal or national choices should guide the decisions. To put it simply, Nussbaum refuses to see less than the whole world as the paramount community of every human being. The third dimension in which Nussbaum’s outcome-oriented approach offers a more feasible account, and one almost totally ignored by the contractarianists, is the sphere of ethical relations to non-human beings, those who are not even potential parties to a rational social contract, but toward whom it is nevertheless realistic to think that humans have certain ethical responsibilities.585

Here Nussbaum invokes a teleological basis for her outcome-oriented approach. That is to say, she wants to argue for an “antecedent and independent account of the human good” as the objective reason given for any social contribution required of an individual. The nature of human good is not to be found in abstract rational inference, but by empirical observance of what is intrinsically good for human beings and other creatures. Thus found, human good is not restricted to the good for autonomous individuals, because an additional empirical fact is that human beings are, in Aristotle’s terms, “political animals” in the sense that they depend on each other in a radical way; they have a role to play in satisfying each other’s good. Life without needs and also without responsibilities with respect to fellow citizens, antecedent of personal choices and contracts based on autonomous consent, is characteristically non-human.

584 Nussbaum 2006, 131.
585 Nussbaum 2006, 14–22.
586 Nussbaum 2006, 83.
While Nussbaum’s critique seems understandable in light of the relevant features left out of the Kantian liberal social contract, a principal difficulty remains in the capabilities approach as well from the contractarian point of view. The rational method reflects a natural longing for impartial or rational justification of any proposed political principle as a condition for fulfilling the Kantian idea that persons be treated as ends in themselves.\(^{587}\) Indeed, Kant has captured an important point with his two complementary formulations of the categorical imperative. Taken together, they endorse the idea that if any member of a political community is required to do or sacrifice something without impersonal reasons being given for such action, then persuasion has been transformed into manipulation and the person’s dignity as a rational human being is compromised.\(^{588}\)

How then is one to ensure that certain goods are objectively good for humans and thereby avoid arbitrary judgment? This is the classical Kantian criticism of the utilitarian model. The reason behind the Kantian criticism of teleological approaches is hostility to paternalism. Because there are no viewpoints for an assessment of the good that transcend contingent conditions, it is wrong to claim anything to be good for anyone against or independent of the views of individuals. The response from Nussbaum’s side is that the very formally articulated capabilities, instead of, say, feelings or even preferences such as are found in utilitarianism, indicate rather strongly that an opportunity remains for choice and protection against the so-called adaptive preferences, that is, preferences of individuals that, consciously or unconsciously, are a result of social manipulation, whether intentional or unintentional.\(^{589}\)

But there remains a final question: because the capabilities are by definition not derived from any antecedent procedural rationale, how is one to make sure that the naming of the capabilities is not itself directed by the heavily contingent ideologies adapted – consciously or not – by the namer herself? From the Kantian point of view this is always a problem with any moral claim derived from empirical experience. This applies most clearly to the aspect of caring for animals, which is part of Nussbaum’s tripartite agenda. She correctly notes that utilitarianism fails to avoid human-centeredness in evaluating the good of animals, but at the same time she acknowledges that the capabilities approach does not avoid this failing either. The difference is that the latter approach acknowledges the failure more openly and thus is perhaps better able to mitigate it as well.\(^{590}\) Indeed, Nussbaum’s concrete suggestions for animal protection cannot be anything other than what humans think would be good for animals. Furthermore, while restricting protection to the level of the species, the capabilities approach obviously does not treat non-human individuals as ends in themselves as it does with humans.\(^{591}\)

\(^{587}\) Nussbaum 2006, 150.

\(^{588}\) MacIntyre 1985, 9.

\(^{589}\) Nussbaum 2006, 73.

\(^{590}\) Nussbaum 2006, 353, 354.

\(^{591}\) See for example Nussbaum 2006, 357, 358.
Thus, the extension of the focus of morality from the Kantian human-centered vantage point to the non-human world is not one of substance and, in fact, from the Kantian point of view merely illusory. All in all, human centeredness prevails, but, significantly, an impartial point of view on the good of any other human is also openly questioned.

All human descriptions of animal behavior are in human language, mediated by human experience. As Singer emphasizes, there is a real risk of getting things wrong through anthropomorphic projection. But we should remind ourselves that the same problems vex our human relationships. A real human being, as Proust says, imposes “a dead weight that our sensitivity cannot remove,” an opaque area of mystery that even the most refined other mind can never fully penetrate. Only in our own imaginations can we experience the inner life of anyone else. From this observation Proust derives the startling claim that only literary artistry gives us access to another human mind: what we do when we read a novel is what we have to do always, if we are ever to endow another shape with life. All of our ethical life involves, in this sense, an element of projection, a going beyond the facts as they are given. It does not seem impossible for the sympathetic imagination to cross the species barrier – if we press ourselves, if we require of our imaginations something more than common routine. As J. M. Coetzee’s imaginary character Elizabeth Costello, a novelist lecturing on the lives of animals, says, “The heart is the seat of a faculty, sympathy, that allows us to share at times the being of another.”

So: the capabilities approach uses sympathetic imagining, despite its fallibility, to extend and refine our moral judgments in this area. It also uses theoretical insights about dignity to correct, refine, and extend both judgments and imaginings. There is no surefire recipe for doing this right; but we have to begin somewhere, and it is likely that any thoroughgoing and serious moral exercise will do better in this area than the self-serving and half-baked thinking that most of us typically do on this topic.592

From the point of view of the further considerations in this section, what is important in this quotation, is not the inner tension between the open acknowledgment of the impartial view of the other person or creature as a fiction and, simultaneously, the salient strive toward objectivity and critical evaluation of any such view. Rather it is that Nussbaum seems to show little appreciation of the fact that it is above all an extreme avoidance of unjustified paternalism that lies behind the contractarian ideal of mutual advantage. In contractarianism the parties of the contract are not to be viewed as egoists who care only about their personal advantage. At least in a considerable part of social contract theory, the mutual advantage is related to parties who care about their comprehensive doctrines, which they take to be good not only for themselves, but also for other people. As a result of the fear of arbitrary paternalism, the Kantian approach considers it essential not to get involved in these commitments on the basis of uncertain intuition. Consequently, when Nussbaum claims that her approach includes benevolence when it comes to its view on moral subject as opposed to the egoistic anthropological presuppositions of contractarianism, she confuses benevolence with paternalism from the viewpoint of Kantian liberalism. The Kantian approach entails an extreme agnosticism toward people’s comprehensive doctrines, whereas in consequentialist models such as utilitarianism or the capabilities approach, this agnosticism is compromised simply by benevolent paternalism. Likewise, Rawls’s adherence to the contractarian tradition may be seen as concomitant

with his goal of a free-standing political view for reasons of extreme tolerance, not for reasons of egoistic anthropology. \(^{593}\)

In spite of this confusion of concepts, Nussbaum in fact recognizes the main problem lurking behind her model, namely, the problem of intuition. Her first rejoinder to this charge is that Rawls does no better in avoiding intuitionism, \(^{594}\) which I have indeed shown to be a truthful contention earlier. However, this is not an argument in support of the capabilities approach, but only against Rawls. The real justification for the experiential approach is to in the general idea behind the positive method: abstract objectivity is a fiction, which blinds to the real-life problems. This is also the idea behind Dewey’s earlier criticism of the quest for certainty within the ‘spectator theory of knowledge’. Unlike in Kantianism, in the positive method contingency and objectivity do not exclude one another, but rather each assumes the existence of the other. The objectivity thus arrived at, which is never complete and always open to revision, is nonetheless critical; but the critical perspective is related to deeper and deeper engagement with the question under scrutiny, instead of the contrary ideal of impartial distance through rational abstraction. An example of the critical aspect remaining in the positive method is Nussbaum’s criticism of utilitarianism on behalf of the capabilities approach:

There is a . . . problem with the reliance on utility: it does not even include all the relevant information. One thing we want to know is how individuals feel about what is happening to them, whether they are dissatisfied or satisfied. But we also want to know what they are actually able to do and to be. People adjust their preferences to what they think they can achieve, and also to what their society tells them a suitable achievement is for someone like them. Women and other deprived people frequently exhibit such “adaptive preferences,” formed under unjust background conditions. These preferences will typically validate the status quo. Satisfaction is one thing that is important; but it is surely not the only thing. \(^{595}\)

This criticism of utilitarianism also applies to Nussbaum’s critique of the utilitarian concept of animal protection. Nevertheless, the intention to extend the focus of morality to the non-human world in general is no doubt present in Nussbaum. Thus, the capabilities approach is fully in line with the planetarian alternative of the positive method as opposed to human-centered Kantian ethics. The kind of planetarian ethics that Nussbaum is after starts from Aristotle’s holistic biological teleology and is modernized by Dewey’s ethical application of Darwinism. From the point of view of the positive method, the problem remains, however, that the very reality of non-human nature does not itself seem to embrace the moral aspect of life, of which Darwin’s own theory also reminds us. Non-human nature lives, by and large, a

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\(^{593}\) Rawls 1993 377, 378. See also Rawls 1999, 12: “Though we can imagine what we sometimes think would be a happier world – one in which everyone, or all peoples, have the same faith that we do – that is not the question, excluded as it is by the nature and culture of free institutions. To show that reasonable pluralism is not to be regretted, we must show that, given the socially feasible alternatives, the existence of reasonable pluralism allows a society of greater political justice and liberty. To argue this cogently would be to reconcile us to our contemporary political and social condition.”

\(^{594}\) Nussbaum 2006, 173.

\(^{595}\) Nussbaum 2006, 73.
selfish life, not an ethical one – at least if by ethics is meant a non-selfish attitude toward those who do not belong to one’s own species. This question of the planetarian aspect of global ethics will be explored later in this chapter.

In general, however, adopting a totally new viewpoint of the positive method is a powerful and comprehensive alternative to the rational method, as this viewpoint turns out to be not only critical, but also incommensurable with the Kantian vantage point. It requires a completely different way of looking at the world. Of course, this kind of incommensurability means that not only is the positive method fundamentally immune to Kantian criticism, but also the reverse is true. But as the latter has already been shown to be incapable of sufficiently addressing any concrete ethical questions in the first place, it is worth testing whether experiential insight would do better in this necessary task, especially in constructing effective global ethics.

There remains a possibility for intuitive, but still objective reasons for political requirements at the same time as the good is set prior to right and outcome prior to procedure in a way that the communitarian responsibility for the common good overrides the idea of mutual advantage in a social contract. But this requires a new comprehensive insight with respect to the rational method as presented thus far. In humans the focus is now on real-life freedom, namely, how people actually use their liberties. This is what the list of concrete capabilities is to contribute to the too-formal articulation of liberties; the capabilities approach aims to flesh out the particular contents of liberties, using the common experience of moral behavior as its source. After all, while the concretization of formal liberties is right to the point from the perspective of the positive method, the way Nussbaum intends to apply this concretization is still insufficient. The “flesh” of liberties, though being approached, is still not embraced, so that it would reflect the experiential reality in its full meaning. This is related to the charge that in real life, the proposed capabilities very often collide between citizens. In her rejoinder to this criticism Nussbaum reflects the conformist side of Hegel:

In the human case, we often face the question of conflict between one capability and another. But in the human case, if the capabilities list and its threshold are suitably designed, we ought to say that the presence of conflict between one capability and another is a sign that society has gone wrong somewhere. We should focus on long-term planning that will create a world in which all the capabilities can be secured to all citizens. Thus, the conflict displayed in Sophocles’ Antigone, between civic order and the free exercise of religion, is removed (in the Hegelian sense aufgehoben) by the creation of societies that honor each individual’s free exercise of religion as a part of what constitutes the political sphere and its basic values. If parents face a conflict between life-sustaining food and the education of their children, in the sense that only sending their children to work all day will enable the family to survive, that again is a sign that society is not well designed. Even in very poor regions, intelligent planning can make it possible for people to live healthy lives and also to educate their children.596

Here a crucial term that Nussbaum introduces in order to justify her perfectionism is threshold. It is not that all concrete embodiments of using one’s capabilities are supposed to be in harmony between the members of a society. It is rather that a certain threshold must be met in

596 Nussbaum 2006, 401, 402.
the case of each capability on the list and in the case of every individual. Nussbaum admits that this is an ambitious agenda, but at the same time she holds that it is completely plausible to strive toward this ideal as far as possible.\textsuperscript{597}

She brings up this point to counter Rawls’s criticism of the inaccuracy of the capabilities approach and the consequent necessity to an intuitive balancing of capabilities:

What, then, about the idea that the capabilities approach, with its ten ends, is doomed to intuitionistic balancing of particulars in a way that makes its political principles hopelessly indeterminate? This charge, which might be accurate when applied to some theories one might imagine, is altogether inaccurate when applied to the capabilities approach. What the theory says is: all ten of these plural and diverse ends are minimum requirements of justice, at least up to the threshold level. In other words, the theory does not countenance intuitionistic balancing or trade-offs among them. The constitutional structure (once they are put into a constitution or some other similar set of basic understandings) demands that all be secured to each and every citizen, up to some threshold level.\textsuperscript{598}

On deeper consideration it seems, however, that Nussbaum has missed the essential point in Rawls’s criticism. The crucial flaw in Nussbaum’s defense is related precisely to the concrete definition of threshold, namely, it is not only difficult, but in fact impossible to assess the right level for any threshold for any capability as a basic good in the absence of any particular account of the comprehensive good. Yet this absence is built on the premises of the capabilities approach right from the start.

Consider, for instance, conflicts between religious observance and physical health. If a person’s religion requires major earthly sacrifices, such as financial offerings, for the sake of the eternal life of human beings, in order that the religion might survive and even spread, then it would be understandable that the capability concerning that particular religious observance would override the capability of good health of all the world citizens when thresholds of both are estimated from the perspective of the religious doctrine concerned. As Michael Walzer points out in the following example, there are nutritional cases in which it is impossible to insist on the priority of what Nussbaum calls “basic goods:”

Even the range of necessities, if we take into account moral as well as physical necessities, is very wide, and the rank orderings are very different. A single necessary good, and one that is always necessary – food, for example – carries different meanings in different places. Bread is the staff of life, the body of Christ, the symbol of the Sabbath, the means of hospitality, and so on. Conceivably, there is a limited sense in which the first of these is primary, so that if there were twenty people in the world and just enough bread to feed the twenty, the primacy of bread-as-staff-of-life would yield a sufficient distributive principle. But that is the only circumstance in which it would do so; and even there, we can’t be sure. If the religious uses of bread were to conflict with its nutritional uses – if the gods demanded that bread be baked and burned rather than eaten – it is by no means clear which use would be primary. How, then, is bread to be incorporated into the universal list? The question is even harder to answer, the conventional answers less plausible, as we pass from necessities to opportunities, powers, reputations, and so on.\textsuperscript{599}

\textsuperscript{597} Nussbaum 2006, 293–295.

\textsuperscript{598} Nussbaum 2006, 175.

\textsuperscript{599} Walzer 1983, 8.
It is easy to see the difficulty of claiming a threshold, for instance for education. First of all, what is “adequate” education as the capabilities list defines it? Surely, the threshold cannot mean that people should be taught anything whatsoever by whomever for a sufficient period of time. In the matter of threshold, the quality of education is at stake. But the criterion for quality is derived only from comprehensive doctrines, and from that perspective the definitions of threshold for education collide substantially in different doctrines. In general, the list of capabilities is thoroughly laden with such attributes (for instance, *worth* living, *good* health, *violent* assault, *justified* anger, *critical* reflection, *equal* worth, *unwarranted* search and seizure, *meaningful* relationships of mutual *recognition*). The concrete meanings of these attributes are to be derived only from comprehensive doctrines, with the result that the threshold for the capabilities on the list itself becomes a matter of major dispute.

Nussbaum would probably reply that the threshold has to be assessed in light of a Rawlsian overlapping consensus, in which comprehensive doctrines are ignored. Thus, the adequacy of education would refer to a liberal kind of education. At this level, that is, when it comes to any assessment intertwined with comprehensive goods, Nussbaum resorts to the contractarian idea of mutual advantage. This is the upshot of her endorsement of a Rawlsian type of neutrality toward the good when it comes to “metaphysical” questions. After all, it remains unclear why here she retreats to the Kantianism she criticizes in Rawls on other points. There is no need for that confinement, as she has already adopted the principles of the positive method against Rawls. More importantly, without this confinement, she would have avoided the charge that in its formality, the capabilities approach is a crucially unrealistic picture of how liberties are used in real life by human beings – precisely the same criticism which she herself levels against Rawls and other contractarians.

Nussbaum’s clear distance from Rawls notwithstanding, there is still another reason to claim that this distance is not sufficient to escape fully the criticism of the Kantian moral self leveled by the positive method. Nussbaum argues for the priority of basic human needs over any kind of more detailed substantial goods that people of different cultures pursue; indeed she considers the former a criterion for the latter. The *telos* that Nussbaum’s interpretation of human goods offers is so thin, as it were, that it does not provide any substantive theory of good from the Aristotelian point of view. But while this “thin” account of the good functions as an ethical criterion for assessing the acceptability of the substantive goods in the world, the crucial problem concerning the formalism of Kantian morality remains unaltered. Here one may see the analogy with the problems of PWE’s formalism noted earlier by Heim. In fact, Walzer articulates a point that can be applied to both PWE and the capabilities approach:

> There is no single set of primary or basic goods conceivable across all moral and material worlds – or, any such set would have to be conceived in terms so abstract that they would be of little use in thinking about particular distributions. . . . These can be incorporated only if they are abstracted from every particular meaning – hence, for all practical purposes, rendered meaningless.\(^600\)

\(^600\) Walzer 1983, 8.
Indeed, this abstraction is the very thing of which Nussbaum and her allies *de facto* use, whether consciously or not. But it is exactly what was criticized by Nussbaum earlier, because the rationalization leads to a distinction of elementary universal principles from more substantive goods. Consequently, Nussbaum also includes the main problems of the rational method: because there is no substantive good emerging from the surrounding community to determine the moral right and wrong, the moral agent is abstracted from reality such that ethics becomes meaningless. As stated in the experiential type of criticism of the deontological method, it is unrealistic to expect that people are unencumbered and autonomous choice-makers with respect to the ends of life. Now the same problem arises, though in a slightly moderated form. Nussbaum does not see individuals as totally unencumbered. Individuals have obligations to the social rights of disabled people antecedent of personal choice. All the same, individuals are still unencumbered with regard to what ends they should choose on the more substantive level. Further, they are ethically obligated to adjust their choices to the demands of the superior “thin” human goods. Sandel states this kind of cosmopolitanism sharply, and it is worth quoting him at some length:

If our encompassing loyalties should always take precedence over more local ones, then the distinction between friends and strangers should ideally be overcome. Our special concern for the welfare of friends would be a kind of prejudice, a measure of our distance from universal human concern. Montesquieu does not shrink from this conclusion. “A truly virtuous man would come to the aid of the most distant stranger as quickly as to his own friend,” he writes. “If men were perfectly virtuous, they wouldn’t have friends.”

It is difficult to imagine a world in which persons were so virtuous that they had no friends, only a universal disposition to friendliness. The problem is not simply that such a world would be difficult to bring about but that it would be difficult to recognize as a human world. The love of humanity is a noble sentiment, but most of the time we live our lives by smaller solidarities. This may reflect certain limits to the bounds of moral sympathy. More important, it reflects the fact that we learn to love humanity not in general but through its particular expressions.

J. G. Herder, the German Romantic philosopher, was among the first to affirm differences of language, culture, and national identity as distinctive expressions of our humanity. He was scornful of the cosmopolitan citizen whose devotion to humankind is wholly abstract: “The savage who loves himself, his wife and child, with quiet joy, and in his modest way works for the good of his tribe” is “a truer being than that shadow of a man, the refined citizen of the world, who, enraptured with the love of all his fellow-shadows, loves but a chimera.” . . .

. . . The cosmopolitan ethic is wrong, not for asserting that we have certain obligations to humanity as a whole but rather for insisting that the more universal communities we inhabit must always take precedence over more particular ones.  

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601 Sandel 1996, 342, 343. See also Mouffe’s criticism of Habermas’s related position: “The notion of ‘constitutional patriotism’ defended by Jürgen Habermas is another attempt to break the connection between ethnicity and citizen identity by linking the granting of citizenship to allegiance to certain universalistic principles. The danger in approaches of this sort is that, in postulating the availability of so-called postconventional identities, theorists tend to ignore the important emotions and passions that are roused by existing symbols of nationhood. Their incapacity to understand the strength of these sources of identification leaves them unable to offer a real alternative to the forces of ethnic nationalism. It would be more promising to counter such forces by fostering a form of ‘civic nationalism,’ one that would not only acknowledge the need for belonging and for acquiring a national identity but would also try to satisfy that need by mobilizing the common values of a shared democratic tradition.” (Mouffe 2001, 294.)
Furthermore, this is not a realistic interpretation of what ethics is by nature. It is too simplistic to suppose that these two dimensions of good would be in sufficient harmony in real life. From the perspective of realistic moral experience, people are encumbered first and foremost by their comprehensive ends as substantive goods. Only in light of these encumbrances are humans in a position of assessing what less substantive, that is, thin goods, they should pursue.

Thus, from the perspective of the positive method, the capabilities approach needs more substantive teleology in order to distance itself from individualist and abstract deontology. There should be an overtly substantive account of the good life behind the claims of any social theory. On the one hand, Nussbaum’s argument for social justice is reminiscent of Rawls’s difference principle. However, while Rawls clearly wants to stay within the deontological sphere, Nussbaum opts for a teleological view. The difference principle was constructed mainly for purposes of economic equality and emancipation. As such, the principle is no doubt a sign of deviance from deontology in the direction of communitarian values. Nevertheless, the capabilities approach makes the case for social rights even stronger. The claim that weak people have to be helped, not only economically, but also in all other areas, is more openly a communitarian ideal. The society and the communal network have the prior claim to the rights of individuals. Significantly, Nussbaum even openly supports communitarian teleology of the priority of the good over right. Since she opposes the individually laden contractual liberalism on this basis, the self-identification of the capabilities approach may thus be seen as methodologically similar to the classical Hegelian critique of Kant’s individualist contractarianism.602

On the other hand, Nussbaum actually refrains from blurring the distinction between rights and the good completely. And more, she even sets the right prior to the good by presenting the fostering of the basic human good as a criterion of ethical judgment for any world view. The problem of Nussbaum’s solution to the problem of global ethics is that it appears too all-embracing of the two methods. Consequently, her model is easily seen as inconsistent, both from the perspective of the positive method and the rational one. It should be either more experiential or more deontological, instead of trying to be both.603 In fact, such an ambitious synthesis is not necessarily a problem in itself. The difficulty lies in that the methods are combined in such a way that they are not aimed in same direction.

At this point it is worth noting that, while the cosmopolitanism of Pogge had considerable affinities with PWE’s general aim, Nussbaum’s has even more. She invokes a global interpretation of Rawls that meets PWE’s criticism of Kantianism much better than Pogge’s alternative. The suggested list of basic capabilities given above could be understood much in

602 Pinkard 1986, 265.

603 Similar to my point, Kautz (2001, 30) remarks that communitarians tend to criticize liberal theory on the one hand, but save its overall structure (i.e., rights) on the other, which makes the communitarian critical claims somewhat disembodied.
the same way as the PWE-based commandments of the Declaration. In other words, both are argued primarily as a consolidation of UDHR by offering a view outside of rights language. Both Küng and Nussbaum strongly emphasize the centrality of human dignity without accepting the Kantian interpretation of it at face value. With the rhetoric around PWE including the opposite term “responsibilities,” the same communitarian emphasis is characteristic of the capabilities approach; both views oppose the Kantian view of the moral person as an autonomous rational agent.

At the same time, in both cases some similar critical questions arise as to what makes them real alternatives to Kantianism. A related ambivalence in PWE and the capabilities approach with regard to Kantianism is the general, human-centered anthropology at the core of both, despite the sincere attempt to extend the Kantian viewpoint beyond humans to a more holistic planetarianism. And finally, there is indeed some notable difference from Kantianism with regard to the meaning of human rights within the capabilities approach. It is this aspect that PWE should follow in order to distance itself clearly enough from the Kantianism it criticizes and still advocate a limited concept of humanum as a general ethical criterion, that is, an independently evaluative ethical criterion for particular religious traditions.

Finally, there is a flaw in Nussbaum’s alternative, which is related to the same difficulties shown earlier to be PWE’s problem as well, namely, the formality of the list of principles for global ethics. This is related to the Hegelian tendency to ultimately embrace the experientially observed religious and ideological pluralism in a conformist type of common good in a future global society. The concept of benevolence that Nussbaum attributes to Aristotelianism as opposed to Hobbes and other classical contractarians is, owing to its connection to the formal good, more reminiscent of what MacIntyre views as an Aristotelian “mask” for a radically modernized version in line with liberalism. As MacIntyre comments on this problem in general:

Any conception of chastity as a virtue – in anything like the traditional meaning of the word – in a world uninformed by either Aristotelian or biblical values will make very little sense to the adherents of the dominant [modern liberalist] culture . . . Other virtues fare a little better, although since utility becomes the hallmark of a virtue . . . the vagueness and generality of the notion of utility infects any conception of “doing good” and more particularly the new conception of the virtue of benevolence. Benevolence in the eighteenth century is assigned very much the scope which the Christian scheme of the virtues assigned to charity. But, unlike charity, benevolence as a virtue became a license for almost any kind of manipulative intervention in the affairs of others.604

For Aristotle, not much in the concept of benevolence is understood in this modern sense, and the fears of arbitrary paternalism mentioned earlier appear to be relevant, not only from the point of view of contractarianism, but also from the Aristotelian viewpoint itself. Note, of course, that Nussbaum’s undeniable reservations about utilitarianism or Hume do not question this juxtaposition of her model with the general problem of utilitarianism in the precise context of the above quotation because the question is now merely about liberal generality, or formality, of the concept of the good and the virtues it requires, be they given the names of

604 MacIntyre 1985, 232.
chastity, utility, common good, capabilities, or whatever. All this indicates that, while it may be the right direction to begin with an antecedent and independent account of the good in giving a more concrete content for PWE’s endorsement of the golden rule and specific commandments, the sufficient concreteness will not be found through Nussbaumian basic goods, but rather through placing comprehensive accounts of the good in a more central position.

What then would be a more egalitarian way to advocate human rights from the point of view of the positive method? Here it is worth considering Michael Walzer’s book Politics and Passion. In fact, PWE expresses its sympathies with some of Walzer’s earlier formulations outspokenly:

. . . what is meant by “thin” and “thick” ethics is, of course, comprehensible and as such well expressed. And at the same time, when it comes to the certain universal character in this context, I can . . . gladly feel confirmed in my striving for a common ethos for humanity. Personally, I would not speak about “mini-morality” or “minimal-morality,” and particularly not about “moral minimalism:” after all in German “ism” has a devalued connotation related to a new ideology more than it does in English; Walzer also emphasizes that “minimalism” signifies “not an ethics that is organized afterwards or that would be emotionally dull,” but rather an “ethics in its purity.” In any event the question here does not have to be about “minimized,” decreased ethical standards lowered to a minimum, let alone standards that are reduced or hardly adhered to. Strictly speaking, what is at stake is less a question of minimal standards, but the minimum of consensus, the necessary basis for societal consensus. An ethical consensus means the agreement necessary for contemporary society on the fundamental, ethical standards that, in spite of all political, social, or religious differences, can function as the least possible foundation for human life together and for shared commerce.605

Here Küng subscribes to Michael Walzer’s view as he tries to illustrate the nature of the global ethics he wants to advance. His text speaks of thin and thick moralities, which is the way Walzer illustrates his version of the overlapping teleological systems along communitarian lines.606 Recently, Walzer, however, has clarified his intentions. Although these are not dealt with in PWE, the claim grounded in the above critical analysis of capabilities is that Walzer’s alternative is the direction PWE should take in order to avoid the major difficulties mentioned. Thus, it is necessary to proceed to Walzer’s position.


606 On Walzer’s position, see for example Apel 2000.
While Nussbaum was mainly concerned with the critical extension of Rawls’s theory, Walzer, in turn, may be applied to the experiential criticism of both Habermas’s discourse ethics and Nussbaum’s capabilities approach. Similar to Nussbaum, Walzer also draws on the strengths of the positive method; he wants to “suggest some of the ways liberalism might better encompass an understanding of politics, sociology, and social psychology.”\(^{607}\) Owing to this realistic vantage point Walzer is able to draw attention to similar aspects of liberalism than Nussbaum does, namely, the actual and effective use of liberties, which requires rather complex criteria. However, precisely within this vein of enquiry, Walzer wants to extend the individualist focus, still prevailing in Nussbaum:

For the inequalities that need to be overcome or curtailed are not simply individual inequalities. They impact different groups differently. They divide society not only between rich and poor but also between black and white, Anglo and Hispanic, French and Arab, German and Turk, Hindu and Muslim. And the differences among groups make a political difference. The old idea of the old left – that once the revolution abolished the class hierarchy, there would be no more inequality – seems to be wrong. It has never been tested, of course, but one reason for that is the failure of class politics to challenge the deepest inequalities of contemporary societies. Multiculturalism is an effort to address those inequalities.\(^{608}\)

This invocation to the collective aspect of liberalism also leads Walzer to acknowledge an essential Hegelian aspect not present in Nussbaum, namely, the idea of conflict as the fundamental ingredient in any societal issues.\(^{609}\) Thus, Walzer appears to have an additional point of criticism of the capabilities approach in view of its sympathies with a homogenous society. Against Nussbaum, who here reflects a rather Deweyan reading of Hegel, Walzer’s emphasis is on the irreconcilable conflicts of interests in the different capabilities.

At first glance it seems that Walzer’s vantage point in criticizing liberalism is indeed the fundamentally individualist orientation of liberalism. Walzer forcefully shows how the idea that subjects in any sense and in any society are free to decide what associations they belong to and what resulting commitments they have is a fiction. In reality, people are guided by antecedent communal influences and make their so-called individual choices accordingly. Thus, traditional liberalism’s adherence to the ideal of individual choice as a guiding principle for all political decisions rests on shaky ground. Furthermore, more egalitarian versions of liberalism with emphasis on free opportunities for making use of individual freedoms are also quixotic because not only autonomous choice, but also fundamental freedom to leave one’s fundamental associations appears illusory in light of people’s factual behavior. All in all, communities such as social classes tend to reproduce themselves by influencing the choices of their members.\(^{610}\)

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\(^{607}\) Walzer 2004, ix.
\(^{608}\) Walzer 2004, xii.
\(^{609}\) Walzer 2004, xi.
Pierre Bourdieu is among those who have made it clear that there is no question of the plausibility of Walzer’s argument concerning the social behavior of humans in general. After all, it seems that the fact of involuntary association and the related sociological type of objection beg the question when applied to liberalism as a philosophical theory. This is what can be concluded on the basis of the following notion of Sandel:

... it is unclear how the sociological objection proposes to deny the deontological notion of [individual] independence. If it means to offer a psychological objection, then it cannot reach the deontological view, which makes an epistemological claim. The independence of the subject does not mean that I can, as a psychological matter, summon at any moment the detachment required to overcome my prejudices or step outside my convictions, but rather that my values and ends do not define my identity, that I must regard myself as the bearer of a self distinct from my values and ends, whatever they may be.611

As Sandel points out here, the real question at stake in deontological liberalism is a principal commitment to let individuals choose freely for or against their dominant associations, and within this view freedom is understood as an external, experiential reality rather than a sociological fact about individual autonomy. In many ways this kind of freedom is exactly what Walzer himself is after:

Particular associations can indeed be a threat, not because they are involuntary but because they are xenophobic, hierarchical, or totalitarian. It is not pure voluntarism that freedom requires but the possibility of opposition and escape. The possibility: while opposition is usually a good thing, escape is not always or necessarily so. We need not always make it easy to walk away from involuntary associations. Many valuable memberships are not freely entered into; many binding obligations are not entirely the product of consent; many strong feelings, many useful ideas, come unchosen into our lives.612

The second part of this statement nonetheless suggests that Walzer wants to oppose even the idea of external freedom of individuals against fully-fledged liberal individualism – the idea that individuals should principally view themselves completely as unrestricted by any prior commitments. This brings a real alternative to liberalist individualism to the fore, and it may first be juxtaposed with Sandel’s proposal taken up earlier in connection with Rawls. It was noted that, according to Sandel, the individual is not even at the principal level to be disentangled from her ends and associations, so that the individual as a moral subject would be expected to be guided in her actions primarily according to principles unrelated to these ends. Rather, the subjectivity of a person is to be found in light of the ends and associations that are antecedent of any individual choice – by way of retrospectively evaluating what is me and what is only nominally me in ends that I am committed to. Now, the point of controversy is not in the question of whether any contingent social factors are guiding my commitment to the ends I have, but whether some of these choice-preceding social factors in me and their embodiments as my personal ends are in fact a constituent part of what I am as a moral subject – against the claims of liberalism – and, moreover, whether there is a way to separate these ends from those that are only nominally me – against the claims of uncritical conventio-

611 Sandel 1998, 12.

612 Walzer 2004, 2.
nalism. In order to see the critical points of Walzer’s alternative to liberalism, it is important to determine more carefully whether Walzer’s communitarianism draws on the same kind of concept of the moral self as does Sandel or whether Walzer is more indebted to liberal individualism. For that matter, it is worth reconsidering Walzer’s concept of social freedom as expressed in the following passage:

Critical decisions do, in fact, have to be made about all the unchosen structures, patterns, institutions, and groupings. The character and quality of involuntary associations shape the character and quality of voluntary associations in significant ways. What is involuntary is historically and biographically prior; it is the inevitable background of any social life, free or unfree, equal or unequal. We move toward freedom when we make opposition and escape possible, when we allow internal dissent and resistance, divorce, conversion, withdrawal, and resignation. We move toward equality when we open paths for social change within involuntary associations, for status realignments among them, and for redistribution across them. But mass escape is never possible; nor will realignment and redistribution ever lead to abolition. We can’t bring the unchosen background wholly into the foreground, make it a matter of individual self-determination. The point is obvious, I think, but still worth stating: free choice depends on the experience of involuntary association and on the understanding of that experience, and so does egalitarian politics. Without that experience and understanding, no individuals would be strong enough to face the uncertainties of freedom, nor would there be clear and coherent alternatives among which to choose or political protection against the enemies of free choice. Even the minimal trust that makes voluntary association possible would never develop. So there wouldn’t be a struggle for equality that encompassed men and women with identities and loyalties, comrades and commitments – there wouldn’t be a realistic or sustainable egalitarianism.

Here Walzer invokes a concept of equality or egalitarianism to illustrate his ultimate purpose – modifying traditional liberalism. The focus returns to the question left unanswered by Nussbaum’s capabilities approach. The idea behind Walzer’s claims that a communitarian rendering of liberalism would be more egalitarian than an individualist one is precisely that only with the former version is liberalism able to fulfill its task of realizing effectively the freedoms of citizens. It is a brutal social fact that society tends to support the hegemony of one or many interest groups at the cost of the others – usually minority groups – even under liberalism. Walzer illustrates this claim by invoking the opposite concepts of stigmatization and emancipation or empowerment:

The members are categorized and stigmatized collectively, not individually, and then they are systematically discriminated against socially and economically. According to the classic liberal understanding of the market, people rise and fall, succeed or fail, one by one; stigma, by contrast, is a common fate. Why won’t the emancipation model work for stigmatized groups? 615

The best way, perhaps the only way to overcome durable inequalities is to enable the believers or activists of stigmatized groups – like American blacks or, given the significance of religion in American life, black Baptists – to connect with their peripheries, to accumulate resources, and to provide life-cycle services similar to those provided by the more advantaged groups. This is the empowerment model: It begins with individuals associated with a group and diminished by the association; it empowers them by strengthening the group. . . . Empowerment is still an individualist model, but it recognizes that individuals live in groups and that their place in society is determined in part by the place of their groups. Further, it seizes upon the loyalty of many individuals to a par-

613 Walzer 2004, 18.
615 Walzer 2004, 30.
Ambition is the fuel of emancipation model (so are the hope that ambitions can be fulfilled and the indignation that comes when they are thwarted). But ambition is only a part of the individualist story, and it is overemphasized in many accounts. Attachment is the other part, and because of the power of attachment, no society of equals can be achieved or sustained without collective empowerment.\footnote{Walzer 2004, 38, 39.}

This pair of quotations actually states two related social facts. First, Walzer articulates a concept of inequality from the point of view of the positive method in a more fully-fledged form than Nussbaum. Just because individuals \textit{de facto} make use of their freedom through primarily associating with communities, in a realistically egalitarian social theory, the corresponding commitments are not subordinated to individual rights that are invoked independently of these particular associations. Second, adhering to philosophically justifiable individual liberties is to be blind to the sociologically observable laws of associational mobilization – the latter being actually a precondition for any viable democracy. Those associations and communities that determine the good of their members are essentially the ones to foster any active political participation required for democratic self-legislation. However, if individual choice is always and unconditionally expected to override the commitments created by such associations, then there are no genuine sources of political mobilization available. It is precisely by prioritizing the particular good – whatever it might be – over the right and over individual autonomy that enables these associations to mobilize their members to political action. The strongest attachments that individual citizens have are usually related to their ends as particular comprehensive doctrines. Thus, it is only by giving support to these associations that individual empowerment takes place.

Both of these aspects lead to a rather radical proposition from the standpoint of standard liberalist accounts, namely, the claim on group or cultural rights alongside individual ones. This means, among other things, that particular cultural or religious communities are allowed and, to a certain extent, even encouraged to reproduce themselves in ways that are not congenial to the ‘priority of right over the good’ principle; for instance, parents belonging to certain religious groups are publicly allowed to educate their children according to the “parochial” values of their own group instead of with the “impartial,” liberally determined, public values of education.\footnote{Walzer 2004, 44–65.} In this question Walzer is more Hegelian than Nussbaum, who clearly opposes group rights\footnote{Nussbaum 2006, 262.} because they necessarily restrict individual liberties. Hegel similarly opposed the Kantian individualist interpretation of rights on the grounds of the latter’s unrealistic account of societal realities.\footnote{Pinkard 1986, 265.}
The moderation of the individual rights of liberalism applies not only to domestic cases, but also to global ethics wherein individual states may be seen as embodying a global conception of cultural rights. On this basis Walzer is ready to criticize individualistically-oriented articulations of cosmopolitanism, such as Pogge’s and Nussbaum’s versions:

I suspect that liberal political theorists would have less trouble reconciling themselves to the pluralism of states if all states turned out to be liberal democracies. Once again, we can best think analogously in terms of the domestic debate about multiculturalism: it would be nice if all the coexisting cultural groups were liberal, open, and non-hierarchical associations. But no genuine pluralism will ever culminate in an identity of this kind or even in a close and pervasive similarity. Pluralism makes for difference – or, conversely, it is existing differences that make pluralism necessary.  

Another dimension in which Walzer endorses the realist side of Hegel as opposed to Nussbaum is the view of society as a conflicted entity. In a way this view follows naturally from compromising the ‘priority of right over the good’ by including cultural rights on the agenda. If there is no clear-cut neutrality of the state toward the comprehensive doctrines of a society, as is the case in Walzer’s multiculturalist model, then the question necessarily arises of which doctrines gain more influence than others. When the ‘priority of right over the good’ is mitigated, the mutual contest of particular ideologies is allowed to occupy the public political sphere to the same extent. There is no bird’s eye view, such as Rawls’s public reason or Habermas’s deliberative reason, that would dissolve these conflicts once and for all, because these views themselves endorse a totalizing hegemony of particular Kantian ideology undermined by the factual operations of liberal democracy. “. . . the better we understand the differences that exist, and respect the people on the other side, the more we will see that what we need is not a rational agreement but a modus vivendi.”

After all, Jean Hampton has aimed his counter-criticism at the kind of communitarianism that Walzer is proposing from the more Kantian point of view. His points can be applied to any form of what I call the positive method in general. The major charge Hampton brings is that the positive method, by stressing the individual’s social embeddedness to the extreme, eventually deprives ethics of all its critical potential. It is not difficult to find examples in history in which societies were ruled by social claims prior to any individual liberties and with horri-

620 Walzer 2004, 139.
622 Walzer 2004, 104.
ble results from the ethical point of view. Even today, moral injustices are justified by appealing to “the interests of the nation.”

So, if communitarians would have the state respond to “social roles” and community values,” how can they insure that when it does so, it will not, say, compromise religious liberty or enact laws that reflect the prejudices of a majority against a minority? Why couldn’t either use of state power and authority endanger not only the liberty and equality of certain people but also their very well-being?624

From the deontological point of view, the positive method is too optimistic with respect to the moral level of the dominating views. On the contrary, there is clear evidence that power and domination easily corrupt people morally. All kinds of arbitrary uses of power are a constant temptation to the ruling people, be they societal authorities, mobilizers of cultural hegemony, or simply the democratic majority.625

As we have seen, liberals such as Feinberg have also been persuaded of the importance of respect for custom and community life and have sought to incorporate such respect in their theories. Still, these liberals are committed to assessing these commitments by reference to a reason-based theory of what is good for, or owed to, individuals. Such liberals will surely want to know how communitarians can assess and criticize the status quo in their society unless they rely upon some such reason-based individualistic theory. Thus far, communitarians have not yet developed a way of supplementing their respect for custom and culture with a fully worked out theory of how we are to critically assess custom and culture.626

To put it differently, a deontological criticism concerns the question of how anyone can ensure that the disapproved and eliminated end of life in society is really not justified on rational grounds, and, conversely, how is anyone to make sure that the telos the community is striving for is in fact right, or, although it might be right whether it is right to control those who do not agree who are usually the members of society who are in a minority position with their views. The only possible way to make sense of these uncertainties is to abstract oneself from the concrete social ties related to experience using the help of reason.

Because Walzer still wants to remain in the liberal democratic vein, he is committed to addressing the issues taken up by Hampton. This he does by viewing the reality of civil society and the state through Hegelian glasses far more than is done in the Kantian liberalist account.627 Walzer presents civil society as an arena of associational life, wherein different groups try to advance their own public interests as far as possible. This necessarily calls not only for mobilization of one’s own community members, but also for readiness to negotiations and compromise, for in pluralistic societies no single comprehensive doctrine is going to win the battle once and for all.628 Interestingly, Walzer’s model may be seen as an institutionally explicated version of what Neuhaus invoked and discussed in criticizing PWE on a Gi-

625 Hampton 1999, 253.
626 Hampton 1999, 255.
627 On Hegel’s position, see Pinkard 1986, 265.
ardian basis. In light of this Neuhausian interpretation of PWE, I would conjecture that Walzerian multiculturalism would charge not only the capabilities approach, but also PWE with conformist Hegelianism. The added value of Neuhaus as a theologian and Walzer as a general political analyst is the introduction of psycho-social factors and their conflicting nature, with the resulting view of society as less harmonious than either Nussbaum or Küng appear to see things.

On the other hand, there is both in the multiculturalist approach and in PWE an essential difference from more standard liberalism, namely, incorporating the importance of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue on the front of public life. This follows from the acknowledgement of different ideological and religious traditions as the primary players in the formation of public morality contra the presuppositions of liberalism.629

Still, Walzer forcefully acknowledges that equality between different groups and communities is not to be attained, and totalitarian tendencies are not to be avoided at the level of civil society because politically more powerful groups will automatically oppress the marginalized, and associations will indoctrinate their own members; the problem of hegemonial rule operates at every level of civil society. But according to Walzer, this is not to be prevented solely by the individualist principle of liberties, since the totalitarian tendencies of hegemony appear prominently at the level of identity politics, that is, the variety of possible individual choices is diminished in reality, while the full range of liberties may remain formally on the public charter. Instead of the liberalist idea of state-neutrality toward the operations taking place within civil society, Walzer advocates a relatively strong state, which could better prevent and dismantle the hegemony of the powerful by supporting the marginalized associations from above.630

All the same, Walzer is committed to liberal democracy, and his proposed active concept of a state does not say that the state would be sovereign with respect to civil society. On the contrary, Walzer endorses a mutually corrective dialogical relationship between civil society and the state. “No significant move toward greater equality has ever been made without state action, but states don’t act in egalitarian ways unless they are pressed to do so by mobilizations that can take place only in civil society – and that already represent a move toward

629 The following affinity of Taylor’s multicultural presumption also reflects to a significant extent the general idea behind PWE: “Given the tension in liberalism between universalism and cultural distinctiveness, public institutions cannot refuse to respond to the demands for recognition by its citizens when cultural survival is at stake – or even when cultural enhancement or flourishing is at stake. As societies become increasingly multicultural, the demand for recognition will have to outweigh ‘the rigidities of political liberalism’ if the rights of cultural communities are to be supported. The politics of recognition simply asks that we respect the experiences, works, and identities of those belonging to other cultures, and that we should comport ourselves under a ‘presumption of equal worth’ before passing judgment of any kind. It is arrogant to rule out the possibility a priori that we could not learn something about ‘the good, the holy, the admirable’ from people from different cultures. Like Gadamer, Taylor says we should be willing ‘to be open to comparative cultural study of the kind that must displace our horizons in the resulting fusions.’ ” (Kaplan 2003, 157).

630 Walzer 2004, 66–82.
greater equality.” This dialogical rendering of civil society is what makes Walzer’s an ambitious enterprise, perhaps too ambitious. As he himself puts it:

My own dilemma might best be described this way: I am looking for a position between that of Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, who . . . claim that democratic states sometimes have “an obligation to support cultures that flout the rights of the individual,” and the position of Amy Gutmann, who . . . argues that democratic states must always “respect individuals as . . . purposive agents with equal freedom to live their lives as they see fit.” But perhaps there is no viable space between those positions.

In fact, the problem with finding a balanced dialectical account of the state and civil society is at the core of Hegel’s system. Klaus Hartman, among others, has pointed out that Hegel never succeeded in articulating a logical interrelation of the two, that is, showing that there really is a mutually equal check on powers between the individual’s interests arising within the civil society and the state’s interests in curtailing the development of civil society. This is, for instance, because Hegel does not offer sufficient reasons for why the uncompelled trajectories of the civil society would result in a situation such that individuals and their groups would authentically grasp that the interests of the state are ultimately similar to their own interests. Contrary to the Hegelian ambition, “Hegel’s state possesses, for the average citizen, no guarantees against false consciousness. The citizen cannot know, he can only trust that the state is rational . . .” In other words, citizen is offered no reasons for the claim that the state’s actions are ultimately for the best of its citizens. This was discussed more broadly in the first chapter of part II.

Now, what really makes Walzer’s dilemma inescapable is that without a deontological derivation of justice from the ‘priority of right over the good’ not a single chance remains to escape the fact that the state itself is entangled with identity politics in a way that makes it impossible to fight those politics. While this is no defense of liberalism – it is now clear that the principal possibility to foster egalitarianism is actually no possibility at all – it does become difficult to see any reason for Walzer to remain within the liberal tradition in general. The point is that the state, by its active balancing of different groupings in the society, stigmatizes itself by identifying the oppressed. This kind of large-scale identity politics is carried out only through excluding other perspectives. An active state creates and is dependent on hegemonic structures to the same extent as civil society, and thus the dialogical and self-corrective relationship between the two does not solve the main dilemma.

Paul Ricouer gives a classical example of a sociological analysis by historian Karl Mannheim, which is reminiscent of Walzer and which illustrates the critical point. Mannheim

631 Walzer 2004, 83.
633 Kolb 1986, 111.
634 Kolb 1986, 112.
635 Kolb 1986, 114.
introduced the concept of relationalism as an alternative to relativism, which seemed to be inevitable after Mannheim’s having shown the absence of any objective truth residing in history. In Mannheim’s terms the task relationism sets for a historian or sociologist is to outline the complicated relations of events and ideas along with other contingent factors from a non-evaluative point of view. Refraining from evaluative judgment, again and again the researcher is supposed to embrace the relative nature of reality against Enlightenment objectivism in the matter of emerging social questions. Ricoeur’s criticism at its simplest is that Mannheim was insufficiently able to recognize that hegemonic ideology cannot be avoided even in relationalism: the non-evaluative standpoint is a fiction and the researcher is embedded in ideology – both influenced by and (re)producing – when “observing” social reality.\(^\text{636}\)

In fact, Walzer’s own egalitarianism may be questioned on the same grounds with which he himself criticizes Herbert Marcuse: “Marcuse’s argument follows from an extraordinary confidence in his own account to recognize ‘the forces of emancipation’ and so to refuse toleration only to their enemies.”\(^\text{637}\) Hence, egalitarianism as Walzer’s guiding concept loses its argumentative power, and the idea of equality becomes tantamount to the doctrine of external pluralism. There is no way to assess objectively the equality of state-supported flourishing or non-flourishing of different associations and cultures in society; the only characterizing factor in multicultural liberalism is the very multitude of those associations. This factor remains ultimately a task of the state to ensure together with the criteria according to which some identities are included and some excluded from the societal constellation.

Nevertheless, there remains a liberal ideal of the state as a more or less impartial superstructure. Walzer does not set out to carefully justify the liberal concept of egalitarianism as impartiality, but instead endeavors to show the preconditions for its functioning in reality.\(^\text{638}\) However, the point is that precisely with this move, liberalism loses any chance of a philosophical defense in the first place. Having lost any objective criteria for equality, the political liberalist has only one means of defending the bird’s eye perspective is, namely, by giving up the philosophical justification. In effect, the liberal impartiality is not an actual impartiality, but only an apparent one. The reason to adopt it is not philosophical, but radically practical. And this is what the postmodern type of liberalism indeed argues. Bridges, who introduces a contextual justification for liberalism, believes that the remaining way to persuade people to adjust to liberalism, given its lack of self-justification, is through rhetoric.

If liberalism is to be conceived consistently as a body of political (as opposed to metaphysical) doctrine, its proponents must embrace explicitly an appropriately rhetorical understanding and analysis of its content. They must embrace fully an analysis of the content of liberal doctrine in terms of the rhetorical categories of speaker, audience, occasion and intended rhetorical effect.\(^\text{639}\)

\(^{636}\) Ricoeur 1986:159–180.

\(^{637}\) Walzer 1997, 118, N.16.

\(^{638}\) Walzer 2004, xii.

\(^{639}\) Bridges 1997, 58.
The justification is reduced to rhetorics and, as a consequence, particularism differs from relativism only by in form, but not in substance: in a sense the universal scope of ethics is left, but there are no justifications claimed for it. This second modification is carefully explained by Richard Rorty in his postmodern view of liberalism:

On this view, the philosopher of liberal democracy may wish to develop a theory of the human self that comports with the institutions he or she admires. But such a philosopher is not thereby justifying these institutions by reference to more fundamental premises, but the reverse: He or she is putting politics first and tailoring a philosophy to suit.640

Here we have lost any objective grounds for advocating liberal egalitarianism. Instead, Rorty declares that the argument against anti-liberal tendencies is purely a cultural matter:

We do so because there is no way to see [the anti-liberals] as fellow citizens of our constitutional democracy, people whose life plans might, given ingenuity and good will, be fitted in with those of other citizens. They are not crazy because they have mistaken the ahistorical nature of human beings. They are crazy because the limits of sanity are set by what we can take seriously. This, in turn, is determined by our upbringing, our historical situation.641

Now at last it has become obvious, why the experiential way of viewing ethics is an impossibility for deontology. Any introduction of contingent ingredients would add a crucial uncertainty to the argument, which is contrary to the requirements of reason in ethical matters. Reason seeks certainty, which experience, naturally, cannot offer, owing to the latter’s subjective scope as well as its embeddedness in contingency. Kant makes this very clear:

The counterpart of a metaphysics of morals, the other member of the division of practical philosophy as a whole, would be moral anthropology, which, however, would deal only with the subjective conditions in human nature that hinder men or help them in fulfilling the laws of a metaphysics of morals. It would deal with the development, spreading, and strengthening of moral principles (in education in schools and in popular instruction), and with other similar teachings and precepts based on experience. It cannot be dispensed with, but it must not precede a metaphysics of morals or be mixed with it; for one would then run the risk of bringing forth false or at least indulgent moral laws, which would misrepresent as unattainable what has only not been attained just because the law has not been seen and presented in its purity (in which its strength consists) or because spurious or impure incentives were used for what is itself in conformity with duty and good. This would leave no certain moral principles, either to guide judgment or to discipline the mind in observance of duty, the precepts of which must be given a priori by pure reason alone.642

Nevertheless, rational certainty is precisely what is abandoned from the perspective of the positive method. Consequently, the problem of contingency, even as radical as it appears in Rorty, may not be a problem for the positive method as such. The justification for action is not expected to be derived from philosophical arguments in the classical meaning of the term, but from the particular engagement with ongoing social realities. Universal justification is a fiction from the point of view of the positive method, but this may not refute the acceptability of moral claims. To be sure, people are by nature moral creatures and morality implies persuasion. While this is no counter-argument from the perspective of the rational method, it does

642 Kant 1797, 44, 45.
signify the fact that the viewpoints of the two methods are, in certain, respects incommensurable and not just opposite. Another question, however, is whether the relativist features in postmodern articulations of liberalism make it clear that a consistent moral theory requires both perspectives, both the rational and the positive methods, to be taken seriously into account. If not, it would seem that the relativism along the lines of the positive method now evident simply has to be accepted.

There is still a question to be addressed from the point of view of the positive method. Here we have to return to the original question, mentioned in the beginning of my treatment of Walzer, of whether Walzer really demonstrates a deontological concept of the self or instead accepts the experiential alternative put forward by Sandel. Indeed, not only Walzer, but also Rorty and other postmodern liberalists still endorse the idea that the ultimate viewpoint for organizing society is not a particular good of any comprehensive doctrine, but the ‘common good’ derived independently of any such doctrine. While this common good is now “thinner” than it is with other authors examined in this chapter – Walzer allowing for cultural rights within the society and Rorty in turn acknowledging the radical relativity behind the liberal common good – there is still an expectation that the right design of society requires the kind of impartial view compatible with the deontological self depicted by Sandel. Walzer assumes that at least those who are in charge of society’s design subordinate their particular views of the good to the one good that enables an egalitarian balance among all particular goods. Rorty acknowledges that there is no philosophical justification for the liberalist egalitarianism, but he nevertheless endorses the ‘priority of right over the good’ as the right culture.

After all, as Sandel has shown, the liberal concept of the self is flawed from the very perspective of moral experience, because it does not give a realistic account of how moral life functions. This criticism derives from the positive method itself and thus amounts to the claim that in reality moral persons do not organize their lives according to liberal principles. This notion undermines the very strong points of both Walzer and Rorty: there is a discrepancy between multicultural theory and moral experience, and there is no culture of impartial liberalism. Insofar as people still adhere to liberalism in this sense, they do so by contradicting their own moral behavior. The ‘priority of the right over the good’ is thus still insufficiently dismantled in the communitarian and postmodern versions of liberalism to be credible from the viewpoint of the positive method.

A slightly different criticism of Walzer would be to see him as illustrating, not the deontological self, but communitarianism, whereby the authority of the strong state is taken as a fact rather than thoroughly argued. This problem would be what I originally suggested to Hegel face after being unable to offer logical reasons for the legitimacy of the strong state on the grounds of individual interests in civil society. Kolb argues that the problem of any Hegelian type of societal enterprise cannot be met by giving up on the austere philosophical justification that Hegel himself wanted to derive from his more comprehensive philosophical pattern.
Kolb mentions Taylor as an example of this effort, but it also applies to other multiculturalists such as Walzer and Will Kymlicka:

What is in question is Hegel’s totality and the relation of his logic to the world. He was committed to discerning in contemporary affairs the movement of the logical sequence. Given his limited success, it is tempting to save the program by moving up in generality and decreasing the audacity of the claims involved. But this threatens to change his careful balances into a tautologous separation of form and content.

That is, to collapse back into the separation of the formal state and self-interested individual in the liberal way with the result of re-endorsing the idea of the deontological self as well.

3.2.3. From Gray’s Value Pluralism to Derrida’s Deconstructionism

Above I have argued that in Walzer’s multiculturalist version of liberalism, the ‘priority of right over the good’ is mitigated so that individual liberties give way to a more tolerant pluralism in comprehensive doctrines to such an extent that, ultimately the concept of egalitarianism becomes tantamount to external pluralism. Still, Walzer retains the idea that there is at least a sufficiently impartial viewpoint from which hegemonic operations of civil society could be assessed, a strong but democratic state being a superior actor to enhance egalitarianism on the basis of these assessments. After all, it is this second dimension of impartiality that has proved to be an implausible assumption. The question necessarily arises, why not merely accept the first dimension, pluralism, and give up the liberalist chimera of individual freedom and societal emancipation? This is precisely what John Gray has proposed in his book Two Faces of Liberalism:

*Modus vivendi* is liberal toleration adapted to the historical fact of pluralism. The ethical theory underpinning *modus vivendi* is value-pluralism. The most fundamental value-pluralist claim is that there are many conflicting kinds of human flourishing, some of which cannot be compared in value. Among the many kinds of good lives that humans can live there are some that are neither better nor worse than one another, nor the same in worth, but incommensurably – that is to say, differently – valuable.

Gray here actually claims that it is possible to retain the original, fundamental ideal of liberalism in one particular form that allows a pluralism of doctrines, while thoroughly giving up on the other liberalist ideal, the ambition to impartiality, state neutrality, and the ‘priority of right over the good’ and even thick account of the ‘common good’ as found in Dewey, Nussbaum, and Walzer.

Different ways of life embody incompatible aspects of the human good. So, in different contexts, may a single human life. Yet no single life can reconcile fully the rival values that the human good contains. The *aim of modus vivendi* cannot be to still the conflict of values. It is to reconcile individuals and ways of life honouring conflicting values to a life in common. We do not need com-

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643 Kolb 1986, 40.

644 Walzer expresses his substantial affinity to Kymlicka, Taylor, and Amy Gutman, all of whom represent the multiculturalist position; see Walzer 2004, 170, N.1.

645 Kolb 1986, 117.

646 Gray 2000, 6.
Gray’s fully-fledged value-pluralism and *modus vivendi* is a rather radical revision of liberalism, but for him it is not without historical justification:

To think of this [radically pluralistic] condition as a peculiar disability of modern times is mistaken. The pot-pourri sometimes called western civilization has always contained conflicting values. Greek, Roman Christian and Jewish traditions each contain distinctive goods and virtues that cannot be translated fully into the ethical life of the others. The notion of a “western tradition” in which these irreconcilable elements were once fused cannot withstand philosophical – or historical scrutiny. There was never a coherent synthesis of these values, nor could there have been. Still, for many centuries, these diverse inheritances were subordinated in European societies to a single ethical ideal. With all its doctrinal variations, and the many prudent allowances it made for the intractability of human nature, the Christian ideal of life succeeded in subjugating or marginalizing others that had been part of the European inheritance for centuries or millennia. Liberalism needs to be rethought to fit a context in which different ideals of life coexist in the same societies – and often the same individuals.

It is important to note that Gray’s value-pluralism is different from moral nihilism. He assumes some elementary ethical absolutes, but these are not derived from liberal proceduralism or any other homogenizing impartiality toward ideological conflicts. Rather the opposition against relativism derives from universal human needs:

Relativists, subjectivists and sceptics who think a shift in moral practices or beliefs could alter our judgment of [the] universal evils have forgotten a vital Hobbesian truth. Altering our beliefs about ourselves does not change our needs. Human beings are not made of their opinions. Every human being is at risk from evils that can make any kind of good life difficult, or impossible.

Here Gray comes close to Nussbaum’s capabilities approach, deriving the concrete benchmarks for moral evaluation of the ongoing *modus vivendi* from objective experience much in a Deweyan sense. He refers to certain clear violations against life evident from common experiences, such as persecution, famine, or grave poverty, that are to be the focus of moral problems determining the moral limits of any particular view of the good:

... to be tortured, or forced to witness the torture of loved ones or compatriots; to be separated from one’s friends, family or country; to be subjected to humiliation or persecution, or threatened with genocide; to be locked in poverty or avoidable ill-health – these are great evils for all who suffer them. Insofar as a conception of the good does not encompass these experiences, it is defective, even delusive.

The strength of both Nussbaum and Gray is that by resorting directly to common, universal experiences instead of to rational inferences, they are able to propose both global as well as a planetarian scope for ethics without the need for any extra rationale for these extensions. What distinguishes Gray from Nussbaum is that Gray is even more committed to radical

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647 Gray 2000, 5, 6.
648 Gray 2000, 12, 13.
649 Gray 2000, 66.
650 Gray 2000, 66.
variety in the testimony of experience and is ready to take a more substantial distance from liberalism on this basis. This amounts to at least two major differences.

The first is related to planetarianism. I mentioned that although Nussbaum criticizes Kantianism for its anthropocentrism, she herself introduces human imagination as a tool for taking care of non-human goods. Gray in turn wants to challenge the kind of environmentalism in which all claims for morality are ultimately reduced to human considerations about nature. What he challenges, is the idea that non-human nature would have interests akin to humans, because experience shows that non-human nature is in no way comparable to human nature. Thus, Gray takes the protection of nature one step further, to take cognizance of, as in the case of humans, the real needs of the objects considered.

There is no pre-established harmony between human well-being and the conservation of the earth. To utter this forbidden truth is to go against the mainstream of environmental and ecological thought. Conventional Green thinking affirms that there can be no ultimate conflict between the interests of the human species and the integrity of the natural environment. It is not difficult to see why mainstream ecological thinking should adopt this position. In all its standard varieties Green thought is a species of Enlightenment humanism. The project by which it is animated is universal human emancipation, not conservation of the natural environment which humans share with other species. The possibility that these two projects might not always coincide in their implications for practice is too threatening to be contemplated by most ecological thinkers. And conflicts between them might easily create dilemmas that are insoluble. There is little utility for practical men and women in observing that the demands of human well-being may be at odds with those of other animal species. After all, public policy is formed and implemented by human beings. No measure that does not promise a benefit to humans is likely to gain a hearing.\footnote{Gray 1997, 162.}

Based on this strikingly radical refutation of anthropocentrism, which is not found in Dewey’s or Nussbaum’s planetarianism, Gray considers feasible alternative the so-called Gaia hypothesis. For him, Gaia is first and foremost a deeply Darwinian mode of planetarianism. This means that humans are not considered the primary actors on the planet. Rather Gaia serves as a whole system regulating the different life processes. These processes are each characterized by self-interested motives for enhancing the position of one’s own species. Gray gives an example in the growth of the human population, which he considers the major threat to the environment as a whole. He thinks that the only way to protect nature overall from overpopulation may be in ways that inevitably appear harmful to humans. Population growth, in a Darwinian scheme, is considered a characteristic feature of human animality, in which procreation is an essential form of self-preservation. Population growth is one of the reasons that the human species dominates the earth. Nature as whole, in turn, tends to react destructively to those life processes, which are threats to the entire system and balance the planetary power-relations. Thus, there are no harmonious relations between Gaia and the individual species as such, but rather hard laws that obey the logic of totality rather than show sympathy for particular interests. Humans are no exception; they may already be on their way to extinction, thanks to their own actions.\footnote{Gray 1997, 161–170.}
Gray’s interpretation of Gaia takes the Deweyan type of ineptness to Darwinism to its final conclusion. His account of planetarianism includes rather drastic proposals for traditional green theory as well as for planetarian enterprises such as Nussbaum’s and Küng’s models also demonstrate. But this ultimate dismantling of anthropocentrism may be seen as an essential corrective to traditional Kantian anthropocentrism by the positive method. Only a thorough dismantling of anthropocentrism enables us to appreciate environmental reality as it is, without distortions of rational enquiry. Hence, if PWE is to argue for the planetarian character of humanum and simultaneously hold onto its experiential rationale, Gray’s Darwinian revisions to standard environmentalism must be taken seriously into consideration.

As for the human case, Gray is confined to a rather indefinite and minimal list of human evils instead of defining a broad conception such as Nussbaum’s list of capabilities as the evaluative criterion. This is obviously related to Gray’s additional claim that particular views of the good endorse conflicting criteria for this broad assessment of capabilities, as has been stated in the case of Walzer’s corrective notions with respect to Nussbaum:

Yet such universal evils do not ground a universal minimum morality. When faced with conflicts among them, different individuals and ways of life can reasonably make incompatible choices. Differing ways of life come partly from divergent settlements among universal evils. The content of the universal evils to which human life is subject is a matter of knowledge, of true belief founded on experience; but rational inquiry does not yield a single answer as to which we are to choose when universal evils collide.

More, universal evils do not always override particular loyalties. There is nothing unreasonable in putting the claims of one’s way of life over those of universal values . . .

In the final analysis, it seems that the essential criterion for Gray to assess the moral acceptability of any ongoing modus vivendi is whether it manages to balance between competing parties peacefully, although even peace is a relative value, because the comprehensive views of the good may justifiably subordinate it to other, even more important values. On the basis of acknowledging a radical pluralism of conflicting values, it seems that Gray would subscribe to Walzer’s notion that it is not possible to list basic goods that override any comprehensive goods of particular ideologies. Nevertheless, some few absolute moral criteria remain by which particular views of the good may be assessed, although this amounts to a rather moderate claim and restricts the public claims of particular, mutually conflicting ideologies as little as possible. There remains a tension between the two aspects of Gray’s proposal, and it is difficult to see how he will resolve it in practice. Still, it might be possible to see PWE’s humanum as drawing on this very tension so that global ethics would follow from the dialogue between the elementary experience of moral evils and the valuations of comprehensive goods, which may have very conflicted ways of dealing with these evils. But on this account,
the basic understanding of *humanum* as a contribution to the standard liberalist rendering of universal human rights acquires a much more complicated connotation.

Human rights can be respected in a variety of regimes, liberal and otherwise. Universal human rights are not an ideal constitution for a single regime throughout the world, but a set of minimum standards for peaceful coexistence among regimes that will always remain different. Liberal universalists are right that some values are universal. They are wrong in identifying universal values with their own particular ideals. Human rights are not a charter giving universal authority to liberal values. They are a benchmark of minimal legitimacy for societies whose values are different.

Even though there was a plausible and effective way to articulate some general absolutes for morality on the basis of experience without downplaying the conflicting plurality of different views of the good, there is an additional tension in Gray that needs to be addressed. Gray’s claim that mutually conflicting goods are all considered justifiable in their own right includes a contradiction: how can opposite claims both be true? If values conflict in some question, then the both cannot be considered an integral part of the same society. This is what Sandel has in mind when he refers to the need of public solutions to conflicting values instead of simply yielding to the liberal claim of reasonable pluralism:

There is no reason in principle why, in any given case, we might not conclude that, on due reflection, some moral or religious doctrines are more plausible than others. In such cases, we would not expect all disagreement to disappear, nor would we rule out the possibility that further deliberation might one day lead us to revise our view. But neither would we have grounds to insist that our deliberations about justice and rights may make no reference to moral or religious ideals.

Taken to the extreme, one might ask why not be open in principle to totalitarianism, if some value which by definition condemns another may, in principle, be right? Gray acknowledges the apparent paradox in his claim and rejoins:

The good is independent of our perspectives on it, but it is not the same for all. It is not just that different ways of life honour different goods and virtues. More, what one way of life praises another condemns. Value-pluralism is the claim that both may be right. This claim is paradoxical. It seems to imply a tolerance of contradiction that classical logic prohibits. There is paradox here, but not – or so I shall argue – of the kind that should concern us. It may be that the good cannot contain contradictions; but it shows itself in ways of life that are incompatible.

It is worth considering more carefully what this defense amounts to. Gray gives two principal articulations of value-pluralism. The first suggests that the differences between values in society are merely apparent, because in reality they reflect one and the same truth. This defense is akin to John Hick’s theological version of religious pluralism. In light of the critical analysis of religious pluralism in the first chapter, it is hard to see how Gray manages to retain his general ambition to dismantle the homogenizing tendencies of liberalism if he is to make this kind of value-pluralism his central point of departure. This is because such a starting point requires a metaphysical premise independent of the experiential reality of particular goods and thus becomes an exclusive and homogenizing comprehensive doctrine in itself.

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656 Gray 2000, 22.


658 Gray 2000, 7, 8.
A more plausible way to defend value-pluralism is Gray’s claim that different values are actually mutually incommensurable instead of mutually incompatible. Here the plurality of values is acknowledged authentically. The difference of values is not compromised by introducing a homogenizing meta-level. Nonetheless, incompatibility and mutual opposition of different values are only apparent. To clarify, Gray introduces the Wittgensteinian idea of mutually incommensurable contexts:

As Wittgenstein noted, we cannot disagree in our judgments unless there is much on which our judgments are agreed. We must have common practices if we are to make divergent judgments. Our practices are not, however, all of one piece. They are connected together, but in loose strands, not a tightly woven fabric. In consequence, the same behaviour can be judged differently in different practices. It is true that our judgments can be right or wrong only by reference to common practices; but different practices can reasonably be applied in different contexts. When incommensurable values yield incompatible judgments, they are pragmatically inconsistent, not logically contradictory.659

This contention is a very powerful defense of value-pluralism within the pattern of the positive method. No doubt, there is no experiential evidence of unity across different contexts that could enable final comparisons. Rather as Gray proposes that only the practical implications of mutually incommensurable goods often collide – and this needs practical reconciliation in the form of compromise rather than a revision of value-pluralism as the overall theory. Nevertheless, there is one additional critical notion from the perspective of the positive method: experience clearly shows that conflicting ideologies claim to deal with the same ultimate reality, and these ideologies do not usually accept the claims of metaphysical value-pluralism in general or the incommensurability of the opposing doctrines in particular. Hence, the resort to incommensurability seems to run counter to the exclusivist type of self-identification of ‘comprehensive doctrines’ in the same way as doctrinal pluralism does. The comprehensive doctrines themselves often strive for complete dominion instead of accepting a permanent modus vivendi. Even though this fact may show the fundamental problems remaining within the positive method, it still might not refute the whole method. It might be that it is precisely this aspect that reminds of the critical function of the positive method vis-à-vis individual preferences. From the perspective of the positive liberal method, the totalizing tendencies of comprehensive doctrines downplaying the plurality of the good are greater problems than downplaying the exclusive nature of ideologies is for their proponents’ self-identity.

659 Gray 2000, 55.
are very different from one another. None can reasonably claim to embody the flourishing that is uniquely human. If there is anything distinctive about the human species, it is that it can thrive in a variety of ways.\textsuperscript{660}

Here the relation between experience and emancipation of the marginalized also proves to be crucial in Gray. As is clear from his criticism of the Christian Western hegemony above, Gray still wants to transcend ideological particularity by basic common experience and \textit{take all parties into account}. But this does not amount to any metaphysical presupposition; on the contrary:

Unlike liberal toleration, \textit{modus vivendi} does not cherish the hope that the world will someday converge to truth – even the truth of value-pluralism. The idea that political life could be without illusions is itself illusive. Nor, if it were possible, would politics without illusions be without loss. As Nietzsche perceived, illusions may be a condition of some forms of life that are worth living. If variety in ways of life depends partly on some of them making strongly universalist claims, a world in which everyone subscribed to value-pluralism might not be notably diverse. In that case, value-pluralism could be self-undermining.

The theory of \textit{modus vivendi} does not imagine that a world without illusions is possible, or wholly desirable. It seeks only to cure us of the false hopes that go with philosophies that promise an end to conflicts of value. In our time, a hubristic species of rights-based liberalism is foremost among those philosophies.\textsuperscript{661}

A plurality of good amounts to individual differences in needs with respect to good. Value-pluralism within the positive method is rather down to earth: it does not advocate any values as such, but rather the many-fold individual endorsements of them. The emphasis is on the subject rather than the object. Gray’s model has much in common with Rorty’s relativist version of liberalism. However, on the basis of the overall theory of \textit{modus vivendi} as value-pluralism presented above Gray dissociates himself from Rorty:

Liberal relativists are wrong in thinking that there are no universal values. They are right that liberal values belong in one way of life, or a family of ways of life, and have no universal authority. At the same time, they are mistaken in supposing that liberal societies can abandon their universalist claims without being altered profoundly.\textsuperscript{662}

Neither does value-pluralism connote stubborn preferentialism or conventionalism. Gray criticizes both – identifying utilitarianism with the former and internal realism with the latter. The self-critical aspect of value-pluralism, understood as what Gray calls irrealism, is based on the evidence of experience. Individual preferences are to be tested in light of their mutual coherence with regard to the overall good of the individual:

Despite its name, internal realism is a species of conventionalism. It makes truth in ethics depend – in the last analysis – on convention. By contrast, irrealism holds that questions of value are answered at the bar of experience. The beliefs that our moral practices express are not immune to revision. They and the practices that go with them are rightly abandoned when experience tells against them. The hard core of ethical life is found in those experiences that cannot be altered by changing our beliefs about them. Our moral beliefs are corrigible inasmuch as they can be undermined by those experiences. It is not through our practices and conventions that judgments of value have objectivity. It is by tracking experience; but experience does not support a single view of

\textsuperscript{660} Gray 2000, 20, 21.

\textsuperscript{661} Gray 2000, 136, 137.

\textsuperscript{662} Gray 2000, 22.
the good. In an irrealist view, we can be in error about the good life; but not all questions about the good have one true answer.\footnote{Gray 2000, 64.}

In fact, Gray articulates more comprehensively than Küng the experientially grounded distinction between the inner and outer perspective with respect to religious truth in PWE. Both Küng and Gray want to retain a real possibility for \textit{self}-criticism of each individual tradition while restricting the possibility for \textit{mutual} criticism between them and thereby limit ideological exclusivism by endorsing pluralism. In the case of PWE this was already evident in the threefold categorization of truth criteria in which specific religious criteria were restricted to the self-corrective evaluation of one’s own religion. This is closely related to the goal of introducing openness to the pluralism of values, while at the same time retaining appreciation of the uniqueness of individual ends, for example, religions. Let me remind of PWE’s classification:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Seen from the outside}, from the perspective of so-called religious science, there are \textbf{different true religions}: religions that, despite all their ambivalence, ultimately fulfill certain common criteria (ethical as well as religious). There are different ways of salvation (with different figures of salvation) to one end, ways that even partly overlap and in any case can contribute to each other.

\textit{Seen from the inside}, that is, from the viewpoint of a New Testament-oriented, believing Christian, that is, for me as an encountered, challenged person, there is only \textbf{one true religion}: Christianity, insofar as it testifies to the one true God, as he has made himself known in Jesus Christ. . . .

Is this possibly self-refuting? No, this entanglement of outer and inner perspective is also evident in non-religious fields. To take only one example from the political sphere . . . a statesman (a diplomat) in negotiations just as an expert in constitutional law must take it as a given that in principle the other state has its own legitimate government, that its jurisdiction is similarly obligatory and binding on its citizens. This assumption, however, can be fully coherent with his basic inner stance: as a loyal citizen under other citizens he feels, to the best of his knowledge, to be obliged precisely by his particular government (and no other); he sees himself in a uniquely binding loyalty precisely to this state and this government (and no other). The best negotiator, I would say, would be the person to know how best to link together the both perspectives: the optimal faithfulness to one’s own country (to one’s own government, confession, religion) along with maximal openness to the others.\footnote{PW, 129, 130: “Von \textit{aussen} gesehen, sozusagen religionswissenschaftlich betrachtet, gibt es selbstverständlich \textbf{verschiedene wahre Religionen}: Religionen, die bei aller Ambivalenz zumindest grundsätzlich bestimmten generellen (ethischen wie religiösen) Kriterien entsprechen. Es gibt verschiedene Heilswege (mit verschiedenen Heilsfiguren) zum einen Ziel, die sich sogar zum Teil überschneiden und sich jedenfalls gegenseitig befruchten können. \textit{Von \textit{innen} her gesehen}, also vom Standpunkt des am Neuen Testament orientierten gläubigen Christen, für mich also als betroffenen, herausgeforderten Menschen, gibt es nur \textbf{die eine wahre Religion}: das Christentum, insofern es den einen wahren Gott, wie er sich in Jesus Christus kundgetan hat, bezeugt. . . . Ist dies vielleicht ein Widerspruch? Nein, diese Verflechtung von \textit{aussen}- und \textit{innenperspektive} findet sich auch in anderen, nichtreligiösen Bereichen. Nur ein Beispiel aus dem politischen Raum . . . Auch der Staatsman (Diplomat) muss in Verhandlungen, auch der Staatsrechtler muss in Vorlesungen grundsätzlich davon ausgehen, dass der andere Staat prinzipiell seine eigene gleichfalls legitime Verfassung hat; dass dessen Recht in gleicher Weise für seine Staatsbürger verpflichtend und bindend ist. Diese Auffassung aber kann und soll völlig kohärent sein mit seiner inneren Grundhaltung: Als loyaler Staatsbürger unter Staatsbürgern fühlt er selber sich in seinem Wissen und Gewissen nun einmal gerade auf diese (und keine andere) Verfassung verpflichtet; er sieht sich in einer einzigartig verpflichtenden Loyalität gerade gegenüber diesem Staat und dieser Regierung (und zu keiner anderen).”}
As a political studies scholar Gray seems to develop this politically-oriented vantage point still further and thus articulates one plausible institutional proposal for the pluralism of PWE as well. Gray’s contribution is to offer a more elaborate and thus more feasible rationale for PWE’s position in this regard. Indeed, his appeal to intuitively objective experience as the source of self-criticism in moral matters versus contingent conventions has some weight and it shows a feasible way to achieve an emancipatory agenda for the positive method.

Even more importantly from the perspective of our discussion, there is also a practical problem: based on experience, the good is plural and not singular. If this is so, then how is the individual to define, which values are the right ones personally if there are no impersonal criteria with which to assess those values? The point is that while Gray derives value-pluralism from the experiential fact of people embraced by incommensurably different contexts, at the same time he has to acknowledge that individuals themselves are divided between those contexts internally.

There is nothing wrong in applying different values in different contexts. People who belong in more than one way of life can accept and apply different moral practices in different contexts of their lives. There is nothing contradictory in a person honouring rival values in different contexts of her life. The idea that doing so must be wrong or irrational is a piece of Kantian detritus.

But how are we to decide what to do when our values have implications that cannot be reconciled? Compromise is not always possible. The contexts in which we make our judgments are not sealed off from one another. We can be in different social contexts at the same time. Indeed, in a society in which many people belong to more than one way of life, this is a common occurrence. Gray calls these dilemmas radical choice situations. He admits that there are situations – and they are increasingly common in contemporary multicultural societies – in which people have to decide between incommensurable alternatives resulting from conflicting value-claims of different contexts occupied by one and the same person. The nature of such radical choice situations is that a person has to decide on an issue without any external criteria. Nevertheless, Gray notes two things that mitigate the dilemma of radical choice and of the threat of subjectivism, thus sustaining hope for the possibility of self-criticism in value-pluralism. First, he conceives of radical choice situations as exceptional rather than routine instances of individual life projects. “Such radical choices occur in crises of ethical life, not as normal episodes within it.”

Second, he stresses that even in the radical situation the choice does not follow ex nihilo; neither the moving power engendering this radical choice nor the concrete implications resulting from that choice is ultimately subjectively decided, but rather encumbered by antecedent social and historical influences. “As different human subjects resolve

Der beste Verhandlungsführer, vermute ich, dürfte gerade jener sein, der beide Perspektiven ideal zu verbinden weiss: die optimale Treue zum eigenen Land (zu eigener Verfassung, Konfession, Religion) mit einer maximalen Offenheit für die anderen.”

665 Gray 2000, 56.

666 Gray 2000, 64, 65.

such dilemmas in different ways, new identities and values are shaped from those that have been inherited from the past."

It is worth considering whether in reality the first impression of the exceptionality of radical choice situations is really true on the basis of experience. Given the Wittgensteinian contextual rationale for a middle way between moral subjectivism and moral realism, the normal situation of individual moral decisions for Gray is supposed to be the one that clearly takes place within the bounds of one particular context and yield one ultimate good. In that case the criterion for the right moral decision would be this ultimate good itself as well as the mutual consistency of a person’s separate choices for aspiring to that good. Gray makes it clear that he does not advocate pure conventionalism, preferentialism, or subjectivism and that subjective preferences, interests, and wants must first and foremost be placed under critical scrutiny internally, that is, within and not across different contexts.

Now, imagine someone who inhabits a context of criminal culture in which the ultimate good is considered to be optimal material prosperity by any means possible. There are two ways to evaluate one’s actions within that culture from the perspective of one’s ultimate good. First, one can assess particular actions with respect to the ultimate good. For instance, robbing a bank while taking care not to get caught might be more in line with the ultimate good than, say, either working honestly or robbing a bank carelessly. The first desire or preference is to be preferred to the last two in a critical evaluation based on the ultimate good. The problem with this first alternative, of course, is that there is no way to distinguish between characteristically ethical criticism or evaluation and merely prudential evaluation. Hence, there is a need for a second possibility to assess critically whether the given ultimate good is a proper end in a more objective sense or merely a desire or preference in the subjective sense. MacIntyre deals with this problem in *After Virtue*, and puts it generally as follows:

\[\ldots\] unless there is a telos which transcends the limited goods of practices [that is, particular contexts of good] by constituting the good of a whole human life, the good of a human life conceived as a unity, it will *both* be the case that a certain subversive arbitrariness will invade the moral life *and* that we shall be unable to specify the context [that is, the hierarchy and mutual priorities] of certain virtues adequately.\]

In order to retain the ethical character of self-criticism one has to be able to criticize the ultimate good itself. The criterion for *that* criticism is obviously, for Gray, the objective experience. The only way to assess personal wants and preferences critically is to distinguish subjective experience from objective experience. But as we have already learned from Gray, it is precisely objective experience that shows that ultimate good is plural, depending on the context one inhabits. If this is true, then in order to avoid subjectivism, the normal ethical enquiry characteristically has to deal with a second-order question: which context should I inhabit?

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\[668\] Gray 2000, 65.

\[669\] See MacIntyre 1985, 201–203.

\[670\] MacIntyre 1985, 203.
Moreover, as Gray considers these different contexts to be mutually incommensurable, the only way to retain the critical aspect of ethics in any plausible form within the premises of the positive method is to introduce radical choice situations as the normal case of ethical life as opposed to Gray’s insistence.

Given this correction, however, we are back to the general problem of Sandel’s criticism of the deontological self on experiential grounds, although now within the framework of Gray’s characteristically anti-deontological rendering. The situation of radical choice makes this salient simply because the moral subject has to decide between different concepts of good without having any antecedent ends whatsoever that would offer guidance. As Sandel was shown to argue plausibly, it is precisely this kind of criterionless choice as the essence of moral life that appears highly implausible in view of the common experience of how ethical decisions take place in real life.671

After all, there is another way to endorse value-pluralism without having recourse to this barren idea of the deontological self. This is related to Gray’s second rejoinder concerning the essence of radical choice. He claims that even what appears to be radical choice is ultimately determined by contingent factors that are not within the control of the human subject in question. At first glance this would appear to refer to the sociological objection that Sandel deems irrelevant to his criticism of the deontological self, namely, the factual dependency of every choice on sociological influences. Yet this is not the whole story. Here, after a brief prelude, we have to revisit Heidegger.

671 Sandel’s positive scheme focuses on discerning authentic individual identity and its collectivist distortions without dismantling thorough embeddedness to antecedently given ends. Showing first the implausibility of viewing the self totally independent of its ends, he then proceeds to introduce a model in which it would be possible to distinguish those antecedent encumbrances that belong to the self from those that do not. Sandel introduces friendship as a fundamental element in individual’s search of ultimate end of life, because it is the other person who knows me well who can decisively help me to recognize my authentic identity from its distortions. According to Sandel, the self is antecedently thickly constituted of its ends, but not all antecedent encumbrances are necessarily these constituents. This leads to the critical dimension in Sandel’s communitarian ethics. But this requires a unitary understanding of the good contra Gray. Sandel too takes the contextual nature of the good into account, but in a significantly different manner from value-pluralism. For Sandel, while the good is principally independent of and above particular cultures contra the relativist type of communitarianism, the good is to be sought through non-universal, rather coherent communities. This would be the only realistic way in a radically pluralistic contemporary culture. All this no doubt alludes to optimally small communities with respect to coherence and personal relationships instead of to impersonal large communities in which departing interests concerning the good make mutual personal knowledge too difficult in practice. This kind of federalism versus constitutionalism is an essential part of Sandel’s own republican position. In other words, while Gray argues for the prevailing existence of coherent communities as far as the rarity of radical choice situations is considered, Sandel argues for the necessity of their re-creation because of the contemporary frequency of radical choice situations. See Sandel 1998 and 1996. Sandel’s republican alternative may appear to be Hegelian to some extent and hence, susceptible to criticism along the lines of what has been presented in this study in the case of Hegel as well as Walzer: who and on what grounds is ultimately to create the network of smaller communities in a particular form of state? There seems to be no final rationale for the Hegelian social paradigm. After all, I will rather equate Sandel’s republicanism with the post-secular alternatives to be dealt with in the part III.
Earlier Sandel stated that the sociological objection to the deontological view of the self, being based on the psychological claim that there is no objective viewpoint, but only communally influenced relativity in any ethical decision, could not distinguish itself substantially from the liberal rendering of the self because the view of deontological self, while acknowledging the social relativity of individual choices, is based on an independent epistemological principle, namely, that the self is to be seen as fundamentally different from the particular ends to which it is committed. This brings Sandel to the second possible sociological objection of liberalism:

If, on the other hand, the sociological objection means to challenge this epistemological claim, it is unclear what the basis for this challenge could be. Hume perhaps came closest to portraying a wholly empirically conditioned self, such as the sociological view requires, when he described the self as “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement” . . .

But as Kant would later argue, “no fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances.” To make sense of the continuity of the self through time, we must presume some principle of unity which “precedes all experience, and makes experience itself possible” . . .

It is the second, epistemological, type of sociological criticism that addresses the actual problem in question here, as it claims that the individual self is not to be considered, even in principle, as different in essence from the social influences it encompasses. This criticism of liberalism appears unavailable to Sandel, because it would dismantle the unity and continuity of the self. A similar assumption of unity is also behind Gray’s criticism of subjectivism. However, as was the case with Gray with respect to the non-centrality of radical choices, Sandel too fails to give comprehensive reasons from the point of view of the positive method for his rejection of this epistemologically-laden sociological objection. The concept of the unitary self refers to an essence “which precedes all experience;” it is characteristically a rational presupposition transcending experiential evidence. Of course, the idea of continuity within a subject may be seen as based on the universal experience of the self. After all, this subjective experience may be distorted, and therefore, it should be checked by an objective experience of the self. This reflects the critical ambition of the positive method: experiential observation is to be tested through critical reflection based on more and more sophisticated experience.

It is worth noting that the Kantian self is not so different from Hume when it comes to epistemology. Both have in common, that the ultimate essence of the self is not reached, only das Ding für uns. The same is true of Heidegger’s view of the self. Now, what Heidegger adds to Hume is that even perception, or “impression,” is not the final conclusion, nor, to Kant, is rationality – both are preceded by language or the phenomenology of ‘Being’. It would seem that Sandel has not paid sufficient attention to this Heideggerian alternative to the deontological self. Here is how Kolb describes the concept of the self in Heidegger:

For Heidegger, concepts and propositions are not the basic means for making things available to us as meaningful. Propositions select and make explicit meaning that is already lived with in another way.

672 Sandel 1998, 12, 13.
To talk of a realm of meaning prior to the articulation of propositions tends to confuse English-speaking philosophers. Our standard model for such a realm is provided by Locke and Hume, and that model has been seriously questioned. Heidegger does not mean to speak of such a realm of immediately given data, either atomistic sense data or a flowing sensory continuum.

The prior way in which things are made available as meaningful is not an intuition of sense data or contact with subsistent meanings. Heidegger talks about our being-in-the-world. Significance is found in the world in which we are always already involved. A “world” is not a collection of objects for a subject; it is a texture of things and possibilities in which we are involved in action and ongoing purpose. Things are encountered in our actions as fitting into a texture; they lead on to other things revealed within possibilities for action. The possibilities we find ourselves among are not direct objects of awareness; they are not objects for us as subjects [as is the case in the idea of the deontological self]. They are present in a sideways manner as the horizon within which we comprehend practically the things we are dealing with. The “world” is the texture of lived possibilities that reveal the things around us as having this or that character. A doorknob is for turning; turning is for entering; entering is for talking, and so on in many directions and dimensions at once.

Heidegger’s history of influence reaches to French structuralism, among other things, which de-emphasized the Cartesian notion of subjectivity as universal rationality. Categories of thought would rather be influenced by the antecedent contingent function of language whose structures were mutually incommensurable across different cultures. Indeed, it is this Heideggerian relativist type of transcendental phenomenology and structuralism that Gray should resort to in order to escape the charge of the empty self of deontology. This is because here there is an empirical alternative to the abstract self in deontology along the lines of the positive method. In the following, Eric Matthews emphasizes the experiential flavor in the structuralist concept of the self:

If we cannot think without language, however, and if language is simply an empirical characteristic of human beings, then the investigation of our patterns of thought becomes a task for empirical anthropology rather than philosophy. In particular, the idea of a “self” or “subject” ceases to refer to a metaphysical absolute, existing outside time, space, and history, and becomes something constructed in language. It is not a self-transparent “given” of our experience, but something which comes into existence as part of the structures of language as they function in our developing relationships with others in society. In this way, the rejection of the transparency of thought and of a priori structures of rationality and the downgrading of the “subject” from a transcendental foundation to an empirical construction are mutually inseparable presuppositions of the adoption of a structuralist approach. Structuralism marked a revolution in philosophy because those who adopted it could no longer consistently think of the philosophical project in the same way. Philosophy could no longer take the high a priori road, ignoring the empirical conditions of human experience and reasoning to what must be so if human beings were to have the kind of experience they do. It had to treat human beings as simply empirical individuals in the world, whose own thoughts were not necessarily transparent to themselves, but whose behaviour and responses were shaped by underlying and largely unconscious structures of thought.

Indeed, through recourse to late Wittgenstein, given above, Gray’s position seems to be akin to the structuralist approach described here by Matthews. One additional way in which Gray endorses the principles of both structuralism and Heidegger by implication is his defense of Nietzschean perspectivism. According to the perspectivism, there is no one paramount articu-

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673 Kolb 1986, 132.


675 Matthews 1996, 139.
lation of truth, but rather different perspectives, all of which touch upon the truth and the good from different angles. Different cultures and different ideological hegemonies endorse their own truths, but the task of the philosopher is to relativize these truths by showing the social and cultural particularities and contingencies that give rise to these quasi-universal claims. Nietzsche calls this task genealogy. It is the French sociologist Michel Foucault, originally a structuralist, who is the foremost spokesman for Nietzschean genealogy in contemporary social analysis.

There is, however, an aspect in light of which it is very difficult, if not impossible to practice genealogy. As Bernard Williams has made it clear, the relativist as well as the subjectivist position is by nature self-refuting, because these positions tend to consider it universally true that there is no universal truth. Using the same line of argument, Alasdair MacIntyre makes the fundamental ambivalence within genealogy strikingly plain. In order for Nietzsche to function as the prophet of truth in the face of all the lies in the history of metaphysics, that is, to unmask the particular and contingent nature of all universal claims to truth, be they in religion, politics, or philosophy, Nietzsche has to make himself the only exception. Foucault faces the same problem when he sets out to relativize some ideological hegemonies that penetrate Western ideas of madness and normality. Both are attempting to open the world of totalitarian discourses for multiplicity where none can claim priority over other ideological conceptions. At the same time both authors recognize that without relativizing their own claims, there is an unsustainable discrepancy built into these very claims.

For one thing, one might insist, there is perhaps a way out of this dilemma within the positive method by drawing on biology. What may well have made Nietzsche somewhat ignorant of the kind of strikingly refutive notions that MacIntyre puts forward is his indebtedness to evolution theory. In fact, there are two endorsements of Darwinism in Nietzsche, both resulting from his virtue ethics.

But Darwin’s “dangerous idea” . . . did not precipitate a collapse of old certainties and usher in a new, post-metaphysical age of vertiginous contingency. The supposed demise of God did not lead to a “transvaluation of all values,” to use Nietzsche’s phrase. In fact, as the claims of religion and metaphysics were eroded by the tidal wave of new scientific discoveries, biology itself was pressed into service to sustain, legitimate and reinvigorate the values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, reconstructing religious orthodoxies in a secular scientific form. Instead of locating their source in some transcendent realm, scientists, philosophers and moralists now sought the genesis of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, even truth and falsity, in the evolutionary processes of life itself, in the health of the individual and the vitality of the species. . . . Nietzsche himself recognised that although nineteenth-century secular theories of human nature and origins discarded the obvious trappings of Christian teachings, they by no means repudiated the view of human nature which was once identified with creationist theology and Judaeo-Christian “ascetic ideal.” Equally importantly, however, Nietzsche was by no means consistent in his awareness of the ideological presuppositions implicit in contemporary biologism – as it was manifested, for example, in Darwi-

676 Williams 1972.


678 On the two faces of Nietzsche’s ethics (nihilism and more affirmative ethics), see for example Robert C. Solomon, From Hegel to Existentialism, ch. 6 and 7.
nnian and Spencerian evolution, in theories of evolutionary ethics and aesthetics, in racial science and the crypto-theology of degenerationist psychiatry. By disentangling the complex web of associations attached to the discourses of evolution and degeneration, I hope to demonstrate not only the ways in which Nietzsche seeks to subvert, reinterpret and revalue them, but also the extent to which his own thought is still ensnared in his century’s values and prejudices. 679

It is worth enlightening this “inconsistency” of Nietzsche further by recalling one of the implications of contemporary biologism behind his thoughts, the one most relevant from the present perspective, namely, evolutionary ethics. A classical example of these theories is Herbert Spencer’s:

Spencer held, first, that human society has evolved, just as the human species evolved, and indeed that the evolution of species and of society can be placed on a single continuous scale. Secondly, he believed that the higher a society is upon this scale the more ideal its morality; and thirdly, that conduct tends more and more toward the end of preserving life, it being assumed that in life there is, especially as one ascends toward the ideal, more pleasure than pain. 680

The problem is not the claim of teleology as such, but rather the moral nature of that teleology. Indeed, despite the strong evidence that there is teleology in nature, the question at stake is whether this particular teleology is the right one from a moral perspective. Nowhere is the ethical principle “no ought from is” more relevant than here. 681 It seems that Nietzsche himself was not at ease with biologism, but attempted to dismantle biologism through emphasis on metaphor. He was nevertheless unable to get rid of biologism altogether as the hegemonic discourse. Thus, it is possible that Nietzsche may not have fully realized the problems of argumentative incoherence that MacIntyre points out above.

One might, however, propose that while it may be true that Spencerian-Wilsonian social Darwinism is not in line with the Nietzschean dismantling of any hidden universal values, the same cannot be said of the more moderate view, which shows only the origins of ethics to be both in universal biology and a particular culture without introducing any valuation across different ethical views. This is a corrective contribution to Spencerian Darwinism within ethics by Edward Westermarck; the intention behind Westermarck’s contribution is indeed to denounce valuation between any ethical patterns and with the help of biology. 682 One might then see the Nietzschean method of genealogy as endorsing this Westemarckian amoralization of any culture and thereby to preventing any kind of ethnocentrism. That is, Nietzsche’s original intention was to render every statement on moral values metaphorical, except this very basic claim of the metaphorical nature of values, which is based on common experience or, better, scientific evidence.

It is difficult, after all, to see why this Westemarckian claim would not be vulnerable to the same critique by Williams as any other type of relativism: it does not position its own

680 MacIntyre 1967, 251.
681 On this so called natural fallacy and its implications, See MacIntyre 1967, 252; 1985, 56, 57.
682 Stroup 1982, 250, 251.
fundamental claim under the same relativizing framework, which in this case is related to contingent biological and social conditions, as it does with respect to the claims it deals with directly. No doubt, in some sense, the Westermarckian kind of biologicist relativism would meet the requirements of the positive method for the experiential plausibility of any ethical model. The problem, however, is that Westermarck’s claim is vulnerable to the Heideggerian phenomenological approach, which sees extreme Darwinism and biologism to endorse a culture of scientism that is itself made possible by a contingent opening of meaning (‘Being’) within language. Indeed, there is no evidence that the culture of Western science as such would be the paramount way to view the world in a deep sense. It appears that this kind of transcendental phenomenology cannot be surpassed within the positive method, in which realism counts. The most realistic position is radically attuned to human finitude and consequently is skeptical of universal and final ideological claims.

Yet in the final analysis the flaw in all the cultural relativisms above – be they of biologicist or phenomenological type – from the point of view of the experiential perspective can be illuminated *ex negativa* by the analogous agenda of Claude Levi-Strauss in the sphere of social anthropology. What Levi-Strauss intended to attain with the structuralist account of different cultures was a denouncement of the ethnocentrism that prevailed in mainstream anthropology. There cultures were divided into primitive and more developed ones, the modern Western culture – the most organized – being the epitome of cultural progress. Levi-Strauss wanted to show how different cultures had their own internal structures that could, in their very structurality, be *compared* with each other, but in a manner that mutual hierarchical *ranking* of them is rendered impossible.683

Jacques Derrida’s main thesis is, after all, that the very use of the concept of structure was ultimately what prevented structuralism from avoiding ethnocentrism. ‘Structure’, according to Derrida, is not something “lying there” in the world ready to be analyzed. On the contrary, “structure” is a conceptual tool for analyzing the world; moreover, this tool has no unambiguous connection to the world “as it is.” It is this factual truth that makes the structuralist ethnologist an unrecognized fulcrum of the new ethnocentrism as he is the author of creating structures and of the claim that they have a correspondence with the real cultures analyzed. For Derrida, however, there is no such correspondence, and it goes against sincere sociological evidence to assume that such is the case. “No one, in short, has shown that ‘structure’ is any less the product of elaborating on ideas and images that come to hand or mind than any other element of discourse. It is simply a matter that it happens to conform itself well to the aims and ends of explanation within a given cultural and historical moment.”684

At this point we have reached the phase of poststructuralism and thus the final devastating critique of Gray’s value-pluralism, which, in its most plausible form, may parallel structu-
eralism, but not poststructuralism. It is important to remember that PWE’s assumptions are similar to Gray’s interpretation, not only with respect to the mutual incommensurability of different contexts of goods – such as religions – but also with respect to Gray’s weak point, namely, his structuralist type of contextualism. Conclusively, poststructural criticism of classical structuralist sociology also applies to a significant degree to PWE. It appears that it is not enough to de-emphasize the mutual criticism of different goods, for example, religions. The claim that an internal criticism of religions is recommended all the same and is even possible presupposes the idea of ‘structure’ and reflects an ambition for ‘structure’ that is more the invention of an outside researcher than an objective reality demonstrated by the religions themselves.

The proposed philosophical criticism is illustrated further by Ricoeur’s criticism of Mannheim’s relationalism. What Mannheim thought was that, instead of evaluating different phenomena by mutually comparing them with each other, the historian’s task is to show the internal relations of individual phenomena. The former aim was dismantled by the relativist nature of the social world, while the latter still enabled explanation of ideologies with respect to their internal coherence. But as Ricoeur plausibly insists, the problem is that there is no such objective standpoint in light of which any person is in a position to describe impartially the criteria of such internal coherence. In other words, the concrete meaning of internal criticism is itself an object of endless ideological struggle – outside and inside particular traditions, such as religious ones.

In the previous chapter it became clear that PWE has a tendency to treat world religions as more or less coherent structures. Of course, Küng does not have a monochromic picture of religions and of their internal structure. But it is important that for Derrida, the quixotic ambition for structure is not merely the same as ignoring heterogeneity. ‘Structure’ does not necessarily eliminate variations, but it does limit them and it defines the core of a phenomenon around which all variations are organized.685 Stephen Hahn describes it as follows:

A structure, as distinct from a mere aggregate or collection of data, requires a center at the same time that such a center is not subject to structurality itself, but is both outside and inside the structure (organizes and so far conceptually supersedes and controls it while remaining connected to and in tension with it) – “origin” or “end,” “arche” or “telos” . . . – determining the indeterminate. The concept is only coherent within this contradiction, expressed in a variety of ways, which posits the “center” as something that definition to variable elements while itself remaining essentially “out of play.”686

Indeed, while it is believed that there are many different, even incommensurable, structures, the availability of the general concept of the structure itself is not questioned. It is taken to be similar to the Aristotelian unmoved mover, the first premise, which has no previous premises. It is clearly a rational presupposition, and moreover intertwined with the use of language. ‘Structure’ is tantamount to concept, which is a linguistic construction. Language operates

685 Hahn 2002, 5.

through concepts, and thus it is precisely language that enables one to think that the word has an ultimate structure and is not some game of indeterminate and runaway phenomena into which we are cast.\textsuperscript{687} Hahn continues,

\ldots multiple iterations of the concept of structure, deployed without the concept of structure having been thought through, arise to master an “anxiety” that “is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game” \ldots Another word for the mastery of this anxiety/desire would be “certainty,” which (it is not stated but implied here) is a name for the object of classical philosophical inquiry. To be certain, either as subject or object, would be to stand outside what is variable and therefore uncertain. It would be to perceive, at the least, and perhaps to be able to give an account of, the origin and end of what is variable.\textsuperscript{688}

In Derrida the criticism of structure applies even to the self.\textsuperscript{689} In this he follows a path already paved by Heidegger and structuralism. After all, as was evident in the first chapter, the ultimate problem in Heidegger is a certain optimism about the ability to speak about ‘Being’. Derrida’s philosophy is marvelously designed to address this problem, as Karl Simms illustrates the Derridean contribution:

Heidegger pointed out that Being is a very peculiar “thing,” insofar as it is the only “thing” of which we cannot say that it has being, which is why we must put “thing” in inverted commas when we talk about Being – is Being a thing? We can say of beings that they have being, but we cannot say of Being as such that it has being. Derrida’s inflexion on this problem is to point out that since Being “itself” is nothing, is not a being, it cannot be expressed or named through the use of metaphor. “And therefore,” Derrida \ldots goes on, Being “does not have, in such a context of the dominant metaphysical usage of the word ‘metaphor,’ a proper or literal meaning which could be alluded to metaphorically by metaphysics. Consequently, if we cannot speak metaphorically on its subject, neither can we speak properly or literally.” \ldots regarding Being, the problem that arose at the conceptual level – does Being have being or not? – reappears at the verbal level – does the word “Being” have a literal meaning when there is no figurative meaning to compare it to? This question appears unanswerable, which is precisely Derrida’s point: the constant, vigilant repositing of this question in different forms constitutes what Derrida calls “deconstruction.” For Derrida, deconstruction is \ldots an affirmation of the ability of metaphysics to incorporate its own negation within itself.\textsuperscript{690}

The last sentence of this quotation is highly significant and may well be seen as a continuation of the negative theology by Karl Jaspers presented earlier.\textsuperscript{691} Significantly, in this, for Derrida, decisive sense, even Heidegger’s metaphysics – not to speak of Gray’s value-pluralism – does not differ substantially from the Enlightenment. The point is that while Heidegger emphasized the withdrawal of ‘Being’, he still did not, at least sufficiently, take the extreme step of negating his own considerations of ‘Being’, even those of his accounts on the withdrawal of ‘Being’. Although Heidegger alludes to the task of deconstructionism, he still does not fully endorse the required self-negation without reservation.

\textsuperscript{687} Hahn 2002, 2, 5.  
\textsuperscript{688} Hahn 2002, 5, 6.  
\textsuperscript{689} Hahn 2002, 2.  
\textsuperscript{690} Simms 2003, 129, 130.  
\textsuperscript{691} Ehrlich 1975, 23–30, 152–157.
The case is perhaps slightly different in Jaspers, not only because he provides tools for relativizing Heidegger’s general account, but also because he himself openly acknowledges the self-negating nature of his own general theory as well. Nevertheless, it is still questionable whether Jaspers renounces the ambition to have the last word with his theory; although he acknowledges the necessity of his own relativization in principle, he does not push self-negation to the extreme in his work. On the culmination of his philosophy in the concept of “thinking,” Jaspers states: “I regard by thinking as the natural and necessary conclusion of Western thought until now, the ingenious synthesis by virtue of a principle that enables us to admit all that is true in any sense whatever.” In the final analysis, it is Derrida who is in a position to say, “What Western philosophy attempts to do is by language to arrive at a conclusion. But the conclusion does not arrive. Life goes on.” But, again, what is of crucial importance is the ability of metaphysics’s self-negation to operate in the opposite direction as well; as Hahn continues on Derrida: “Yet life does not go on without the prospect of arrival.”

This last remark leads us to the complementary aspect of Derrida. The point is, in Heideggerian-Derridean terms, it is not simply that ‘Being’ does not have a literal meaning; one cannot even say that, but the question “appears unanswerable,” as Simms described Derrida’s inflexion in the above long quotation. If it was simply the case that ‘Being’ does not have a literal meaning, then one should indeed stop speaking of ‘Being’ altogether. Now, however, metaphysics must go on with a prospect – and its negation – again and again. It is this double denial of arrival, on the one hand, and the abolition of metaphysics in the most extreme sense, on the other, that calls for deconstructionism instead of nihilism or quietism. It would be too simple just to give on with the project of ‘structuring’; in fact, it would be self-refuting, because in that very denouncement is the seed of a new structure – paradoxically, it would reiterate the very paradigm of structuring. What is needed is a completely different type of paradigm, a paradoxical one, which retains the ambition for structure, origin, and center – the ‘being’ – at the same time as it dismantles any hope for its attainment, the inevitable result of this being radical choice, a determinate choice for structure without the possibility for structure. As Bernard Williams pointed out, both subjectivism and relativism as well as what he calls amoralism are untenable positions, because they retain a non-relative or non-subjective element in their very claims; likewise, whenever amoralism amounts to assuming that it is better

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692 Ehrlich 1975, 119, 120, 170, 217–222.
693 Ehrlich 1975, 217–222.
696 Hahn 2002, 10.
to keep outside morality entirely, it also invokes a hidden moral argument by this very assumption.

It has already become evident in MacIntyre’s critique that Nietzsche was unable to retain a completely nihilist account of metaphor. On the other hand, Nietzsche may be defended precisely through affirming the self-negation of metaphysics. This is how Jaspers interprets Nietzsche, thus also introducing the positive aspect of self-negation:

Jaspers’s encounter with Nietzsche’s thinking on the problem of truth and with two opposing extremes of erroneous interpretation of Nietzsche – one tending to trivialize him, the other seeing him as the apostle of nihilism – gave added impetus to the clarification of the role of doubt in faith.

Jaspers sees that for Nietzsche the relentless exercise of the will to truth will in the end question itself. Doubt, as we have seen, is for Jaspers the primary means whereby the concern over truth breaks through the wall of cogitative fixations of the truth. The necessity for thinking in terms of absolutes may lead to the untruth of dogmatism. However, a radical doubt, in opposing the untruth of dogmatism, may itself get stranded in untruth, if it becomes fixed and ceases to be a moment of the concern over truth. Traditionally such fixed doubt has been called skepticism in the narrow sense, and Jaspers distinguished two kinds: namely dogmatic skepticistic and indecisive skepticism. Cicero, denying all certainty in acknowledging only probabilities which he accepts as tentative guidelines and without obligation, serves Jaspers as a typical example of indecisive skepticism. For Jaspers, a man who, when faced with the insight of the impossibility of ultimate certainties, does not commit himself, is a nonentity. And a dogmatic skeptic, in denying that anything can be known, knows too much. But to condemn the skeptic or to oppose him under the banner of dogmatic assent is not the truthful or fruitful way of overcoming skepticism.

Jaspers considers the movement of skeptical relativising to be the alternative to both dogmatism and skepticism.

In any case, by invoking the two-dimensional and paradoxical account of poststructuralism, Derrida is indeed able to avoid MacIntyre’s and Williams’s criticisms of amoralism, relativism, and subjectivism better than, for instance, Gray, Westermarck, or even Nietzsche. Here, in Derrida, we arrive at Heidegger’s Hegelian idea of movement as becoming, without the other Hegelian idea of final Aufhebung to absolute ‘presence’.

This is marvelously reflected in the salient effort of Derrida to escape his own definitions. According to Hahn, “Derrida strives not to settle upon one analytic vocabulary and to avoid reification of the paths of his own thinking. . . . The conversations Derrida encourages and engages in almost always end in a sort of irresolution and promise to re-open.” This

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697 Williams 1972, 17–51.

698 Ehrlich 1975, 28, 29.

699 Hahn 2002, 13: “Derrida ends ‘Structure, Sign, and Play’ not with an assertion of unity-in-difference that stitches together or sutures disparate ideas and phenomena with reference to a ‘point of presence,’ not with conceptual closure, but with a gesture toward whatever it is that resists closure and categorization. He ends, that is, with a challenge to ‘perception’ . . . because discourse or language (the signifying system) is what enables us to mark time and the marking of time is (1) always delayed, never on-center with a non-linguistic experience (consider the temporal experience of the autistic, what is it?), and (2) always marked in discourse by verbal shifters which are constantly open to re-contextualizing. Language itself, which articulates the difference of moments, the ‘surrogate’ for something that perhaps does not exist (the phenomena it points to), always differs with respect to the moment it names. It does not arrive at a conclusion (a non-linguistic point of presence or perception).”

700 Hahn, 2002, in Introduction, [p.2], nonpaginated.
rhetorical ambivalence was also operative in Nietzsche shown earlier by MacIntyre. But as Moore points out, it is not clear whether Nietzsche takes this ambivalence openly to the extreme.

Nietzsche not only argues, like all biologistic thinkers, that values have their genesis in a biological substratum underlying human experience; he also claims that the discourse of biology is itself shaped by and saturated with these same values. But while I think Nietzsche can, as we shall see in later chapters, sometimes be shown to interrogate biological concepts and theories at this ideological and abstract level, in many other cases – perhaps in most other cases – he clearly does not use biological language in a way that is consistently critical or even metaphorical – at least in any normal sense of the term “metaphorical.” And here is a problem: Nietzsche’s definition of metaphor is so wide that he effectively empties the concept of meaning and renders it practically useless. If all cognitive and linguistic phenomena are to be understood as metaphors, then this can tell us nothing about his specific use of biological and medical terms. It does not explain why he has chosen to express himself in this particular idiom . . .

. . . Nietzsche’s insight into the value-laden character of science and biology does not always lead him consistently to subvert or ironise those valuations. It is only by historicising Nietzsche’s biologism – in a sense turning his own deconstructive weapons against him – that we can assess the extent to which he achieved or failed to achieve what he saw as the first and last task of philosopher: “To overcome his time in himself, to become ‘timeless’” 701

Derrida’s corrective value to Nietzsche in this sense is a more fully-fledged acknowledgment of the paradox embedded in the use of metaphor, a more plausible articulation of genealogy on the basis of Heidegger’s philosophical pattern. If it were possible to say anything definitive about Derrida, which is doubtful, one could say that the whole point of Derrida is to confirm MacIntyre’s and Moore’s criticism of Nietzsche. The whole point of philosophy, indeed of life, is to say something that is not possible to say, and what is more, one cannot embrace the very point, let alone express it to others. Thus, Nietzsche’s failure, and not his success, in articulating the metaphorical nature of ethics may be considered one of the finest examples of Derridean pessimism. One cannot say anything definitive about anything, this very statement itself being in need of further deconstruction by the absolute necessity of saying something definitive, while the impossibility of saying will infinitely refute the necessity of saying and vice versa. And so it goes, again and again, with deconstructive alternate self-negation of structure and “free-play” of meaning, as its antithesis. 702


702 Simms 2003, 129: “If Derrida was already putting into question Nietzsche’s concept of the dead metaphor and its catastrophic consequences for philosophical discourse in ‘White Mythology,’ it does not follow that this putting into question leads to the opposite position, advocated by Ricoeur, that living metaphor is the lively expression that keeps philosophical discourse alive. Rather, Derrida wishes to question, or ‘deconstruct,’ the received opposition between ‘dead’ and ‘living,’ and not only between the words ‘dead’ and ‘living,’ but also between the philosophical concepts that lie behind them. Instead of merely opposing to one another the concepts of dead and living metaphors, Derrida introduces the concept of a ‘retrait of metaphor.’ The French word retrait means ‘retreat,’ but is left untranslated to make visible its indebtedness to the word trait, which is lost in English. For Derrida, metaphor is constantly in retreat – each time a metaphor is coined, it begins to die. But this is a paradoxical process: it means that language becomes ever more metaphorical (in the Nietzschean sense that the words in any given language have lost their original meanings) and simultaneously ever less metaphorical (in the Ricoeurean sense that if a metaphor is dead, then it is no longer a metaphor – it is just language). It is this self-contradictory double movement, or trait crossing its own path (re-trait), of language that fascinates Derrida, and precisely for a metaphysical reason.”
Derrida’s complementary value to both Nietzsche and Heidegger is in his substantial extension of this extremely pessimistic pattern to the ethical sphere in a way that does not lead to ethical nihilism, but leads instead to endorsement of absolute responsibility. This means that the dismantling of the ‘structure’ does not, in the final analysis, ignore the project of morality in general, although it introduces a completely new paradigm for it. For Derrida, decision becomes the term that signifies that the above-mentioned contradiction between structure and the free-play of interpretation is not ultimately resolved. Here we come back to the question of radical choice. Now that the Hegelian logical pattern is refuted by Heideggerian suspicion, does radical choice not appear to be ever-present in the human condition in general and in ethics in particular?

Again, the answer is both yes and no. The identity of the self as a moral subject is not lost in the poststructural paradigm, but, significantly, it is manifested in a way that thoroughly dismantles the rational ambition for its integration, even its unquestionable presence. Morality and self become existential concepts rather than ontological ones. While this is something other than Kantian ethics, is it not that the main problem expressed in Sandel’s critique of the deontological self ultimately remains relevant, as it is in Kant, Rawls and all other authors that I have analyzed until now in this chapter. In Derrida’s radical or, better, undecidable decision, the self is viewed as being fundamentally distinct from its attributes. Thus, Hegel’s critique of the formal subject reappears.

In order to clarify this question it is necessary to consider more carefully another side of Derrida, namely, his move from Heidegger to ethics through the work of Emmanuel Levinas. For Levinas, Western liberalism and humanism create a fatal hubris. Their attempt to include difference within their theoretical framework paradoxically results in the exclusion of a radical kind of difference, that is, the difference that opposes the liberal pattern itself. But how, one could ask, is it possible to respect difference in any reliable manner other than by constitutional arrangements of deliberative justice? How is it possible without full-fledged respect for individual autonomy and liberalism as the inevitable corollary of this autonomy? Before addressing this question with a Levinasian line of thought, it is worth noting that individual autonomy itself creates an additional ethical problem reflected in the following example given by David Campbell. He claims that it was the very countries with a liberal orientation that showed little interest in the atrocities in Kosovo and Bosnia; surrounding Western countries were not genuinely concerned about helping the victims. The problem is that ignorance of the other seems to fit the ethos of individualism all too well.

For Levinas, in order to be able to meet the latter problem one has to be ready to step away entirely from the secure ground provided by liberalism’s rational societal structure. The point in the Levinasian alternative is to give up the liberalist universal rational assurance that

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703 Hahn 2002, 10.

every citizen will be respected within the mass. Levinas insists on this point for the sake of singular radical difference, which cannot be respected authentically without immediacy or without renouncing the totalizing tendency of reason. Rather Levinasian ‘ethics as first philosophy’ is the criticism of every possible totalitarian societal view for the sake of the ‘Other’. In principle, the only ethical absolute is the “face” of the Other, which cannot be abstracted to any general societal view without distorting this extraordinary relationship with radical difference. Instead of individual autonomy, the vantage point of ethics is heteronomy created by the Other. In other words, the immediacy of the encounter with the Other creates an absolute ethical claim upon the self. According to Campbell, this Levinasian pattern is what is needed to overcome the post-Cold War lack of responsibility in international relations in general and conflict resolution in particular.\textsuperscript{705}

Although Küng is nowhere identified with poststructuralism, nevertheless there are interesting affinities with this Levinasian-Derridean account of ethics and politics in PWE. Strikingly, Levinas and Derrida seem to endorse at least as strong a criticism of Kantian ethics as Küng, in the sense that all three authors associate the central Kantian views of rationality and autonomous individuality with the lack of authentic ethical responsibility and the resulting moral crisis of the Enlightenment project. Levinas even confirms the historical claim in PWE that the Enlightenment view of ethics is the ideological source behind the atrocities of twentieth century Europe such as the Holocaust. In this sense poststructuralism based on Levinasian ethics could indeed offer a philosophically-nuanced argument in support of PWE’s rather vaguely elaborated stand against Kant. Moreover, as hinted by Campbell, Derrida also clearly endorses the political aspect of poststructuralism with a global focus as opposed to a national focus, the latter being the standard view in international relations up to the present. The terms “global” and “responsibility” are of ultimate importance for both Derrida’s and Küng’s models. They even embody the same kind of anti-Enlightenment planetarianism whereby the human person and human dignity as the focus of absolute ethical duty in the final analysis are in a more central position than other beings or factors in nature. What distinguishes Derrida from Küng is the latter’s endorsement of theonomous morality. Levinas, however, does subscribe to theonomous ethics contra Derrida. I will return to this question.

First, however, it is important to understand Derrida’s intentionally ambivalent relation to the concept of the self, even though there are two essential reservations. The self is by no means separated from any of its contingent attributions, and neither of these attributions is mutually commensurable so that a substantial continuation of the self could be found in time. And even more, the self as an “entity” is always “becoming” rather than already being. These are the reservations. But the self is nevertheless introduced, manifesting itself in these sporadic moments of intuition. Here the concept of the “undecidable decision” becomes essential. In undecidable ethical decisions the self manifests itself momentarily and with fragility, but ab-

olutely. One might now wonder whether there is actually any difference between the Kantian self and this pure decisionism in the main context of Sandel’s notions, since both emphasize the self-sufficiency of individual choice while simultaneously acknowledging the contingency of any concrete choice. One rejoinder is the following:

The connecting feature of Walzer’s and Gray’s neo-Hegelian versions of liberalism is that society never finally settles; *Aufhebung*, understood as an annulment of society’s internal tensions at some upper level, never appears. This Deweyan open-endedness is expressed with the concept *modus vivendi*; society as a unit is continuously “becoming.” However, it is only with a more thorough neo-Hegelianism, with a Heideggerian flavor, that the experiential dilemma of the deontological self is to be met. Now, not only society, but also the self is situated between conditions of becoming and escaping. The positive potential of the self is realized in the ethical relationship with the Other, in which both are becoming in the Hegelian sense, while simultaneously escaping in the neo-Hegelian sense.

One may still ask about the substantial difference between Derrida and Kant from the perspective of the *positive method*. In other words, Derrida seems to distinguish himself from Deweyan direct experience by his endorsement of Heideggerian phenomenology. Dewey was able to downplay the Cartesian-Kantian distance between subject and object by his comprehensive and reality-oriented alternative view. To be sure, Derrida too is able to overcome the dichotomy, but he does so by taking the Kantian transcendental critique to the utmost extreme. On the other hand, somewhat paradoxically, his extreme version of the Heideggerian “linguistic skepticism” is an ultimate end-product of Kant’s notions interpreted through Hegelian revision. One can recognize Derrida at the final end of the continuum in the description of Kolb, where he identifies the Königsbergian predecessor as well as the postmodern followers of Hegel.

There is no application of the completed categorical sequence to a foreign realm. This relentless extension of encompassing unity is meant to forestall questions of the kind we usually ask about causes and mechanisms. There is no change or transition which requires an external cause; we are thinking the necessary structure of the whole within which we find ourselves by thinking the necessary structure of pure thought. . . . This is transcendental philosophy with a vengeance, overcoming Kant’s failure to carry his revolution all the way. . . . Hegel says that his attempt is not structured according to those discredited dichotomies of internal mind and external reality. Rather, he is elevating our awareness of our own existence to an awareness of our full necessary conditions and context. There is no move from inside to outside.

We become able to recognize our full conditions of possibility. Those conditions do not involve the Kantian distinctions of thought from reality itself. In this sense Hegel never makes ontological claims. . . .

706 Kolb 1986, 86, 87. On the original problem in Kant from the point of view of transcendental philosophy, see Wilson 2007, 29: “Kant does not know what the ‘thing in itself’ is because it transcends experience. In a famous inconsistency Kant says that the (transcendent) ‘thing in itself’ is the unknown nonsensible ‘cause’ of an object. . . . The inconsistency is that he defines causality as a (transcendental) category or concept of the understanding, not applicable to the thing in itself”; Wilson 2007, 41: ”. . . the unconditioned for Kant is that which is not derived from or conditioned by anything else, and as such it cannot be part of the space-time world in which everything is conditioned. No point of Kant’s philosophy was immediately contested more than the supposedly unconditioned ‘thing in itself,’ because it cannot be even talked about without recourse to concepts, all of which are ‘conditions.’ Kant says the ‘thing in itself’ is (in some way) the ‘cause’ of the objects of perception, and yet Kant
In fact [the overarching and encompassing quality of Hegel’s claims] furnishes one main alternative to the permanent residence in dichotomy offered by Weber and like theorists of modernity. Nor is Hegel’s type of claim absent today. It appears in doctrines about the inescapability of language, in pragmatic wholisms that refuse the absoluteness of formal meta-levels, in poststructural thought. All of these, and to a modest extent even their chaste siblings such as Quine, make a move similar to Hegel’s. They substitute for a final descriptive language in a subject-object framework a movement that enfolds within itself any attempt to establish a place beyond itself. There is less totalization, less self-transparency than Hegel would prefer, but in many thinkers today something like Hegel’s general strategy persists.\textsuperscript{707}

Although Deweyan pragmatism also puts a high value on the centrality of language, Derrida’s transcendentalist criticism of perceiving Ding an sich is significantly more pessimistic, since pragmatism in any case invokes a positive and optimistic stance vis-à-vis reality. Consequently, Derrida seems ill-equipped to defend himself against the completely reality-oriented positive methods, such as Dewey’s pragmatism. Indeed, Levinas himself justifiably sees Derrida as taking this Kantian critique to its extreme.\textsuperscript{708} Significantly, this is not the whole story. In order to make it more complicated, but also in order to save Derrida from his potential Deweyan type of critique within the positive method, it is necessary to point out Derrida’s substantial indebtedness to the phenomenological tradition, through both Heidegger and Levinas. Here we have to recall the anti-Kantian basis of the phenomenological tradition laid down by Husserl’s heuristic discovery.

Husserl’s pioneering invention was the rediscovery of the first-person point of view in a sphere in which Humeans and Kantians were left with insoluble problems of bridging the gap between subjective experiences and objective reality. The puzzle of Hume and Kant was, according to Husserl, owing to false presupposition that human experiences are to be considered primarily from outside, from a third-person point of view. The actual nature of human experience is not its psychological reality as such, but its intentionality. As an intentional act experience is always an experience of something whereby this something as an object of experience becomes the primary focus of study. It is thus distinct from the Humean-Kantian preoccupation with the contents of experience within the subject. This Husserlian first-person point of view reveals that what belongs to the fundamental essence of the objects of experience is that they embody a reality independent of the experiencing subject.\textsuperscript{709}

Husserl’s basic notion may well be juxtaposed with that of his American contemporary, Dewey, as far as the subject-object dualism is concerned. Indeed, Husserl’s rebuke to the Humean-Kantian third-person view when it comes to analyzing human experience is strikingly close to Dewey’s hostility to what he calls the ‘spectator theory of knowledge’ mentioned earlier. Both Husserl and Dewey reflect the nature of what I have called the positive method also says it is beyond the bounds of all our concepts of understanding, among which is causation. Idealism draws the conclusion that Kant is wrong on this point, that there is no ‘thing in itself’ involved in sense experience.”

\textsuperscript{707} Kolb 1986, 91.

\textsuperscript{708} Bernasconi and Critchley 1991, xiii.

\textsuperscript{709} MacIntyre 2006, 19–49.
versus the rational method. Now, of course it is this type of anti-Kantian Husserlian discovery that is behind Heidegger’s contentions and enables Heidegger to transcend the subject-object dichotomy by phenomenology, as I stated in chapter 1.

At the same time, however, as we have seen, Heidegger adds a skeptical element to Husserl. While no doubt it belongs to the fundamental essence of the objects of experience that they embody a reality independent of the experiencing subject, one cannot say anything further about these objects because of the simultaneous immediate experience of the subject’s radical confinement in time. The object of my immediate experience is not only reality in general, but also myself as a subject experiencing reality radically embedded in the finitude of ‘Being’. This amounts to a paradox, namely, that no experience of reality can be immediate in the Husserlian sense in which one seeks the ultimate essence of the objects experienced; the only possible immediate experience is this very lack of immediacy. I observe that there is no opportunity to grasp the essence of things beyond the fact that they exist. I can say “that they are” (‘being’), but I cannot say, definitively, “how they are” (‘Being’) owing to my finite condition. Now, it is precisely this Heideggerian double stance toward Husserl that Derrida develops further in his deconstructionist program, as is evident in Reiman’s description of Derrida:

In Speech and Phenomena, Jacques Derrida gives an argument for nongivenness of meaning and thus for the fundamentality of interpretation from within phenomenology itself. He does so by playing Husserl’s Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness (trans. James Churchill [Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1964; originally published 1928]) off against Husserl’s own theory of the intuitive givenness of linguistic meaning. The latter requires there to be an instantaneous grasp of the meaning of a term, while the former shows that there is nothing in consciousness that is instantaneous. Everything in consciousness is elapsing in time, and that implies that the appearance of an instantaneous grasp of meaning is really the product of a gathering up of flowing elements of experience into some meaningful totality, which is to say, interpretation. Nor should the term “elements” here be taken as implying yet other instantaneous givens, since that too is denied by the elapsing nature of consciousness. As far down as we go, all we get are interpretations.710

What I have wanted clarify here is that, while it is true that Derrida inhabits the end of the same continuum of which Kant is the starting point, it is precisely and only the transcendentalist dimension that Derrida has inherited from Kant via Hegel and Heidegger. At the same time there remains a crucial Husserlian element in Derrida that makes him at least as strongly anti-Kantian in terms of subject-object dualism as Dewey. This element is the Heideggerian critique, not the Kantian or Humean one, that Derrida turns against Husserl himself. The finitude of time makes one incapable of saying or perceiving anything definitive about reality, but this does not dismantle the phenomenological reality-orientedness toward which Husserl has already guided us after and against Kant.

Having said this, it is crucial to understand in what sense Derrida can be still considered to embody an even stronger Husserlian reality-oriented positive method by his very Kantian element, that is, transcendentalism. The answer brings us to another, anti-Heideggerian phe-
nomenological inheritance in Derrida. Namely, even Heideggerian phenomenological “scepticism” is not the whole story. Strikingly, it may be considered the servant of one specific reality-oriented element in Derrida, that is, the moment of the Other. In effect, this brings us to Derrida’s Levinasian rendering of ‘ethics as first philosophy’. It is important that Levinas retained the Husserlian type of “positive” phenomenology against the Heideggerian type of “negative” phenomenology precisely in his “horizontal” relationship with the Other, which after all is the primordial dimension of ‘ethics as first philosophy’ as opposed to those models, Heidegger included, that preoccupy themselves with ‘Being’ (meaning ontology and metaphysics). Now it seems that Derrida is following Levinas, instead of Heidegger, at least to some extent, in insisting on some role for immediacy in the Husserlian sense in this phenomenological type of encounter with the Other.

In that particular light, it is possible to respond plausibly to the dilemma of radical choice by opposing both the deontological and the Sandelian rendering of the self. While this Levinasian dimension is against ontology, it is not against the absolute nature of ethics approached through momentary experiential discovery. Hence, Derrida retains his credibility within the framework of the positive method precisely through endorsement of ‘ethics as first philosophy’. Derrida’s Heideggerian scepticism on this account is to be seen for the sake of real, that is, the Other.

What I mean becomes clear, first, by observing that along the Levinasian lines Derrida is still able to retain the emancipatory aspect, while completely restricting oneself to experience(s) of the Other without rational ambitions for unity and thereby avoid the problem of hegemony at the individual level. In this light it is also possible to juxtapose Derrida with Sandel’s alternative to the deontological self. Some purely intuitive experience is indeed what was taken to be the potential Sandelian alternative to liberalism’s unencumbered self already in Rawls’s case. There I also posed the question of whether Sandel’s invocation of intuition would really solve the problem of communitarian conventionalism. Now, in light of Derrida’s account of the ethical intuition, even though it embodies a decisionist version of the positive method with a somewhat different flavor from what Sandel himself might endorse, there arise some notable opportunities to consider whether it is really intuition, paradoxically, in an “im-pure” sense that might enable a tradition-critical perspective without doing away with a concept of the self thickly encumbered with social contingency. This intuition, or rather a continuous and non-final striving for that intuition, concerns first, the possibility, or, better, the potential, to discern the self from its distorting encumbrances.

As the self, the Other is even more characteristically beyond the self’s final grasp. In Levinas the emphasis has nevertheless shifted from me to the Other. It is now the good of the other, albeit in no single unitary package, not my good, as was the case with Sandel, that is the focus of anti-liberalist ethics. The nature of normative ethics follows from radical heteronomy, from intuitive recognition that I am thickly encumbered – precisely by the Other. This is the final and most plausible rejoinder to Sandel’s Hegelian critique of radical choice and to the related problem of the deontological self from the perspective of poststructuralism:
radical choice is not carried out by the totally autonomous self, but rather by the self ultimately defined—momentarily and sporadically, once and for all, but ever anew—by the singular encounter(s) with the Other. The face of the Other is the source of this heteronomy.\textsuperscript{711}

At the same time, however, Derrida’s Levinian pattern is still a fine example of the culmination of the liberal project: even though experience recognizes the need for antecedent encumbrance, the focus is still at the horizontal level by which I refer, in practice, to categorical imperative’s second version. Having shown the central role of Levinas in Derrida in order to confirm the latter’s credibility within the positive method, I must ask a further question: what is the added value of Kantian-Heideggerian “skepticism” from the perspective of the positive method? This is after all the other ingredient in Derrida’s philosophy. Indeed, this question is right to the point, because it is precisely by way of Heideggerian reconstruction that Derrida is able to complete Levinas’s project of placing the singular and momentary ethical encounter with the Other at the center of all philosophy. Along these lines the Heideggerian type of deconstruction may be seen in the service of this Real in Derrida’s critique of Levinas. How this is so may be seen, first, through considering Levinas’s affinities to Jaspers and then comparing this juxtaposition with Derrida’s inflection.

When considering the Heideggerian line of thought in general, it is, not surprisingly, the Levinian pattern that is at stake in the case of Jaspers’s philosophy (dealt with in chapter 1). For Jaspers, man’s deeds attest to the degree of his personal commitment to transcendent, though ultimately indeterminate,\textsuperscript{712} truth, while Derrida puts great emphasis on the seriousness of the commitment to decision despite its undecidable character—precisely because of its undecidable character.\textsuperscript{713} Thus, both Jaspers and Derrida show a strong moral bias that likens Levinasian ‘ethics as first philosophy’.

But there is in fact a decisive affinity between Jaspers and Levinas also at the “vertical” level, namely, Jaspers’s view of God as ‘Being-in-itself’ transcending any positive articulation may be juxtaposed with Levinas’s God as “the first Other.” Significantly, while Ehrlich refers to the medieval Jewish thinker Maimonides and his negative theology in order to locate Jaspers’s conception historically,\textsuperscript{714} Levinas entwines his philosophy even more closely with Jewish theology. This is because Levinas sees the God of the Torah as the prime expression of radical difference. God is not only the “first other,” but “other than the other.” God transcends otherness itself.\textsuperscript{715} One important corollary is that Levinas’s political messianic vision is permeated by the context of the Jewish nation as an ideal political community of the Oth-

\textsuperscript{711} Campbell 1994, 
\textsuperscript{712} Ehrlich 1975, 5. 
\textsuperscript{713} Hahn 2002, 8. 
\textsuperscript{714} Ehrlich 1975, 152–157. 
\textsuperscript{715} Davis 1996, 95–106.
There is, however, both from the Jaspersian and the Derridean perspective, a point to be made, namely, that Levinas is not perfectly consistent with his own aim.

Derrida is the one to complete this self-critical vein that follows from the Levinasian invention of radical difference. Derrida’s claim would be that Levinas inevitably retains the exclusion of some difference by introducing a particular way in which the transcendent Other “incarnates” in history. Instead, one should dismantle every possible ideological exclusion again and again in order to appreciate the ever newly emerging singularity of responsibility for the “face” of the Other. This brings Derrida to his deconstructionism as a basis for his international politics. This “New International” seems to respond beautifully to the contemporary political predicament, because it interprets the ethical relationship between the self and the Other as taking place independently of national or communal differences. As Simon Critchley observes: “As there is no conception of the political without an enemy, it might be asked: Who would be the enemy of such a New International? The logic of Derrida’s argument would seem to entail that the enemy would be any form of nationalism, whether French, Israeli . . .” Yet there is an open question in deconstructionist politics to which Critchley alludes only in brackets:

(An open question for me would be as to the sufficiency of this notion of “the enemy.” Namely, that nationalists are fairly easy enemies to have, and matters get more complicated when one faces other “internationals” with different and perhaps opposing political objectives. I am thinking here not only of the various international humanitarian organizations, but also of the many multinational corporations and financial institutions, such as World Bank.)

In the face of other social programs it becomes relevant that deconstructionism is itself such a program and also that this social program may be challenged by the others and hence is in need of defense. Both aspects arising from the nature of deconstructionism as a social program suggest that, although deconstructionism is based on the singular event of the encounter with the Other, this is not the whole of its truth.


Critchley 1999, 278: “Thus, Derrida makes this seemingly formalistic move in order to avoid what I called above the possible political fate of Levinas’s work, namely the latter’s ‘opinions’ on the ‘terrestrial Jerusalem’ which, whilst not simply ‘un nationalisme de plus’ (AEL 202) continually runs the risk of being conflated with the latter. What has to be continually deconstructed is the guarantee of a full incarnation of the universal in the particular, or the privileging of a specific particularity because it embodies the universal. However, it is hugely important to point out that Derrida’s avoidance of the possible political fate of Levinasian ethics is not done in order to avoid concrete political questions, questions of the specific content of political decisions, but on the contrary to defend what he has elsewhere called in relation to Marx ‘The New International.’ ”

Critchley 1999, 279.

Critchley 1999, 279.

Critchley 1999, 279.
Derrida acknowledges that the immediate experience of ethical demand coming from the face of the Other may be impure or distorted. This is why there is always a need for “calculation” alongside the immediate encounter. Derrida acknowledges that my experience of duty toward the Other may indeed be distorted by non-immediacy. Therefore, he calls for a critical element besides the thoroughly positive moment of intuition. This critical element he calls calculation. Calculation refers to creative, never-ending self-criticism. There are probably always new totalities at work that blind us to the radically different Other, even within these immediate encounters, which constantly have to be invented anew. Perhaps most importantly, as one responds to the ethical demand of one encounter, this very response may well mean an exclusion of those Others that are not present in that encounter. The point is that society is always a whole, and including one member usually means excluding another. But in a sense deconstructionism acknowledges this paradox: on the one hand concrete political responsibilities arise from the singular event of encountering the Other in order for it to be authentically ethical. On the other hand, any political program is a generalization and as such is endlessly in need of deconstruction for the sake of radical difference, since all non-singular abstractions are related to inclusive totalities that distort the recognition of the radical Other.722

There is no experience, no testimony of the senses or of reason, that blazons forth the undeniable truth. Rather, the given is, so to speak constructed, which is to say, not given to us, but made by us. Postmodernism is an intensification of this attack, with a distinctive political spin.

The intensification takes the following form. If there is no given, interpretation is “fundamental” (not, of course, in the sense of a new foundational given, rather quite the reverse, in the sense of something beneath or behind which we cannot get, something that stands eternally between us and any foundational given). Interpretation is fundamental in the sense that it is the furthest down we can ever get . . .

Any supposedly canonical interpretation can be shown to have been purchased by the arbitrary exclusion of other possible ones . . .

Related to this technique is the political dimension of postmodernism. Much as any canonical interpretation is based on excluding alternative possible interpretations, any universal vision is based on excluding what doesn’t fit by defining it as “other,” “lesser,” “lower,” “bad,” “crazy,” “primitive” and so forth. With this, deconstruction becomes a political weapon in defense of the people who have been oppressed because their natures or ways have been excluded from the universal standard – as the means to define that very standard.723

Thus runs the Derridean paradox of decision and undecidability that, while creatively solving the philosophical problem of the radical choice better than Gray, nonetheless has major problems when applied to the political sphere of emancipation. The paradox derives from what Levinas calls “chiasms” in Derrida’s work. Derrida’s is a culmination of Kantian transcendental criticism (the rationalist type) of metaphysics on the one hand and a “glimpse” of something “wholly other” than this rational pattern, that of singularity of immediate encounter with the Other, ‘ethics as first philosophy’ on the other.724 Although Levinas too opposes totalizing

723 Reiman 1999, 316, 317.
724 Levinas 1991, 6, 7.
operations of reason for the sake of ethics – the latter referring to the responsibility arising from the “face of the Other” as the “first philosophy” – these two aspects of the chiasm are even more closely intertwined in Derrida than in Levinas.\footnote{Levinas has pointed out the “rigor” of Derrida in taking both aspects of the chiasm to the extreme, but for his part Levinas has not denounced this extreme double movement very vociferously either. (Critchley 1991:xii, xiv. See also Davis 1996:120–141.)} The ceaselessly creative self-critical process of ‘calculation’ becomes the core of deconstructionism itself.\footnote{Campbell 1994, 473: “The necessity of calculating the incalculable thus responds to a duty . . . This is the duty that also dwells with the deconstruction and makes it the starting point, the ‘at least necessary condition,’ for the organization of resistance to totalitarianism in all its forms. . . . this responsibility, which is the responsibility of responsibility, commissions a utopian strategy . . . one that, in respecting the necessity of calculation, takes the possibility summoned by the calculation as far as possible, ‘must take it as far as possible, beyond the place we find ourselves and beyond the already identifiable zones of morality or politics or law, beyond the distinction between national and international, public and private, and so on.’ ”} The deconstructive calculation draws on Derrida’s Heideggerian face; conversely, it is precisely the dismantling of any ambition to structure reality through language that prepares the way for the infinite ethical need to highlight the singular moments of responsibility in the face of the Other. This structuring is a deficiency in Dewey and even Levinas, and it is indeed for the sake of the positive method, a completely non-critical and still absolute experience of something completely beyond the self, that any structures are to be deconstructed. Deconstructionism is thus designed to unmask and dismantle the varying mechanisms of immediately defining the Other, instead of appreciating the infinitely non-definable, but absolute moment of immediacy in the face of the Other. This is exactly what I mean when I claim that in Derrida, Heideggerian phenomenology is put into the service of Levinasian phenomenology: transcendental skepticism is argued for the sake of the Real. Paradoxically, here the rational and the positive methods are brought to their respective culmination points: taken to the extreme, the transcendental and thus the rational type of criticism as calculation, on the one hand, and the immediate and thus positive type of experience, on the other; both presuppose each other. This conclusion is the remarkable contribution of deconstructionism.

This means not only that there is no universal point of view and that the very mission of the poststructuralist researcher is in dismantling these supposed universalities in philosophical and political discussion, but also, and more positively, that the mission of poststructuralism in political studies is to trace, not the objectively best standpoint, but the complicated links through which these multifaceted political identities are endlessly formed and transformed.\footnote{Neumann 1996, 162, 163: “The Copenhagen coterie has also produced studies of how self/other relations impinge on the possibilities for international cooperation. The collective self is predicated on certain key political ideas – what constitutes a ‘state,’ a ‘nation,’ etc. – and will try to make these ideas the basis for institutionalization when they partake in political cooperation. As more than one project of what could be referred to as isomorphism – the attempted reconstruction of social structures in new environments – will invariably be involved, the ensuing political clashes can be studied as the very stuff of world politics. Thus, the key figure of the coterie, Ole Waever, may insist that this way of studying foreign policy offers a fully fledged identity-based alternative to traditional foreign policy analysis. . . .”}
As this type of poststructuralist revision of Gray’s value-pluralism may seem to pose a final refutation of rational political conceptions, scholars have sometimes sought to reconcile anti-relativism and poststructuralism in a way that would preserve some normative ingredients of ethics. In other words, the deconstructive nature of the moral subject and society may be seen to function as the rationale for the normative – or universal – requirement of democracy. The idea is that precisely the fact that there is no justification for any hegemonic ideology in society calls for a democratic institutional setting viewed as a license for constant deconstruction of hegemonies lurking in the society. This proposal does not, however, pay sufficient attention to the all-penetrating focus of the deconstructive claim. There is indeed no point in endorsing literally any institutional structure in light of it, and also the deconstruction itself is by no means free of its own deconstruction.

Herein lies the same danger mentioned above in Ricoeur’s criticism of Mannheim’s relationalism: the impartial standpoint is a hubris, and the researcher is embedded in, influenced by and (re)producing, ideology when “observing” social reality. In Mannheim there is an inherent blindness in the researcher’s own embeddedness in particularity. While the very acknowledgment of the inevitableness of ideological exclusion and its needed “healthy” balance with recognition for the Other’s difference is of central importance, there still remains the

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728 See for example Butler, Laclau, and Zizek 2000, 3: “Along the way, we each consider different ideological deployments of universality, and caution against both substantial and procedural approaches to the question. We thus differentiate ourselves (already internally differentiated) from the Habermasian effort to discover or conjure a pre-established universality as the presupposition of the speech act, a universality which is said to pertain to a rational feature of ‘man,’ a substantive conception of universality which equates it with a knowable and predictable determination, and a procedural form which presumes that the political field is constituted by rational actors. Of importance throughout these essays is the strategic question of hegemony: of how the political field is constituted, of what possibilities emerge from an approach to the political field that inquires into conditions of its possibility and articulation. Significantly, Laclau detects a movement of Marxist theory from the postulation of a ‘universal class’ which would ultimately eliminate political mediation and relations of representation, to a ‘hegemonic’ universality which makes the political constitutive of the social link. The poststructuralism of his approach is thus aligned with the critique of totalitarianism and, specifically, the trope of a ‘knowing’ vanguard subject who ‘is’ all the social relations he articulates and mobilizes.”

729 Laclau and Mouffe 2001. Butler, Laclau and Zizek 2000, 2, 3: “There are significant differences among us on the question of the ‘subject,’ and this comes through as we each attempt to take account of what constitutes or conditions the failure of any claim to identity to achieve final or full determination. What remains true, however, is that we each value this ‘failure’ as a condition of democratic contestation itself. . . . Whereas we sometimes differ on how the emphasis is to be made, we each offer accounts of universality which assume that the negative condition of all political articulation is ‘universal’ (Zizek), that the contestatory process determines forms of universality which are brought into a productive and ultimately irresolvable conflict with each other (Laclau), or that there is a process of translation by which the repudiated within universality is readmitted into the term in the process of remaking it (Butler).”; Ibid., 4: “We are all three committed to radical forms of democracy that seek to understand the processes of representation by which political articulation proceeds, the problem of identification – and its necessary failures – by which political mobilization takes place, the question of the future as it emerges for theoretical frameworks that insist upon the productive force of the negative.”

730 Neumann 1996, 167, 168: “In analysing the self/other nexus, it is particularly hard to ponder the ways in which the writer is implicated in what he or she writes about. Writing is also a normative concern . . . If our analyses are used in order to facilitate the ‘othering’ of this or that human collective, say the house of Islam or
question of how this balance is to be attained. It would seem that one cannot avoid recourse to certain criteria with respect to what ultimately is “active othering” or “dying from otherness” vis-à-vis healthy othering.

This distinction between exclusion and the criterion for its evaluation, while necessary for the realization of any political program, is not to be attained by defining the criterion as the deconstruction of all totalities in a poststructuralist manner. This is because the poststructuralist idea involves a paradox that – even though it might be defensible philosophically (which is uncertain) – dismantles action. This is pointed out by Stephen Eric Bronner:

Nowhere is there a sense that people are involved in real activities, structured by real institutions and agendas, and that they must often make choices between available options. Regulative ideals for informing such choices are never provided; positive ends disappear as surely as the process by which their value might be ascertained. Ethics remains negative or deconstructive. But this is not “ethics.” It merely introduces the term while withdrawing its content and purpose, which, incidentally, is precisely what occurs with the idea of justice. A self-referential ethics, an ethic unconcerned with providing positive criteria for making “practical” decisions or rendering normative judgments, is no ethic at all. . . .

Most postmodernists side with the struggles of the excluded and the chastised. But they lack criteria to decide upon the legitimacy of the protest. Their preoccupation with “gaming” the rules of justice occurs without reference to any positive, or universalist, articulation of what justice might involve. Their encounter with Marxism occurs without reference to its teleology, its political economy, its notion of agency, or the political traditions on which it is based. Their validation of desire is linked with an assault on utopia, and their antiessentialism logically generates a rejection of “rights.”

731 Bronner 2000, 199, 200. See also p. 200: “Such a stance can help make sense of aesthetic experiences and existential concerns with authenticity. But what is progressive in the cultural or existential realms need not prove progressive in the realm of politics, and vice versa. It is unnecessary to endorse the primacy of literary representation, or “socialist realism,” to note the irrationalist and reactionary possibilities evidenced by purely self-referential forms of aesthetic theory when transferred into the realm of politics. There is indeed a case to be made that the possibility for genuinely engaging in new forms of aesthetic experience radically increases within a democratic political order and, furthermore, that expanding the range of experimentation is among the purposes of such an order. But thinkers like Nietzsche and Heidegger clearly did not agree. They equated democracy and equality, justice and “humanity,” with decadence and mediocrity, the impersonal and the inauthentic. They were unconcerned with institutions, and they opposed the progressive political movements of their time. They obliterated the line between freedom and license. And that, indeed, can only benefit the powerful”; Ibid., p. 204: “[Poststructuralist forms of “strategic essentialism”] give no clue regarding when it is necessary to privilege universalist against particularistic claims. The relativism and emphasis on particular “experience,” which originally gave the method its philosophical power, are neither denied nor embraced. They are simply left in a strange form of limbo. . . . It is high time to end the equivocations. Let the postmodernist critics of Enlightenment values either keep their radically subjectivist form of theory and, in the manner of Nietzsche and Heidegger, transform the notion of praxis to meet their theoretical beliefs or else come to grips with political reality, recognize the needs of existing forms of progressive action, and draw the theoretical consequences.” See also pp. 198–205, 315–319.
Only by providing positive convictions can a philosophy exhibit its political validity. This problem, indeed, goes to the core of the postmodern project. It is insufficient simply to call for recognition of any particular interest without reference to universal norms; cultural prejudices are inherent in this kind of political stance. . . .

The contradiction between theory and practice now exists for postmodernism . . . And the response to this current situation must take the same form. . . .

This must, in the first instance, involve differentiating between relativism and pluralism. Both notions militate against the idea that any single truth will show the way into paradise; and, arguably, both call the notion of utopia into question. But pluralism presumes certain universal conditions or institutions for exercising it as well as the ability of individuals to make judgments about its character. Relativism assumes, by way of contrast, that a judgment or a claim or an emotional attitude is what it is and lacks the need for any objective referent to validate it for others.\(^{732}\)

From the perspective of Derridean poststructuralist politics, the problem lies in that the singularity of the momentary encounter with the Other cannot be repeated in time. The fundamental problem is that whenever one makes generalizations on the basis of a singular experience of the Other, one expects rational unity, which marginalizes and excludes in the totalitarian manner of othering.\(^{733}\) The aspect of calculation does not fit the radically experiential general framework and is itself in need of deconstruction. This is not a problem from the perspective of philosophy as much as it is a problem from the perspective of any political action, to which deconstructionism in particular and poststructuralism in general is also committed. In this light it is not surprising that Derrida has difficulties incorporating his philosophy into political programs. Campbell reflects on the reasons for this difficulty:

> This “failure” is derived . . . from the “fundamentally metaphysical” nature of the political codes within which both the right and the left presently operate. The problem for politics that this disjunction creates is, according to Derrida, that one has “to gesture in opposite directions at the same time: on the one hand to preserve a distance and suspicion with regard to the official political codes governing reality; on the other, to intervene here and now in a practical and *engagé* manner whenever the necessity arises.” This, Derrida laments, results in a “dual allegiance” and “perpetual uneasiness” whereby the logic of an argument structured in terms of *on the one hand* and *on the other hand* may mean that political action, which follows from a decision between the competing hands, is in the end insufficient to the intellectual promise of deconstructionism.\(^{734}\)

Unless we accept the influence of hegemonies, the factual equality of democratic society will never be realized in practice, the reason being that only communities can *mobilize* people to assert their political claims against totalizing and unifying “paramount hegemonies” in society overall. Downplaying the undeniably totalizing tendencies of the smaller-scale group hegemonies *alienates* citizens from this action – with the result that emancipation and empowerment become virtually impossible. Derrida too acknowledges this problem and addresses it in his own way:

> If it is necessary to make sure that a centralizing hegemony (the capital) not be reconstituted, it is also necessary, for all that, not to multiply the borders, i.e. the movements [*marches*] and margins

\(^{732}\) Bronner 1999, 203, 204.

\(^{733}\) In an important sense, the ambivalent relation of deconstructionism to abstraction is similar to the Hegelian line of thought in general; see, for instance, the discussion of Feuerbach’s ambivalent relation to abstraction in the previous chapter.

\(^{734}\) Campbell 1994, 474.
It is necessary not to cultivate for their own sake minority difference, untranslatable idiolects, national antagonisms, or the chauvinisms of idiom. Responsibility seems to consist today in renouncing neither of these two contradictory imperatives. One must therefore try to invent new gestures, discourses, politico-institutional practices that inscribe the alliance of these two imperatives, of these two promises or contrasts: the capital and the a-capital, the other of the capital. It is uncertain whether this acknowledgement adds anything substantial to the question. The problem remains that, in light of his own principles, Derrida is unable to specify the balance between unity and particularity. Yet what poststructuralism has plausibly shown is that there is no solution such as the constitutionalism of deliberative justice that Bronner, for instance, advocates. The problem with both of these views is that ideology is seen as fundamentally negative thing, something to be transcended. After all, it is precisely this transcending that is impossible, both theoretically and practically. To conclude the treatment of a long line of criticism from Kant to poststructuralists, the ultimate similarity between the mutually very different representatives is that while aiming to eliminate ideological exclusion, they embody it themselves within their own systems.

From the point of view of Foucault, the same problem can be accompanied by an additional problem. It is not only that deconstruction reiterates the othering but also that by resisting hegemony, it is impossible to avoid submission to that hegemony by the resistance. This is because by naming the points of opposition, the dissidents have already submitted to the overall definitions of the powerful. Judith Butler wants to deny that this problem of reiteration prevails or that authentic ways of resisting hegemony through speech would not exist. Catherine Mills, however, shows that a crucial tension remains between the Foucaultian aspect of ‘reiteration’ and Butler’s Derridean faith in the possibility of authentic resistance to which Butler is not able to give a feasible solution. Indeed, in light of Mills’s Foucaultian notions, Derrida seems to emphasize an unjustified optimism concerning the political possibilities of deconstruction. He speaks of the Derridean duty, the duty that also dwells with deconstruction and makes it the starting point, the “at least necessary condition,” for the organization of resistance to totalitarianism in all its forms. And it is a duty that responds to practical political concerns when we recognize that Derrida names the bad.

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736 Bronner 1999, 318: “Enough fine thinkers have remained content simply to insist upon the need to embrace both universalism and particularism, community and labor, interest groups and unions, identity and class. But this is to pretend that profound differences of material, ideological, and bureaucratic interest are relatively minor. It is to ignore the manner in which they are not merely mechanical, or instrumental, but rather take on a life of their own. The quest for “recognition” or affirmative action can, as is the case with certain trends within the African American and women’s movements, generate a demand for “redistribution.” But there is no reason that it must. Nationalism or parochialism will not somehow “dialectically” turn into internationalism and cosmopolitanism. The criterion for privileging either identity or class in a given situation is the extent to which highlighting the one would speculatively allow for furthering the concerns of the other . . .”

737 Mills 2000.
the perverse, and the worst as those violences “we recognize all too well without yet having thought them through, the crimes of xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, religious or nationalist fanaticism.”

In feminism the standard alternative to the discursive type of social resistance that Butler is defending would be “limiting resistance to legal regulation.” Conversely, there is now a similar problem lurking behind this alternative from the perspective of Derrida: it is difficult to see how jurisdiction would ultimately not be entangled with speech and language. In this way it is possible and necessary to show the internal problem of poststructuralist politics through mutual criticism of Foucault and Derrida. But, in the end, do Derrida’s own principles not lead to problems, which are not only political, but also concern the consistency of his philosophy as a whole? Not only the political application of the original encounter with the Other, but also the very encounter itself is to be seen ultimately dependent on language. In the quotation above Derrida seems to resort to the possibility of escaping the distortively transient flux of discourse in order to say at least something about his ethico-political preferences. But is it really possible to imagine any insight that, in the framework of Derrida’s general philosophy, would avoid “thinking it through”? As Derrida himself puts it:

Perception is precisely a concept, a concept of an intuition or of a given originating from the thing itself, present itself in its meaning, independently from language, from the system of reference. And I believe that perception is interdependent with the concept of origin and of center and consequently whatever strikes at the metaphysics of which I have spoken strikes also at the very heart of perception. I don’t believe that there is any perception.

What Reiman’s earlier quotation mentioned about Derrida’s Heideggerian critique of Husserl at the “vertical” level, that is, at the level of metaphysics and epistemology, appears not to be present to the same extent at the “horizontal” level, that is, at the level of ethics (and politics). Derrida’s self is not so radically bound by time in ethical perception as is the case with other kinds of perceptions. Levinas’s peculiarly constricted version of Husserlian reality-oriented phenomenology is accepted by Derrida, at least to a certain extent, while in all other directions the door for the optimist Husserl is definitively closed in the face of the blow from deconstructionism. All the more important then is that there are no clear grounds for this bias in Derrida’s overall theory. Quite the contrary, the principles of deconstructionism should logically close the door for any positive use of Levinas as well. Derrida should criticize not only Levinas’s Sionistic deviance from Levinas, but also Derrida should criticize his own Levinasian deviance from Derrida, so to speak. In this way the “transcendentalist” face of Derrida – taking the Kantian critique of knowledge to its extreme by deconstructionism – refutes, or

738 Campbell 1994, 473.
739 Mills 2000, 265.
740 Derrida 1990.
rather should refute, the Levinasian face of Derrida, namely, invoking a positive possibility for normative ethics and even, to some degree, politics by way of experience. In conclusion, while Derrida’s merit is indeed his acknowledgment of the interdependence of the rational and positive methods, he still reflects the problem of the liberal approach in general illustrated throughout this chapter: while presupposing each other, the rational and positive methods at the same time refute each other.

While the self-refuting character of the liberal approach is fatal theoretically, there is still more to that corollary, namely, a problem of a rather existential nature. One could actually say that the existential predicament of the self-repeal in liberalism is already found in Kant. Kant himself draws from the experiential aspect of ethics in the very fact that moral law as conscience is an ineradicable part of human nature. The same is true at the other extreme, that is, in the Levinasian type of experience of responsibility in the face of the Other.

It is clear in both cases that conscience makes a person feel that she should act in a moral way. But the realization of moral action already presupposes the availability of some rational structure that sufficiently settles the free-play of structure and is thus able to provide a rationale at least for the action in question. Moreover, it belongs to the nature of moral experience that the settling of the free-play must not be of any kind whatsoever, but it must be the right rationale for the particular action, that is, it has to have a firm basis in authentic reality as it stands instead of in the self-sufficient and abstract world of reason. It is significant that conscience within the liberal approach does not provide this kind of rationale, yet at the same time it requires it. The structure needed for concrete action is not to be found either by way of abstract reason, intuitive experience of humanity in general, or even a most immediate and singular perception possible “without thinking it through.” Even perception is never immediate enough, but is always in some sense a violent abstraction of the reality by means of language. One is left with a Derridean undecidable decision that is akin to Jaspers’s faith as personal commitment to Being-in-itself that one is to have in defiance of all available evidence. In Derrida the problems of the liberal approach are revealed: the (a) experiential yearning for (b) a rational structure – without resolution. When this tension is openly revealed, it is also existentially intensified to the extreme. The new question that transcends the conventional thought of Western philosophy is characteristically existential. As Hahn observes on Derrida:

> “a sort of question, call it historical,” which can only be conceived “. . . under the species of non-species, in the formless, mute in fact, and terrifying form of monstrosity” . . . [Derrida] will eventually identify this abiding within apparent contradictions as “aporia,” and will invoke an inheritance that sets out the necessity of decision at the same moment that it takes away the possibility of choice at the moment of decision being bound by a logical (programmable) necessity. Decision is taken in the face of and embodies contradiction.”

Campbell, along the lines of Derrida, insists that the undecidability of the moral decision is not, in the final analysis, deficiency but rather the undecidability makes responsibility what it is: a personal commitment instead of a conventional dogmatism. The latter would be closer to

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742 Hahn 2002, 10.
ethical ignorance than responsibility because it does not involve the personal element in its most radical form, that is, an ethical decision in the face of powers that seek to paralyze or manipulate that decision. Campbell thus attempts to give an ethically positive account of Derrida’s radical decisionism. Analogously, Ehrlich defends Jaspers against those who wish to see him as a philosopher of pessimism:

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\text{Is it not indeed remarkable to hear a philosopher in all seriousness challenge each and every man to become himself, to live as if all had not yet been determined, to do as if what counts may depend on him, to regard himself as the essentially participating instrument of truth, goodness, justice, to consider that every moment counts, that any situation may require the utmost, all the while not to be sure of any of this but to believe and enact it out of his own resources on the chance that it may be true, and with the consciousness that in case it is true he must not fail, and since it may be true he must live with the burden of having failed.}
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After all, it seems that both of the defenses above, no doubt authentically reflecting the spirit of Derrida and Jaspers, mitigate the tension between the demands of conscience and the structure needed for fulfilling these demands. It is built in the Heideggerian line of thought that a person cannot fulfill the demands or at least cannot have any assurance or encouragement whatsoever in fulfilling the demands, owing due to the radically finite human situation. All the same, the voice of conscience prevails; indeed, it even intensifies in the face of the impossibility to obey consciously. The result is not a Derridean terrifying monstrosity or a Jasperian extreme courage, but a Kierkegaardian despair.

Of course, Heidegger recognizes anxiety, which is not absent in Jaspers or Derrida either. But anxiety is not the same as desperateness here. Real desperateness is infinitely dissatisfied with the present situation. The fact that there is no confession of total despair is a sign that there is still hope that the tension is not so “monstrous” as it could be. Insofar as there are signs of hope in Heidegger, Jaspers, and Derrida, as there clearly seem to be, these viewpoints need revision according to their own principles. It would seem that there are two plausible ways out of the situation of despair, one of giving up hope and accepting the predicament, and the other of finding ways to fight it. But, of course, the former is not an alternative forward.

The latter, in turn, requires that the ‘structure’ called for be sought by means other than those of the liberal approach. This is akin to, but not the same as what Derrida identifies as something completely other than Western philosophy, because deconstructionism does not

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743 Campbell 1994, 470, 471.

744 Ehrlich 1975, 228.

745 Cf. Bronner 1999, 199: “Postmodernists would surely respond by noting the lack of foundation for any type of genuinely epistemological inquiry. And without “foundations,” epistemology supposedly loses its justification. Even if epistemology lacks absolute justification, however, its various forms of expression might still harbor qualitatively different practical implications. These demand normative judgment. If the drive toward systematic thinking is seen as totalitarian, and all ethical justifications for action are termed illusory, then rendering a reasoned judgment becomes impossible. The abdication of ethical judgment thus turns into a principle of judgment.”
refute the whole of Western philosophy, but remains to a significant degree caught by it. Derrida peculiarly embodies a liminal stage between liberalism and its subversion, a significant stage indeed, but still a liminal one that does not fully complete the subversion. Indeed, the point in Derrida is that there is no such thing as complete subversion that would put an end to his proposed double movement. In the remaining part of this study, however, it will become evident that it is Derrida’s adherence to the liberalist paradigm in general that makes him, like all other authors discussed up to now, blind to the possibilities for genuine, but nevertheless consistent subversion.
III The Postliberal Potential of Global Ethics

Several of the positions presented in the previous chapter cannot, strictly speaking, be categorized as either the positive or the rational method, but rather both. Many contemporary global ethical positions are indeed hybrids of the two main methods sketched above. One might conclude that these are examples of how to avoid the self-refuting dilemma of the liberal paradigm. This conclusion, however, would be a misunderstanding. As the capabilities approach, for instance, shifts to the deontological method in the question of justifying the universality of global ethics, it also surrenders to the experiential type of criticism on that very point. Or insofar as Rawls presents certain welfare-state options for a liberal theory, to the same extent this makes him vulnerable to orthodox deontological criticism. Hence, the point in highlighting the mutually refuting features of the two methods is that, as the methods in their purity can be refuted (mutually) as single and separate methods, any combination deriving from these methods will inevitably be refuted, though now by a criticism that likewise combines their mutual criticisms.

To put it differently: as the capabilities approach resorts to some degree of rationalization and abstraction in order to argue for a universal communitarian theory, one may rightly ask why stop at some degree and not go all the way to the extreme rationalization? When using the method of deontology aspiring to universality by rational inference, one also has to accept the content of ethics, which is revealed by this method, that is, ‘the priority of right over the good’. Thus, in principle it is actually even less possible to combine the two methods than it is to defend one of them as a whole.

Put differently, yet again, the problem appears to be that while one would have to choose either extreme of the liberal paradigm, that is, either Kant or Derrida, it is evident that one cannot derive any ethical or political content from either. The claim here concerning the liberal paradigm may be as seen congenial to MacIntyre’s more general statement on the development of modern philosophy. In MacIntyre’s quotation below one may, for present purposes, see a Humean alternative to Kant tantamount to the positive method presented above, as well as find a third alternative provided by poststructuralism above tantamount to a Kierkegaardian argument below:

What drives Hume to the conclusion that morality must be understood in terms of, explained and justified by reference to, the place of the passions and desires in human life is his initial assumption that either morality is the work of reason or it is the work of the passions and his own apparently conclusive arguments that it cannot be the work of reason. Hence he is compelled to the conclusion that morality is a work of the passions quite independently of and prior to his adducing of any positive arguments for that position. The influence of negative arguments is equally clear in both Kant and Kierkegaard. Just as Hume seeks to found morality on the passions because his arguments have excluded the possibility of founding it on reason, so Kant founds it on reason because his arguments have excluded the possibility of founding it on the passions, and Kierkegaard on criterionless fundamental choice because of what he takes to be the compelling nature of the considerations which exclude both reason and the passions.

Thus the vindication of each position was made to rest in crucial part upon the failure of the other two, and the sum total of the effective criticism of each position by the others turned out to be the failure of all. The project of providing a rational vindication of morality had decisively
failed; and from henceforward the morality of our predecessor culture – and subsequently of our
own – lacked any public, shared rationale or justification.\textsuperscript{746}

Logically, the solution to the self-refuting feature of the liberal approach is not found in its
two methods, whatever their combinations. Hence, there has to be another dimension entirely,
independent of the two. The ultimate problem lies deep in the differences between the nature
of moral reasoning and descriptive science. MacIntyre ascribes to the philosophical project of
the Enlightenment the same predicament that, in our context, could be applied to the whole of
the liberal project:

\begin{quote}
At the same time as \cite{Diderot, Hume, Kierkegaard, and Kant} agree largely on the character of mo-
rality, they agree also upon what rational justification of morality would have to be. Its key pre-
mises would characterize some feature or features of human nature; and the rules of morality
would then be explained and justified as being those rules which a being possessing just such a
human nature could be expected to accept. For Diderot and Hume the relevant features of human
nature are characteristics of the passions; for Kant the relevant feature of human nature is the uni-
versal and categorical character of certain rules of reason. (Kant of course denies that morality is
“based on human nature,” but what he means by “human nature” is merely the physiological non-
rational side of man.)\textsuperscript{747}
\end{quote}

Now, MacIntyre – moving on to give his account of the failure of the Enlightenment project –
invokes a very useful distinction. He claims that, historically as well as logically, there is no
other alternative to consistent ethics than the Aristotelian model in which the concept of
“man-as-he-happens-to-be” is contrasted with that of “man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-
essential-nature” whereby the second definition is tantamount to “man-as-he-could-be-if-he-
realized-his-essential-telos.”\textsuperscript{748} One might think of the classical statement ‘no ought from is’
applied in this new context by MacIntyre: it is not possible to derive prescriptive statements
about how man should act from the descriptive statements about what man \textit{de facto} happens
to be. Significantly, however, MacIntyre instead \textit{refutes} the ‘no ought from is’ principle and
suggests that deriving the ethical ‘ought’ from man’s actual situation is in fact a clue to re-
solving the deadlock of the Enlightenment. How is this to be understood?

My proposal for interpreting MacIntyre’s intention is to be possible to differentiate be-
tween two different levels of the principle ‘no ought from is’. One is the so-called horizontal
level in which principles are sought for directly fulfilling the second formulation of the cate-
georical imperative. In this sense of the word the ‘no ought from is’ principle is indeed valid,
and MacIntyre shows that it is virtually ignored by Enlightenment figures, despite their gen-
eral endorsements of the principle.

The other level of ‘no ought from is’ is the one that MacIntyre refers to with an Aristo-
telian flavour, and it is related to the search for principles for the second formulation of the
categorical imperative at most indirectly, that is, by focusing first on the question of the ultimate \textit{telos} of man, instead of on the categorical imperative’s horizontal level. From the per-

\textsuperscript{746} MacIntyre 1985, 49, 50.

\textsuperscript{747} MacIntyre 1985, 52.

\textsuperscript{748} MacIntyre 1985, 52, 53.
spective of PWE this means that it is not possible to detach minimal ethos from maximal ethos. Instead, the latter must always guide the former. The ethical dimension of theology is not isolated from the wholeness of a particular world view as Enlightenment thinking has often understood it. Here, at the level of evaluating ‘comprehensive doctrines,’ it is indeed relevant to take into account facts about human needs and capacities. ‘No ought from is’ would then, according to MacIntyre’s thinking, apply only to the horizontal level; the ethico-political ‘ought’ should be derived from a more ultimate level, that is, not only a comprehensive and substantive account of human good, but also a definite and universal account. The latter may indeed be worked out through ‘is’, that is, human needs and dispositions, and it may be possible that the unconscious motive for the proponents of the liberal paradigm to refer either to the rules of human reason or the experience of human good is the awareness of this general fact.

Yet the reality is quite different in the liberal approach: liberalist solutions refuse, by way of metaphysics, to begin by determining a particular telos naturally valid for all humans. Rather, they begin directly at the horizontal level, that is, with moral justification and political articulation of the second formulation of the categorical imperative. The overarching feature of the liberal agenda, all the way from Kant to Derrida as shown in the previous chapter, is that it embodies the contrary method of going directly to this “horizontal” level. To be sure, Kant realized the importance of ‘no ought from is’ and therefore wanted to resort to categorical axioms arrived at by way of logic; in this sense he may still be said to endorse ‘no ought from is’ in some narrow sense. This is reflected in his subordination of the second formulation of the categorical imperative to the first formulation. But at the same time Kant did not recognize that his practical reason belonged to untutored human capacities rather than logic proper and that abstract reason does not grasp the essence of what is alluded to in the second version of the categorical imperative. From Rawls on, the authors above attempt to incorporate alternative experiential aspects into the liberalist theory with the result that finally the necessity for openly calling for substantive human good as the vantage point for ethics has emerged. Nevertheless, from Dewey to Gray, the difference from MacIntyre’s proposal is that the good is seen more or less as culturally and historically relative as well as internally pluralistic instead of fixed and universal and applicable to all humans irrespective of their historical and cultural situation. There is a salient hostility to essentialist anthropology. Finally, for Derrida the only thing that is absolute is related to the horizontal responsibility for the Other, which escapes any definition. In Derrida, the Levinasian personalism and ‘ethics as first philosophy’ is introduced as the ultimate expression of the drive toward the most radical relativization of metaphysics.

In light of the failure of the liberal paradigm, one may now proceed to a postliberal paradigm with its ultimate claim: a metaphysical telos prior to the immanent nature of both rationality and experience, must be found, one which informs the otherwise too formal rationality and thus gives the otherwise too informal experience its formal criterion in social contexts. One solution would be to invoke Hegelian metaphysics, but, in its faith in pure reason,
this viewpoint has proven to be incapable of addressing the historical realities articulated both by Marxian and Heideggerian critique. But neither Marx nor Heidegger has provided feasible solutions. While Marx goes on to invoke a flawed political vision, Heidegger – and Jaspers for that matter – remains too formal to indicate any concrete political vision. In order to provide a more feasible account of reality than Hegel and without either denouncing metaphysics as the source of an objectively and articulate human telos versus existentialism, it is necessary to synthesize the rational and positive methods in a more fruitful way than has been done by any of the liberalist models discussed above.

In the remaining part of the study, I have a two-fold aim. The first is, to ask what would be a philosophically more consistent argument for ethics in general and global ethics in particular than those I have presented earlier. It will emerge that an essential part of the answer to this question is determining how to combine the rational and positive methods more coherently than has been done heretofore. My purpose is to show that it is indeed possible to combine the two opposite approaches in a more fruitful way precisely in terms of the metaphysical enterprise as compared with the earlier “horizontal” or immanent one. In fact, two different ways to integrate the rational and positive methods will emerge, according to their emphasis on the opposite ends of this methodological synthesis. Yet both embody a genuine synthesis. Hence, the reader has to bear in mind that what is meant as the rational and the positive methods has more with emphasis than with substantial difference. This was after all the case with the horizontal types of liberal models discussed in the previous section whereby the models were more or less combinations, only with different emphases.

The second aim of the remainder of this study is to show what the metaphysical vantage point – that is, the two alternative metaphysical ways of combining the rational and the positive methods – entails in terms of global ethics in contrast to the basic assumptions largely common to all views discussed up to now.
1. The Rational Method: The Aristotelian Line

1.1. MacIntyre, Ricoeur and Sandel as Postliberalists

It has been one of my essential aims to show how different political models attempt to reconcile mutually opposing perspectives within the same theory, each intending to improve the others, yet the result is exposure to equally justified critique from the perspective of the views that were meant to be improved. MacIntyre provides a substantial contribution to this overall critique of the liberal approach by carefully showing that the entire political and ethical discussion of modern society is marked from the outset by a salient inconclusiveness. This is because different moral views of how society should be organized, be they theoretical or practical, in fact include, as it were, remnants of some particular metaphysical and substantive world views that are nevertheless ignored in the very articulation of their theories. One example is Rawls’s egalitarianism versus Nozick’s libertarianism. The tension between the two cannot be resolved philosophically by merely assessing the arguments for Rawls’s principles of equality of opportunities and difference against Nozick’s theory of entitlements without fundamental inconclusiveness. A person may view himself morally entitled to claim a certain sum of money for her or his labor done without at the same time believing in having an obligation to compromise this claim for the sake of the least advantaged in society. Or it may quite coherently be argued that it is an inviolable moral principle that no one should be deprived of any of her rightly acquired property, even for the sake of the poor, without the free consent of the owner. Again, equally justified reasons may be invoked to argue that this deprivation should take place, at least to some decent extent, as Rawls, among others, has indeed argued. MacIntyre notes that the ultimate source of these disagreements, which in their plurality are the underlying feature of the modern political discussion, lies beyond the arguments invoked. In the case of Nozick and Rawls, what would actually contribute to finding a solution would include first and foremost addressing the more fundamental world views that each unconsciously reflects, namely, Aristotelian versus Christian anthropology and the ensuing social perspectives.749

Of course, the immediate question is, how are we ever to assess impartially the mutual superiority of any substantive metaphysical world view when there is at least as great a disagreement on these views as there is on basic ethical and political doctrines? Putting the question this way, however, is from the point of view of postliberalism inadequate at the very least, because it follows from a liberalist understanding of the world. As became clear in assessing the Rawlsian model, the most substantial critique of liberalism is putting the idea of the unencumbered self into question. Sandel gives a convincing account of how the deontological self, which does away with social encumbrances antecedent of personal choices, deprives the moral agent of any possible criteria for making decisions, the result being a fundamental arbitrariness that is contrary to how we understand the morally responsible life should

749 MacIntyre 1985, 244–255; 6–11.
take place in reality. This idea of social encumbrance will be elaborated on further below with a view to providing a plausible answer to the question that has arisen, namely, how to evaluate ethical and political doctrines at a more fundamental level in order to put an end to the radical inconclusiveness of the contemporary disagreement within liberalism.

From the point of view that I will here call the rational method, the basic notion is that the problem, and the consequent predicament in the inability to articulate any genuinely coherent model for global ethics, is that the liberal models belong to the type of thought that attempts to transcend the viewpoints of rival comprehensive accounts of reality. For Paul Ricoeur, as opposed to such liberally-oriented scholars as Jürgen Habermas, there is no such thing as purely objective reality as opposed to the one that is always being mediated to humans through metaphors and their interpretations of a highly relative nature. Now this would seem to show no difference from the poststructuralist thought stated above. However, there is a crucial difference between Ricoeur and Derrida with regard to the explanation of reality. As Simms describes:

Ricoeur calls Nietzsche and Derrida “philosophers of suspicion:” they suspect that there is something wrong with metaphysics, that it is a con, and that its inherent tendency to hoodwink the unwary needs to be exposed. But Ricoeur himself, on the contrary, is not suspicious of metaphysics, and he has faith in its ability to reveal the truth. This is also a faith in the ability of metaphor to tell truth. Ricoeur’s central objection to both Nietzsche and Derrida is that their theories only consider dead metaphor (metaphor that its users have forgotten is metaphorical, such as “toe the line”). Once living metaphor – and, more precisely, the ability to coin new metaphor – is admitted, argues Ricoeur, then the ability of language to increase the store of human knowledge is restored, and the suspicion one might feel towards metaphysics melts away.\textsuperscript{750}

Owing to a positive stance toward language, Ricoeur also differs decisively from the understanding of ideology vis-à-vis Habermas and Derrida. Opposing the former, Ricoeur insists that a fundamentally neutral standpoint cannot be preferred to a particularity of ideology; opposing the latter, he claims that this by no means downplays the quest for truth: it is the contest of particular ideologies that matter, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of general truth. This is after all the point in ideologies – they seek to challenge their adversaries with reference to truth instead of power.\textsuperscript{751} In other words, Ricoeur welcomes the ‘othering’ – the defining of the other self for the sake of truth and objectivity and not against it as in Derrida’s criticism – as the one necessary characteristic of human life.

This is a very different picture of ideological conflicts from those pointed by Habermas and Derrida. Of course, the picture itself is part of the ideological struggle; its claim is not stated from the neutral position of the observer as in Mannheim and Habermas, but also, undeniably, in poststructuralism. Hence, the question arises of how this claim is in a position to avoid the self-refuting dynamics it attributes to deconstructionism.\textsuperscript{752} The decisive move by

\textsuperscript{750} Simms 2003, 76.

\textsuperscript{751} Taylor 1986, xxiii,xxix

\textsuperscript{752} The same question is crucial for William E. Connolly (Connolly 2008, 315), who attempts to avoid the self-refuting essentialism of poststructuralism by characterizing his poststructuralist claims as only one faith-claim
Ricoeur here is to introduce a dialectical dynamics of objectivity and relativity. In order to defend the particularity of ideologies as a positive thing, Ricoeur maintains that there is also an opportunity simultaneously to take speculative distance from ideologies; the embeddedness of human beings within ideologies – or traditions in the Gadamerian sense – is not total. Nevertheless, the dialectics between relativity and objectivity is somewhat mystical; it relates to the imaginative capacities of human beings. Speculative distance, which enables a critique of ideologies, is most effective in “utopias,” which “come from nowhere,” but are still not fictional. Utopia is what unites two opposing realities, particularity and objectivity.  

The problem with deconstructionism is that it takes its two chiasms, that of the critical rational method and the immediacy of the experiential method, to extreme. This means that neither avoids being self-refuting. The existential ethical experience in the manner of Levinas should instead moderate the critique of ‘othering’ in the same way that the concept of ‘distantiation’ through imagination enables Ricoeur to endorse a positive view of ideology. Likewise, the critical method of deconstructionism should moderate the uniqueness of the phenomenological ethical encounter in a way that ‘calculation’ would connote not only further deconstruction of totalities, but also a positive construction of society.

Ricoeur’s account of ideology is what fits generally into Sandel’s scheme of the encumbered self. What distinguish Ricoeur’s account from the concept of complete social encumbrance are, of course, the related aspects of ‘distantiation’, speculation, and utopia. Sandel, however, does not endorse a complete encumbrance either. Indeed, he carefully dissociates himself from such communitarianism, which ascribes the role of guiding a person’s ethical decisions entirely to the community the individual inhabits; in such conventionalism any moral criticism of communities necessary for any serious conception of ethics would evaporate. Instead, Sandel invokes an alternative picture, both to liberalism and conventionalism, analogous to Ricoeur’s, wherein the encumbered self is simultaneously struggling for emancipation from communal distortions. Sandel’s positive scheme focuses on discerning an authentic individual identity and its collectivist distortions without dismantling the thorough embeddedness from antecedently given ends. Showing first the implausibility of viewing the self totally independent of its ends, Sandel then introduces a model in which it is possible to distinguish the antecedent encumbrances that do not belong to the self from those that do. According to Sandel, the self is antecedently thickly constituted of its ends, but not all antecedent encumbrances are necessarily these constituents; this notion leads to the critical dimension in Sandel’s own version of communitarianism.

among other similarly contesting and contestable faith-claims. In practice, my claim will be that it is only through a Ricoeurian pattern that Connolly is in a position to advance these claims.

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753 Taylor 1986, xxv–xxxv.


What both authors contribute to the liberal project is a rather positive account of ideology (Ricoeur) or social encumbrance (Sandel). The problem with both, however, is that they do not seem to argue for the possibility of the negative aspect, the critical potential of ethics. How is it possible to distinguish what is me from what I only have? This question is ultimately left unanswered by Sandel. The problem with Ricoeur is to justify satisfactorily the genuine possibility of ‘distantiation’ by the imagination, speculation, and utopia with respect to the contextuality of ideology and tradition. One would need more detailed elaboration of how a fully plausible model applicable to political action is attained. We will next consider the MacIntyrean supplement, which seems to provide a more comprehensive rationale for these general patterns proposed by Sandel and Ricoeur and also seems to be needed, at least in considering the feasible formulation of global ethics.

MacIntyre’s essential claim is twofold. First, as already noted, contemporary ethico-political disagreements are resolved only by addressing the question of the ultimate substantive telos of human life, which functions as the ground and justification for any specific ethical or political decision. Second, and what makes MacIntyre at one with Ricoeur and Sandel, this telos is to be sought rationally only from a particular point of view, that is, by being genuinely committed to some particular moral tradition and its premises. Only from within that vantage point are its premises as well as those of other traditions critically evaluated. While this view of rationality does introduce a critical dimension as opposed to communal conventionalism, it also questions the liberalist idea of finality and neutrality. MacIntyre’s proposal is that the modern world has retained the external conception of rationality in its aspiration for a rational justification of ethics, while at the same time blinding itself to the historical development that shows how rationality is to be defined in reality. The result of this unfortunate detachment from the history of ethics is unnecessary cynicism about metaphysical disagreement and a quixotic optimism about political disagreement. In order to make his case against modern liberalism philosophically coherent MacIntyre finds it necessary to outline of history of which the Enlightenment has deprived itself. For this and other reasons, it is necessary here to turn our attention to this history.

1.2. From Homer to Aquinas

The history on which MacIntyre bases his thesis had its starting point in ancient disagreements that in turn were rooted in the ambivalence found in Homer. What was unsolved on the basis of Homeric thinking was whether the ultimate human telos is singular or plural, the latter reflecting the relativity of any concept of good with respect to a person’s individual desires, akin to the modern liberalist view. Sophist philosophy necessarily endorsed rhetoric as a means of persuasion and downplayed rational argument, because the issue was how to motivate citizens to desire a particular action, not how to give reasons why actions should be undertaken regardless of one’s desires. But there was also an alternative to sophist persuasion: it was possible to view Homeric virtue as a kind of “excellence” – a disposition or craft contributing to one’s own good – which was not identical with a person’s short-term desires. It was
actually the tension between these two alternatives that created a philosophical problem for rhetorical persuasion attuned to sophist philosophy. In order to persuade Athenian citizens to support their own polis against Sparta and others, it was necessary to resort to communal interests that, in the long run, would also be necessarily in the interest of every individual citizen in a position to benefit from the success of their own polis. Individual interests were clearly intertwined with communal ones, a situation that required invoking a good that was different from the immediate or recognizable desires of any individual at any given moment. But at the same time a further question arose, namely, whether it was correct to restrict the communal basis for individual good to the borders of the Athens.  

Plato finally introduced a philosophical case against the relativism of sophism: he believed that there had to be a telos equally relevant to Athens, Sparta, and every other polis from the viewpoint of which it was possible to determine the good of every individual inhabiting any particular polis. But because, not surprisingly, this good could not be shown to coincide directly with the actual desires of individuals, there was a philosophical need to establish rational foundation for it. Socratic dialectics had already sought to show that individual goods, such as passion and desire, should be evaluated in light of fundamental human nature independent of these goods. But at most this argument amounted to revealing the fundamentally different, indeed incommensurable, cultural conceptions of what is human good. Consequently, the debate between Socrates and the sophists, rather than refuting the sophists with their own standards, remained inconclusive in much the same way as the disagreement in the modern times of liberalism.

No matter how successfully a set of given statements – an account of justice, for example – resists refutation, it seems that it can do so only on the basis of its own particular assumptions; and, as we have already seen, on the basis of some alternative set of assumptions, some other rival incommensurable set of statements may also resist refutation with equal success. Plato’s enterprise of refuting sophist relativism was thus to propose a mode of dialectical rational enquiry that showed to all parties, independent of their particular cultural point of view, what is the ultimate good, the arche, of human life. By way of strict and open dialectical procedure of argument and counter-argument, it would be possible to reveal whether any candidate for the ultimate good is true, not from a particular point of view, but as such. In other words, Plato’s post-Socratic dialectical rationality is to provide, as its end-product, a logos that will transcend any one-sidedness of particular cultural pre-understandings. For Plato, only this kind of finality of truth would enable a resolution of the disagreement between culturally incommensurable starting points. Plato already had an example of this type of rational enquiry in mathematics. The rationality of mathematics provides principles that are valid independent of individual preference. Another feature of mathematics is its unconditionality.

756 MacIntyre 1988, 30–68.

757 MacIntyre 1988, 69–78.

758 MacIntyre 1988, 78.
Yet that MacIntyre notes that nowhere did Plato present a concrete argument that would proceed along the lines of his mode of dialectics. This is in fact a result of Plato’s assumption that the correct understanding of dialectical arguments only preliminarily depicted is fully provided only after years of education in mathematics and dialectics in Plato’s academy. Plato could not invoke any concrete argument for the specific good he advocated because he assumed that his “earthly” opponents lacked the necessary tools to follow his argument. This is how Plato, in trying to solve the dilemma of the nature of justice in the debates between Socrates and the sophists ends up with new, but similar problems concerning the nature of rationality.759

Only with an adequate specification of an arche for the understanding of justice would the Platonic account of justice have been rationamly vindicated against the sophistic. Recognizing that such a specification is not furnished in the Republic is crucial for understanding what Plato contributed to the conflicts about justice: not a doctrine, but a dilemma, and a dilemma which gives definitive form to subsequent debate.

The dilemma is this: either the life of the reasoning human being can be shown to have its arche in the sense defined earlier [by Plato] or the sophistic and Thucydidean view of human reality prevails. Notice that it is the form of Plato’s argument rather than its precise content which provides the dilemma.760

It is Aristotle who sets out to solve this crucial Platonian dilemma by revising the form of the argument. Plato and Aristotle were at one in thinking that the ultimate human good was not to be found in the framework of individual enquiry, but solely in the context of organized community with reciprocal relationships and hierarchical roles ascribed to each citizen. But instead of getting rid of particulars as did Plato, Aristotle made the particulars an essential vantage point of rational enquiry. The particulars in the question of finding the telos were the concrete city-states like Athens, Spartan and others. Aristotle considered these, not shadows of pure ideas contrasted with the ideal Republic in which the ultimate good is grasped as in Plato, but rather the only thing at hand with which to begin the quest for telos or arche. Aristotle took each polis in its own particular, real, but defective way to reflect the perfect polis. Only by comparing each polis with every other one was it possible to arrive at an adequate grasp of what was defective and consequently, what would be the non-defective example. What Aristotle calls epagoge reflects a kind of inductive enquiry in which the form of ideal polis is conjectured more and more precisely on the basis of assessment of an existing polis. This amounts to a dialectical enquiry different from Plato’s, namely, one in which nous grasps

759 MacIntyre 1988, 78–81. “Hence arises the central apparent paradox of the Republic. The kind of education of which the prologue is described in Books II and III and the completion in Book VII is necessary if and only if episteme of the forms is what Socrates claims it to be; but no one can know whether this is true or not unless they have had that kind of education. And no one participating in the conversations of the Republic has had such a training. . . . So the third part of the Republic . . . is a description of how to complete the enquiry and arrive at its arche, and understanding of the form of justice in the light afforded by the form of the Good, but it is not itself and could not be the completion of that enquiry. It follows that the Republic is by intention a radically incomplete book. It tells us what the structure and content a theory which could rationally warrant its account of justice would have to possess. But it does not itself provide such a theory. . . .” (Macintyre 1988, 81, 82)

760 MacIntyre 1988, 83–84.
the *arche* as the first principle by comparing its particular impure versions with the ability of the emerging *arche* to withstand any relevant to test whether that *arche* is the best available candidate. In other words, dialectical enquiry becomes nondemonstrative in that there is no deductive way to arrive at unconditional articulations of the ideal *polis*. All the same, dialectics remains rational; the dialectical testing of particular proposals for the ultimate good is a rational process of argument and counter-argument. There is no way to grasp the ideal *polis* in its wholly impure form, but the idea is to advance toward it by asking what is the best argument so far.\(^{761}\)

It is essential to emphasize further the anti-individualistic *ethos* behind the Aristotelian scheme. For Aristotle, it is not only that one cannot grasp the ideal *polis* without starting from particular ones, but also that it is not possible genuinely to start from particular ones without living a life as a fully committed member of one particular *polis*. In what seems to be a paradox, one cannot transcend the limits of any particular *polis* without first having internally accepted the morality embodied in the hierarchies of some particular *polis*. One has to start rational enquiry into the ultimate human good entirely from within a point of view. This is because, in contrast to both Platonian and the modern liberalist conception, Aristotelian rationality is not in any sense a neutral or abstract inference, but involves a concept of moral character as its essential ingredient. For Aristotle, rational enquiry is as much a virtue that must be fostered as it is an intellectual inference; the two are ineradically intertwined. One cannot begin fostering virtues and fighting the vices without acknowledging that one’s very grasp of what those virtues and vices are is at the very least incomplete insofar as one has not fostered those virtues necessary for such understanding. Acknowledgment of this circular situation necessarily creates a need for *education* into virtues, an education that not only shows how virtues are to be understood, but also guides a person to form a character so that one will be transformed internally to practice those virtues and through that, to understand them deeper and deeper. Put simply, one cannot start on one’s own, but needs a community that provides further advanced masters in the process of virtuous life and education. This is, of course, what the communal hierarchies of *polis* are for. The whole idea of *polis* is, in effect, to educate its members to grasp the ultimate good through their individual good *qua* member of the *polis* in a certain specified role and through that, ever deeper internalize their specific good *qua* individuals – albeit “individual” may be too anachronistic an expression here.\(^{762}\)

At this stage it is useful to bear in mind that there are modern Aristotelians who endorse the general structure of Aristotelian moral teleology, but insist that human good is by its nature plural or formal. These appeared earlier and include such authors as Dewey, Nussbaum, and Gray. For instance, Dewey advocates a common social end prior to any individual preference, and this end is transformed ceaselessly according to societal circumstances. “. . . the

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\(^{761}\) MacIntyre 1988, 88–93.

\(^{762}\) MacIntyre 1988, 96–117.
statement of an aim is a matter of emphasis at a given time.” There is no final metaphysical aim. Rather the aim is to acknowledge several “final aims.” “… an active acknowledgement of diverse goods which life may afford to different persons, and from faith in the social utility of encouraging every individual to make his own choice intelligent.”

As for Aristotle, although some find the objectivity of ends to be in conflict with the Aristotelian theory as a whole, anti-relativism with respect to human good is nonetheless an intrinsic part of that theory. Hence, for MacIntyre, Dewey’s, Nussbaum’s versions of Aristotle – or Gray’s for that matter – would not be genuinely Aristotelian. MacIntyre refers to “… a number of thinkers who agree in recognizing the superiority of Aristotelianism to Kantianism and utilitarianism, but who aspire to do this in a way compatible with a modern liberal allegiance. It is this latter which leads them to substitute for the single and unitary, if complex, final good conceived by Aristotle, a multiplicity of goods, each qua worthy of being pursued. …”

MacIntyre is no doubt right in insisting that, historically, Aristotelianism is ineradicable from particular patterns of good. But there remains an additional question that is more to the point: is there sufficient reason for Aristotelians to hold this view? Of course, the reason is given above by the fact that from the outset, Aristotle denounces any possibility for neutral deliberation. Effective rational enquiry, according to the Aristotelian model, necessarily proceeds from particular conceptions of good, embodied in the particular hierarchies of good in particular historical versions of polis, and it is no use trying to argue rationally for one account of good with a neutral observer who has not already adopted some particular concept of good against which to consider its rival accounts.

But, of course, the intention behind MacIntyre’s account of Aristotle is not only hermeneutic, but also related precisely to refuting the liberalist concept of morality in any of its forms, including its teleological quasi-Aristotelian versions. In revising Aristotle the liberalist type of Aristotelianism ends up in the same dilemma as shown in the cases of Nussbaum and Gray, perhaps in part on the basis of Aristotle’s own principles. Here we may recall the fundamental problem concerning PWE, which is not so much a matter of fostering morality in general against nihilism or egoism, but rather its more concrete articulation on a global and

763 Dewey 1916, 111.
764 Dewey 1916, 121.
765 Chambliss 1983.
766 MacIntyre 1999, 243.
767 MacIntyre 1988, 187. Even Nussbaum seems to acknowledge that her capabilities approach is not Aristotelian in this sense: “Insofar as a highly general idea of human flourishing and its possibilities does figure in the approach, it is not a single idea of flourishing, as in Aristotle’s own normative theory, but rather an idea of a space for diverse possibilities of flourishing.” (Nussbaum 2006, 182.)
768 MacIntyre 1988, 133, 134.
multicultural scale. Put in a different way, the formal teleological morality may indeed be consistent, but the ultimate problem is practical: people never live a formal life and thus the endorsement of a formal good begs the question of finding ethical patterns for globalization. As MacIntyre observes:

It has been argued that all we need to provide in order to justify an account of the virtues and vices is some very general account of what human flourishing and well-being consists in. The virtues can then be adequately characterized as those qualities necessary to promote such flourishing and well-being, because, whatever our disagreements in detail on that subject, we ought to be able to agree rationally on what is a virtue and what a vice. This view ignores the place in our cultural history of deep conflicts over what human flourishing and well-being do consist in and the way in which rival and incompatible beliefs on that topic beget rival and incompatible tables of the virtues. Aristotle and Nietzsche, Hume and the New Testament are names which represent polar oppositions on these matters. Hence any adequate teleological account must provide us with some clear and defensible account of the telos . . .

On the other hand, it would seem to be quite problematic to speak of genuine rationality within as particularistic and indeed paternalist a scheme presented in MacIntyre’s account of Aristotle. Does it not frustrate the quest for objectivity behind any concept of rationality? The solution is to be found in what MacIntyre calls the dialectical relationship in Aristotle, which is significantly akin to Ricoeur’s interpretation of the same concept as well as to Sandel’s alternative to liberalism as a mutual balance between social encumbrance and individual autonomy:

. . . the telos of [Aristotelian] theoretical enquiry in ethics is to elaborate a fully adequate and rationally defensible conception of the good and the best. . . . Retrospectively surveyed, the judgments and actions of the phronimos – that is, if the phronimos is indeed judging and acting as a phronimos should – will turn out to be such as would be required by an adequate conception of the good and the best. How then is an adequate conception of the good and the best to be acquired?

In trying to answer this question we confront what has seemed to some a paradox. In order to become adequately phronetic in judgment and in action, it is necessary to be guided by an adequate conception of the good and the best. Yet in order to achieve an adequate conception of the good and the best, it seems necessary first to be able to perform the requisite epagoge on those experiences in which we have made right phronetic judgments. We cannot judge and act rightly unless we aim at what is in fact good; we cannot aim at what is good except on the basis of experience of right judgment and action. But the appearances of paradox and circularity are deceptive. In developing both our conception of the good and the habit of right judgment and action – and neither can be adequately developed without the other – we gradually learn to correct each in the light of the other, moving dialectically between them.\(^{770}\)

\(^{769}\) MacIntyre 1985, 162, 163.

\(^{770}\) MacIntyre 1988, 117, 118. See also p. 123. The affinity between Ricoeur and MacIntyre is reinforced by the additional notion that, according to MacIntyre, Aristotelian rationality is understood neither at the level of epagoge, i.e., of finding first principles as arche (MacIntyre 1988, 90–93) nor at the level of phronesis, i.e., of deriving right actions from those first principles in varying situations (MacIntyre 1988, 116–118), in terms of rules, but rather in terms of some kind of rational intuition. This kind of rationality is also exhibited by Sandel who additionally introduces the role of friendship in the quest for one’s good (Sandel 1998, 180, 181) precisely in the way MacIntyre does on the basis of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. (MacIntyre 1988, 122; 1988, 180.) It is, moreover, important to note that while Sandel represents a republican alternative to liberalism, MacIntyre explicitly mentions non-liberalist republicanism as an ally rather than an enemy of his own project. (MacIntyre 1985, 236–237.)
In other words, adopting the values and hierarchies of a certain *polis* in order to progress in virtuous life, this progress being the actual prerequisite for any rational enquiry of good, does not preclude the possibility of testing every stage of the educational procedure by means of rationality, which is not reducible to the results of that very education. It is indeed possible to make inductive juxtapositions of one *polis* with another together with their mutual dialectical assessments *during* the course of education and within a certain *polis*. Thus, it is also possible to assess rationally by *nous* and *epagoge* the very value of the procedure taking place at any moment in the context of that education. Indeed, this is the *only* context were this kind of evaluation is possible. Of course, it is not a contradiction to endorse this kind of circularity as Aristotle does. Instead, it seems to be the only feasible scheme that allows rational moral enquiry in the first place after Plato’s inability to show unconditional rationality.

Still, there remain two more or less unrelated problems in Aristotle’s thinking, which seem to create a dilemma similar to Plato’s. One of these dilemmas concerns the *polis*-centeredness of ancient philosophy in general, which Aristotle in principle is unable to transcend. The dilemma was addressed by Stoicism, but it was denounced by the Biblical tradition in which the idea, stemming from Judaism, was that the nature of human good is to be considered as it really is, that is, as universal good for all humanity without exception.\(^\text{771}\) It was also Biblical tradition, albeit particularly the New Testament authors, that provided the resources to address the other dilemma, which was unacknowledged not only by Aristotle, but also by Plato and his predecessors.

Aristotle thought that moral progress is all about acquiring intellectual understanding of the good and directing passions so that they adapt to the principles thus acquired and their concrete applications to a virtuous life. Augustine’s inflection of this idea was to introduce a third element that preceded both intellectual understanding and passions, namely, will. Augustine’s psychological aptness – indebted, of course, to the New Testament and particularly to Pauline theology – enabled him to show that appropriate action does not necessarily follow, even when the intellect and passions are organized correctly if the will does not guide a person to action. The will is the motivating force that not only guides action, but also the preceding attention within the sole framework in which action can operate. But Augustine’s drastic notion was that the will may and indeed does guide attention *away* from the good, intellect and passions notwithstanding, and that without divine help, there is no possibility for right action; without faith there is no possibility for a genuine grasp of the good.\(^\text{772}\) MacIntyre explains:

> Augustine thus does elaborate a genuinely new account both of the nature of justice and of the genesis of human action. The rationality of right action – and right action does indeed, on Augustine’s view, conform to the rational standards provided by the forms which the intellect apprehends – is not its primary determinant, but a secondary consequence of right willing. Hence faith which

\(^\text{771}\) MacIntyre 1988, 146–152.

\(^\text{772}\) MacIntyre 1988, 156–158.
initially moves and informs the will is prior to understanding; what understanding can provide is a rational justification for having initially believed or done what faith enjoined, but such justification must always be retrospective. Prospective rationality, understood very much as Plato had understood it, is then possible for the faith-informed intellect, further informing the will which had directed it into its state of faith (with the necessary work of grace) and continues so to direct it. This secondary character of practical rationality is something to which Augustine was necessarily committed by his psychology of the will.

Medieval Europe was molded by Augustinian Christianity. It was only in the thirteenth century that Aristotle’s texts were introduced to academic philosophy. At that time Thomas of Aquinas took up the enormous and highly controversial enterprise of synthesizing the two largely opposite traditions. His general project was to show, by means of Aristotelian dialectics, that Biblical understanding of human good and virtue is the best account of the good and virtues so far available; that meant, of course, to demonstrate using Aristotle’s own standards both that the list of Aristotelian virtues was to be complemented with Biblical virtues radically at odds with Aristotle’s general understanding of virtues and further, that Aristotle, lacking the concept of will in the Augustinian sense, was blind to the human inability to a lead genuinely moral life without divine assistance. Aquinas’s contribution to Augustine in turn was to show that it was indeed possible to argue rationally for Christian understanding of human good, not only in the retrospective sense of faith seeking understanding, but also in the prospective sense of dialectical argument. But built into this thesis was a return from the Platonic-Augustinian understanding of unconditional rationality and the deductive type of dialectics to the inductive and nondemonstrative understanding endorsed by Aristotle. The whole structure and nature of Aquinas’s *Summa* reflects this point: it sets out to consider extensively every possible argument and counter-argument for and against particular understandings ending up in a consciously incomplete conclusion that reflects its status as the best argument so far but nothing more. It is indeed this historical humility that MacIntyre sees to be still lacking in Aristotle, and that lack is in conflict with Aristotle’s own historical understanding of dialectics. The second point in which Aquinas transcends Augustine is in a more detailed and sophisticated account of virtues as such. No doubt this account was related to the Aristotelian ambition to find a place for a rational account of virtues in contrast to the Augustinian insistence on subordinating every virtue to the chief virtue of humility before divine law.

At this point it is worth taking note of two particular questions on which MacIntyre comments on the basis of Aristotelian Thomism and which attract the interest of anyone in

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773 MacIntyre 1988, 158.

774 Cf. Curran 1986, 391: “In Thomistic moral theology the basic human *choice* is that of the ultimate end and this choice then directs and governs the other particular choices that one makes. One either loves God above all things and directs all other actions to that end or one chooses a creature, ultimately oneself, as the last end and directs all other actions to that end” [italics added].

775 MacIntyre 1988, 164–208.
search of global ethics along the general lines laid down by PWE. One question concerns the proposed planetarian aspect of global ethics; the other brings us to the problem of moral legitimation of laws. One way of proceeding in the more concrete articulation and philosophical justification of the planetarianism of PWE is through Aristotelian biologism. Although MacIntyre originally rejected Aristotle’s unification of biology and ethics,\(^\text{776}\) he later revised his views considerably.

In *After Virtue* I had attempted to give an account of the place of the virtues, understood as Aristotle understood them . . . while making that account independent of what I called Aristotle’s “metaphysical biology.” Although there is indeed good reason to repudiate important elements in Aristotle’s biology, I now judge that I was in error in supposing an ethics independent of biology to be possible . . . and this for two related reasons. The first is that no account of the goods, rules and virtues that are definitive of our moral life can be adequate that does not explain – or at least point us towards an explanation – how that form of life is possible for beings who are biologically constituted as we are, by providing us with an account of our development towards and into that form of life. That development has as its starting point our initial animal condition. Secondly, a failure to understand that condition and the light thrown upon it by a comparison between humans and members of other intelligent animal species will obscure crucial features of that development. One such failure, of immense importance on its own account, is the nature and extent of human vulnerability and disability.\(^\text{777}\)

This introduction of a fundamental continuity between humans and non-humans amounts to concerns for human disability similar to Nussbaum’s Aristotelian approach. Furthermore, and also similar to Nussbaum, MacIntyre’s revised ethics, biologically emphasized, enables us to treat environmental issues as crucially inseparable issues with respect to ethics as a whole, at least in principle. What distinguishes MacIntyre from Nussbaum is, after all, equally important. MacIntyre, by clinging to a particular *metaphysical* account of biology, is able to discern the needs of non-humans more or less in the same way as he has made the case in a human context. In other words, by aspiring to a particular *telos*, MacIntyre is in a position to invoke the same kind of distinction between an animal or a plant “as-it-happens-to-be,” on the one hand, and “as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-telos,” on the other. Of course, the “as-it-happens-to-be” would best be seen to refer here to our human interpretations of the ends of non-humans by looking at their present condition and behavior, while the second alternative would describe us humans in conjecturing their actual good in light of what we first conjectured about the particular *telos* of the species considered as a whole. Only in the framework offered by particular metaphysics is it realistic to attempt to avoid the danger of falsely ascribing to non-humans needs that are not for their essential good.

As for the second question, it is important that in Aristotle and Aquinas, rationality is not about following abstract or unconditional rules as much as it concerns applying practical rationality in concrete life situations. This does not, however, do away with the objectivity of morality. Instead, what is at stake is closely related to Küng’s motives behind PWE. The intention behind PWE is ethical reinforcement of positive laws. According to Küng, the latter

\(^{776}\) MacIntyre 1985, 162–180.

\(^{777}\) MacIntyre 1999b, x.
find no actual or effective legitimation without the former. According to Aristotelian and Thomist thinking, the motivation needed for obedience to any law, be it juridical or moral, is to be derived characteristically from the rational method, but the rationality is closely intertwined with practical life instead of abstract enquiry.

Obeying the precepts of the natural law is more than simply refraining from doing what those precepts prohibit and doing what they enjoin. The precepts become effectively operative only as and when we find ourselves with motivating reasons for performing actions inconsistent with those precepts; what the precepts can then provide us with is a reason which can outweigh the motivating reasons for disobeying them, that is, they point us to a more perfect good than do the latter. . . .

. . . What I have wanted to emphasize is that obedience to the primary precepts of the natural law is only characteristically one ingredient of the goodness of actions and that the force of such precepts as reasons for actions is characteristically derived in key part from the contexts in which they are ingredient. “Not killing someone else gratuitously” or “Not taking what is not one’s own” are not by themselves descriptions of actions.778

From the fact that both ultimate good and more specific moral principles are always to be considered in some particular context, it follows that, based on the MacIntyrean account, ethics is not about constructing impartial and neutral, not to speak of universal, rules as is more or less the case with every version of liberalism’s rights language. Indeed, the aspect of ethical motivation is addressed by Aristotelian-Thomist practical rationality in quite another way than if PWE were to use these ideas to consolidate the ethical commitment to, say universal human rights.

One aspect of PWE, however, namely, linking the claim of the unconditionality of ethical legitimation to the transcendent basis of ethics, is rather alien as a vantage point within the Aristotelian-Thomist pattern. Indeed, the dialectical rational enquiry raises questions along the lines of Küngian theonomy of how realistic is it for any single person to arrive at even sufficient certainty in moral matters – as the possibility of the finality of any ethical view is in any case excluded from dialectical thinking – in order to adopt the needed ethical legitimation.

The procedure that MacIntyre uses as the only reasonably rational method of articulating and justifying ethical views, both at the preliminary level and at the level of “maximal ethos,” is characteristically open-ended, albeit not in the relativistic sense. How is it possible for an average person to evaluate all the arguments for or against any available moral tradition and arrive at a conclusion? And even then the question remains of whether any moment new traditions of thought may emerge to show that the insight gained should be rejected in light of these new considerations. Is this incompleteness in moral matters a realistic picture of how

778 MacIntyre 1988, 194. MacIntyre may be seen as reflecting the general change in Thomism: “In pre-Vatican II moral theology the human and human reason were understood in terms of manualistic Scholasticism’s approach to natural law. Three significant criticisms of the older philosophical understanding have been made by revisionist Catholic moral theologians. . . . the shift from classicism to historical consciousness has given greater importance to the particular, the individual and the changing rather than to the universal, the essential, and the unchanging, as in the older Scholastic understanding. Historical consciousness calls for more inductive methodology in addition to deductive and syllogistic logic.” (Bourke 1986, 390.)
humans live their moral lives? In particular, in the face of an urgent need for global ethics, is this the way to find a path forward in the midst of radical cultural and ideological pluralism? The rejoinder may well be expressed in MacIntyre’s description of Edith Stein’s formulations against Husserl:

Husserl’s mistake was to suppose that human beings are capable of a kind of knowledge possessed only by God: “for him being and knowing are one, but for us they are separate.” . . . Natural reason can never provide the certainty that belongs to divine knowledge. And not only this: the way of natural reason “is endless, and this implies that it can never reach its goal but only approach it step by step. Another consequence is that all human philosophy is bound to be fragmentary,” unlike the fullness of truth that belongs to divine knowledge. . . .

How do we come to be aware of this contrast between the fragmentary and incomplete character of the natural human understanding and God’s knowledge? We will only grasp it adequately when we attain the goal of our life’s journey in heaven, but “Something of what our mind will then see – what it needs in order to avoid straying from its goal has been imparted to us through revelation” . . . And it is because such truths of revelation can only be apprehended by faith that we have to rely on premises provided by faith in order to establish the contrast between Husserl’s aspirations and what is actually possible for natural reason.779

Stein’s position may be seen as sufficiently Thomist – although perhaps not to the same degree as she herself takes it to be – to show how Aquinas would be in a position to invoke divine law and revelation as important reinforcements of reason. It may also seem natural –

779 MacIntyre 2006, 180. Cf. Bourke’s description of Thomism: “This view, that human activities derive their moral quality from the agent’s thinking, feelings, and willing, somewhat anticipates later deontological ethics: our moral duties are known through our best practical judgment on what is required for any particular personal problem. This practical judgment is called moral conscience: it is not a separate power but an action of judging. Such judging is guided by rules of action known by careful reasoning on one’s life experiences. This leads to certain general practical precepts (such as, be moderate and avoid extremes, stand firm against adversities, do no harm to others) which are conclusions of natural right reason. These precepts constitute what human beings can know naturally about moral laws with their ordinary powers of observation and reflection. Since natural law is but a partial sharing in God’s eternal law, humans may be more fully informed by divine revelation about additional requirements of good conduct as found in scripture and Christian tradition. Since love (divine charity) gives the highest moral quality to all inner thoughts and intentions, as well as to external actions, mercy and forgiveness are features of Aquinas’s ethics unknown to his predecessors in classical Greek ethics . . . .” (Bourke, 1986, 624). MacIntyre remarks on the continuity between natural and supernatural revelation: “Hence, when God reveals Himself to us as good and just, although His goodness and justice transcend our prior conceptions of them, it is with those prior conceptions that we have to begin . . . . What we learn from the revelation of God’s commands, both on Sinai and in the Sermon on the Mount, extends and reinforces but never abrogates the precepts that God promulgates as the natural law.” (MacIntyre 2001, 351, italics added. See also MacIntyre 1986.) Cf. the following official Catholic statement: “[W]hile voluntarism represents a basically Christian phenomenon, born on meditation upon a God who acts freely and a Christ who announces the will of the same God, its Unlimited volitional emphasis does not afford an appropriate context for understanding eternal law as an expression of the divine creative wisdom that comprehends but transcends the practical order of human willing.” (Cessario 2001, 60.) While these views still emphasize quite heavily the natural side of revelation, there is simultaneously emphasis on the revelational side of Thomism, which the following official Catholic statement stresses in a somewhat different manner, yet still basically in line with Stein’s general notion: “The teaching authority of the Church provides a service of truth for all men and women, for it presents to the world a divinely authenticated instruction about what constitutes proper human conduct. Because the need for right instruction about human affairs increases, not decreases, with the complexity of scientific and technological advances, the mission of the Church in the world daily gains importance for the well-being of the human family. . . . To claim that the Church holds the true course to human happiness and can point it out infallibly rests on an article of faith. ‘I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints. . . .’ ” (Cessario 2001, 126.)
particularly given Küng’s own theological background – to think that the key term of PWE, the ‘rational trust’, could find its more comprehensive articulation within Thomism as thus sketched; there is both the incomplete witness of reason and the complete witness of faith and revelation – the latter providing moral agent with unconditional certainty, with the former giving genuine legitimation – and both point to the same human good.

However, it would not suffice for PWE to state these general Thomist principles “anonymously” without also acknowledging the ultimate exclusivity of Thomism. What MacIntyre observes below applies as well to PWE insofar as the enterprise would be considered to draw on Thomism: ultimately the crucial question is not the particular version of Thomism, but rather that all genuinely Aristotelian or Thomist versions endorse Aristotle or Aquinas or both as that paramount articulation and justification of human good over other traditions as their ineradicable basic element.

A . . . set of objections will certainly concern my interpretation of what I have called the Aristotelian or classical tradition. For it is clear that the account I have given differs in a variety of ways, some of them quite radical, from other appropriations and interpretations of an Aristotelian moral stance. And here I am disagreeing to some extent at least with some of those philosophers for whom I have the greatest respect and from whom I have learned most (but not nearly enough, their adherents will say): in the immediate past Jacques Maritain, in the present Peter Geach. Yet if my account of the nature of moral tradition is correct, a tradition is sustained and advanced by its own internal arguments and conflicts. And even if some large parts of my interpretation could not withstand criticism, the demonstration of this would itself strengthen the tradition which I am attempting to sustain and to extend.780

This notion entails an attitude toward certain formal versions of Thomism along the lines of modern liberalism and similar to what was presented in the case of Aristotelian formalism: there is no logical or interpretive place to adopt Aquinas – MacIntyre does not identify these modes of adoption more explicitly nor is any identification needed here – that is at one with the fundamental principles of liberalism.781 A logical impossibility follows from the analogous reasons as in Aristotelianism. There is no option for an Aristotelian to endorse a liberalist conception of good: MacIntyre has already shown the predicament of the post-Enlightenment era, which is based on the mutually incoherent principles of Enlightenment moral philosophy,

780 MacIntyre 1985, 260.

781 One type of modern Thomistic position that MacIntyre must be opposing is described by Bourke as follows: “In recent decades there has been some challenge to the apparent absolutism of earlier Thomism (C. Curran, ed., Absolutes in Moral Theology? 1968). Most Thomists insist on the difference between universal ethical judgments and particular personal judgments on doing or omitting this particular action (judgments of conscience). While many universal judgments are thought to impose absolute obligations, it is usually held that judgments of conscience may differ in regard to much the same particular problems. In other words, while I am obliged to follow my own best judgment in governing my own action, such judgments do not have the character of absolute rules for others. (See E. D’Arcy, Conscience and Its Right to Freedom, 1961.)” (Bourke 1986, 625.)
and this leads to certain inevitable conclusions with respect to those Thomist accounts that accept the neutral principles of Kantian or other types of liberalism.\textsuperscript{782}

The message of this roughly sketched history of Western philosophy, to which we, in MacIntyre’s view, have been blinded by the Enlightenment, is that there has never really existed such a thing as a neutral or impartial point of view that can be considered the essence of rationality and rational argument. Each of the traditions mentioned with the exception perhaps of Plato provides a concept of rationality that was historically bound to particular overall traditions. For Aristotle, this tradition was that of a particular \textit{polis}; for Augustine, it was the particular tradition of the New Testament; and for Aquinas, it was both.\textsuperscript{783} MacIntyre does not primarily intend to solve the controversies of these three traditions having different understandings of rationality. Rather he proceeds on this general historical basis to invoke his concept of a “tradition-constituted” or “tradition-constitutive” conception of rational enquiry at a more general, second-order level. In his model, rational enquiry always and necessarily starts from a particular point of view provided by a particular tradition of enquiry. Only by having already committed to a particular historical and communal understanding about what rationality is will it be possible to proceed to more extended questions of whether one’s own tradition ultimately endorses the right concept of rationality and human good. But it is the fundamental claim that rationality is not independent of particular historical and cultural traditions that raises the question of cultural relativism, which MacIntyre also acknowledges. And yet it is precisely the rejoinder to this question that is implicit in the assumptions of the particular traditions outlined above.\textsuperscript{784} As this rejoinder, by implication, brings us right to the question of how PWE might be developed within the framework offered by the rational method within postliberalism, I will now examine this rejoinder more carefully.

\textbf{1.3. Tradition-Constitutive Rationality}

How then is one to decide rationally between different traditions of rationality given that there is no neutral point of view? According to MacIntyre, such a decision must take place in three stages. In general, there might be no need for a tradition to consider whether its view of rationality is flawed. This need arises only when the tradition encounters what MacIntyre calls an epistemological crisis, that is, only when problems arise within the tradition itself that the tradition with its existing intellectual resources is not in a position to solve. This kind of deadlock is the motive for the tradition to begin considering rationalities other than its own. This

\textsuperscript{782} MacIntyre 1988, 175–177. On one type of logical criticism of Aquinas – apparently following from anti-absolutist understanding of ethics along the lines of modern Thomism described by Bourke in Note 777 – and its counter-criticism, see MacIntyre 1988, 186.

\textsuperscript{783} MacIntyre (1988, 209–325) provides an account of the tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment, which drew on both Aristotle and Augustine in its own peculiar way, but for the purposes of the present study, there is no need to elaborate further on this tradition.

\textsuperscript{784} MacIntyre 1988, 349–354.
may happen in two ways: either by inventing heuristic tools for the solution to the dilemma or by learning to internalize a completely different mode of thinking within some other tradition. In either cases revising or rejecting the former understanding in light of the new one is, first, the degree to which reasons built in the former understanding, which initially caused the epistemological crisis, can be explained from the new point of view. Second, the new understanding – again, from its own point of view – should also provide tools for doing away with the fundamental problems left unanswered by the tradition in crisis. If these conditions are met, either by the new tradition or the tradition in crisis, then, according to the tradition-constituted model, there are sufficient rational reasons for preferring the new to the old. However, the nature of rational superiority is such that it is not unconditional and final. At any phase in history an epistemological crisis may occur that shows the weaknesses of a new paradigm. There may always appear a third, a fourth, or still other traditions that are able – from their own points of view – to show the epistemological crisis that is present but unacknowledged in the tradition now prevailing, and then to provide an explanation that fulfils the above two requirements to be rationally superior.  

Now, it is easy to hear the echo from Thomas Kuhn’s classic *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in MacIntyre’s account of tradition-constitutive rationality. Indeed, throughout his argument MacIntyre refers to examples from the natural sciences to clarify his theses. Herein lies the reason why a tradition-constitutive rendering of rationality is not only relevant to the general ethical discussion, but also is important to the philosophical development of PWE. As I have discussed (Pt. II, ch. 2), an essential ingredient in PWE is Küng’s use of Kuhn’s rhetoric to argue for the revitalization of *humanum* in religions. Küng’s basic thesis is that all the major religions have undergone more or less similar “paradigm-shifts” in the course of history. Küng argues that all religions have by and large reached a “postmodern paradigm” that endorses *humanum* as its essential ingredient. I also pointed out, however, the unfortunate fact that it is highly difficult to prove this rather striking historical claim only by referring to religious statements, for instance, such as particular ethical principles or injunctions. Rather it is important to show the congruence in practice, that is, at the level of content instead of mere form. I ended up, rather pessimistically, criticizing PWE’s unrealistic appeal to *humanum* in this sense.

What MacIntyre’s tradition-constitutive account of rationality suggests is that there is nevertheless an opportunity to proceed along Kuhnian lines at a more general and somewhat different level. In other words, even though the paradigmatic congruence between particular traditions *de facto* cannot be shown today, it is not only possible, but also urgent for a global ethicist to become involved in evaluating traditions as a means of clarifying the most important question, namely, which of the existing traditions are rationally the most plausible. According to MacIntyre, *this* process of evaluation is carried out in a manner analogous to

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785 MacIntyre 1988, 360–366.
what has been observed in the natural sciences by Kuhn. In articulating the postliberal mission of PWE, we have gone far beyond the neat liberalist idea that downplays ‘comprehensive doctrines’ or “maximal ethos” of religions for the sake of some general, neutral and elementary ethics. One has to become involved in metaphysical contest proper in order to say something about global ethics in the first place. At the same time, for MacIntyre there are no impartial criteria with which to assess this contest; to a significant degree the traditions are incommensurable. The progress in the rational evaluation of the traditions takes place through epistemological crises and the resulting “revolutions,” to use Kuhn’s terminology.

One might think that the combination of incommensurability and rational contest brings us close to what Jaspers has argued in the doctrine of ‘encompassing’, which refers both to internal truth in every doctrine and to unconditional personal commitment to the truth of a particular doctrine. Nonetheless, as we will see, nothing could be further from the intentions of MacIntyre than this kind of Jaspersian rendering of incommensurability. It is thus of greatest importance to see the characteristically postliberal potential of the tradition-constitutive model for rationality. With the tradition-constituted account of rationality, MacIntyre is in a position to defend rationality against relativism as well as against what he calls perspectivism. This is because for him rationality does not require a neutral point of view or finality. Indeed, these would be impossible ideals for any rational enquiry.

But along with relativism and perspectivism, MacIntyre implicitly refutes hostility to exclusivism. He also addresses the last possible relativist charge, namely, while there are cases in which epistemological crises force traditions to open their eyes to other rationalities, there are also cases in which absence of any substantial epistemological crisis makes it unnecessary to be involved in a tradition-constituted rational argument with any other tradition. And, at least according to partial relativism, this might be sufficient to show that there are cases in which different traditions of rationality are not in a position to refute each other. Therefore it has to be concluded that there are many incommensurable metaphysical accounts of good that may be completely incompatible, yet they may all be true. Yet this contention, the like liberalist neutrality, is based on the misunderstanding that it is possible to look at traditions from a bird’s-eye point of view. This has already been shown to be a flawed idea. What counts for a person who inhabits a tradition that has not encountered an epistemological crisis is, of course, simply that he has no reason whatsoever to reject and even question his commitment to the truth as advocated by that tradition. According to MacIntyre, behind the inability to understand this underlying notion is a revealing modernist misunderstanding.786 He continues,

The perspectivist, moreover, fails to recognize how integral the conception of truth is to tradition-constituted forms of enquiry. It is this which leads perspectivists to suppose that one could temporarily adopt the standpoint of a tradition and then exchange it for another, as one might wear first

786 MacIntyre 1988, 366, 367.
one costume and then another, or as one might act one part in one play and then a quite different part in a quite different play. But genuinely to adopt the standpoint of a tradition thereby commits one to its view of what is true and false and, in so committing one, prohibits one from adopting any rival standpoint. Hence the perspectivist could indeed pretend to assume the standpoint of some one particular tradition of enquiry; he or she could not in fact do so. The multiplicity of traditions does not afford a multiplicity of perspectives among which we can move, but a multiplicity of antagonistic commitments, between which only conflict, rational or nonrational, is possible. Perspectivism, in this once more like relativism, is a doctrine only possible for those who regard themselves as outsiders, as uncommitted or rather as committed only to acting a succession of temporary parts. From their point of view any conception of truth but the most minimal appears to have been discredited. And from the standpoint afforded by the rationality of tradition-constituted enquiry it is clear that such persons are by their stance excluded from the possession of any concept of truth adequate for systematic rational enquiry. Hence theirs is not so much a conclusion about truth as an exclusion from it and thereby from rational debate.787

Here we have arrived for the first time at a postliberal context for dealing with the essential question posed by this study, namely, what is the ethical stance vis-à-vis ideological and religious exclusivism. Ricoeur criticizes Jaspers in a manner analogous to MacIntyre’s rebuke of perspectivism and relativism in general: does the doctrine of ‘encompassing’ not downplay the true essence of existential commitment?

And how can the myth, once unmasked as myth, remain for the philosopher the “unique universal” (das Einzigallgemeine) in which is expressed the hidden divinity, if one of these myths does not, in the form of revelation, take them out of their discordant relationships and re-order them through a pronouncement to the philosopher which would simultaneously heal him of his very vanity? Does not the philosopher run the risk of losing the “narrowness” and the “commitment” of Existenz when he embraces the totality of myths – those of Greece, those of India, those of Christianity – like a Don Juan courting all the gods?788

There are, of course, direct corollaries to this kind of MacIntyrean-Ricoeurian critique of relativism with respect to PWE: as has become clear, global ethics cannot be consistently argued through such anti-exclusivist figures as early Schleiermacher or Jaspers, although their positions were shown to reflect alternative liberal interpretations of PWE. It is paradoxical that, by attempting to transcend the inevitable conflict between moral traditions with the help of a proposed neutral standpoint, Enlightenment thinking has always and necessarily lost grounds for a rational resolution of this conflict. Moreover, MacIntyre argues that Kierkegaard is in fact the final culmination of the Enlightenment when Kierkegaard does away with any hopes for rationality in ethics. MacIntyre defends this claim while also admitting that Kierkegaard’s was an authentically teleological ethical concept. Kierkegaard’s antirationalist teleology at most makes him a problematic mixture of Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment. Let me consider this aspect of MacIntyre’s thesis more carefully.

In this context it is important to ask what, in fact, is the ultimate problem when ethics is deprived of any possibility for rational enquiry. For MacIntyre the problem must relate to his generally feasible hypothesis, namely, that people consider it immoral to require any action of any human being without providing authentic justification that one could, at least in principle, accept. MacIntyre considers the ineradicability of this natural standpoint, which is also behind

787 MacIntyre 1988, 367, 368.
788 Ehrlich 1975, 75.
the second formulation of Kant’s categorical imperative, to be a reminder of the pre-modern period when there were indeed authentic reasons available in contrast to the quixotic modern philosophical discourse. MacIntyre obviously considers Kierkegaard responsible for finally and outspokenly dismantling this natural intuitive hypothesis of justifying requirements of humans and actually, though not consciously, opening the way to manipulation.\textsuperscript{789}

After all, MacIntyre also admits that, instead of viewing Kierkegaard as a half-hearted modernist, he could also be viewed as an authentic Augustinian in contrast to the Aristotelian-Thomist understanding of the interplay of personal faith and rational enquiry; indeed, unlike his critics, MacIntyre seems to have plausible reasons for supposing that a Kierkegaardian choice of a particular telos is at most retrospectively rational, that is, there is no possibility for either a Kierkegaardian or an Augustinian to “reason” herself out of a given stage in life to a path attuned to the right telos.\textsuperscript{790}

MacIntyre’s objection to the Enlightenment project is precisely that within the specific traditional pattern there is, for both Aristotle and Aquinas, a presupposition of rational moral enquiry and development. At this tradition-specific first-order level, MacIntyre would then endorse the ideal of moral education by the representatives of the respective tradition, but in a way that would virtually give the pupil tradition-independent reasons for procedure at every stage of education.\textsuperscript{791} This is a two-fold, but not paradoxical claim: to start committing (or try to commit) to this tradition, one will find reasons to adopt factually the very tradition itself, or reject it. By implication, for MacIntyre the defense of the superiority of the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition consists of the claim that the tradition is defensible in purely rational terms practically independent of the tradition itself. This is not the case with Kierkegaard: there is a requirement for a ‘leap of faith’, also in the realm of morality.

The purpose of this study is not to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the Kierkegaard-MacIntyre debate, but rather to draw on the above inference in a more general way by showing that MacIntyre’s analysis does not necessarily provide a consistent or even a full-fledged argument against the Augustinian understanding of moral persuasion. MacIntyre himself may not even intend to address the coherence of the three different rationalities of Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas by contrast to traditionless liberalism, because MacIntyre, rightly, considers his invocation of tradition-constituted rationality merely to provide basic terms for such an evaluation, a set of second-order terms.\textsuperscript{792} However, what I will ask from now on, is whether Augustinian tradition is just one among many to be evaluated beyond the scope of MacIntyre’s project, or rather is it a position that addresses the selfsame questions as MacIntyre’s tradition-constituted account of second-order rationality. This general hypothesis

\textsuperscript{789} MacIntyre 1985, 9, 42, 46.

\textsuperscript{790} MacIntyre 2001.

\textsuperscript{791} MacIntyre 1988, 172–181.

\textsuperscript{792} MacIntyre 1988, 401–403.
is further made concrete by relating it to an objection to the tradition-constituted model that MacIntyre himself mentions, namely, an objection posed by a person . . .

who finds him- or herself alien to every tradition of enquiry which he or she encounters and who does so because he or she brings to the encounter with such tradition standards of rational justification which the beliefs of no tradition could satisfy.

This is the kind of post-Enlightenment person who responds to the failure of the Enlightenment to provide neutral, impersonal tradition-independent standards of rational judgment by concluding that no set of beliefs proposed for acceptance is therefore justifiable. . . . Such an individual therefore views the social and cultural order, the order of traditions, as a series of falsifying masquerades. . . . So beliefs, allegiances to conceptions of justice, and the use of particular modes of reasoning about action will appear to them as disguises assumed by arbitrary will to further its projects, to empower itself. How, if at all could such a person as a result of an encounter with some particular tradition of enquiry come instead to inhabit that tradition as a rational agent? What kind of transformation would be required?

. . . Such a transformation, understood from the standpoint of any rational tradition of enquiry, would require that those who adopt this stance become able not only to recognize themselves as imprisoned by a set of beliefs which lack justification in precisely the same way and to the same extent as do the positions which they reject but also to understand themselves as hitherto deprived of what tradition affords, as persons in part constituted as what they are up to this point by an absence, by what is from the standpoint of traditions an impoverishment. . . . In each case [of traditions] they are understood by the adherents of that particular tradition of enquiry to need for their correction, even for that minimal correction which would enable them to enter into dialogue with that tradition, what they have by their own attitude debarred themselves from being able to possess or to achieve. How then could such a transformation be possible?

Only, it seems, by a change amounting to a conversion, since a condition of this alienated type of self even finding a language-in-use, which would enable it to enter into dialogue with some tradition of enquiry, is that it becomes something other than it now is, a self able to acknowledge by the way it expresses itself in language standards of rational enquiry as something other than expressions of will and preference.793

This is an important quotation as a whole in the sense that here MacIntyre acknowledges that there is one group that his rational argument cannot rationally persuade. This is the same as acknowledging that there is a group that is rationally justified at least in denying the promise of a tradition-constituted enquiry with regard to the possibilities of a rational enquiry. Although this group might be shown to be inconsistent in adhering to their radical Nietzschean type of genealogy in particular, they cannot be rationally shown to be inconsistent in adhering to the neutral type of unconditional rationality contra the proposals of MacIntyre more generally. This point alludes to a considerable reservation about MacIntyre’s project, for it is MacIntyre himself who appears to lack any means for arguing against this position on behalf of his tradition-constituted rationality. This position seems to be the only Western position immune from MacIntyre’s critique, yet a significant one from the point of view of MacIntyre’s historical account, which started out finding arguments against sophism. In this position the general ideas of sophism seem to reappear, although in revised form.

Of course, it is still possible to reinforce the argument of inconsistency to the extreme. Indeed, MacIntyre has already been shown to address the challenge of Nietzschean genealogy and nihilism by invoking the classical type of *reductio ad absurdum*: Nietzschean genealogy cannot sufficiently unmask its own categorical statements; neither can it avoid the fundamen-

793 MacIntyre 1988, 396, 397.
tal self-refuting tension built into its argument. In the same context, however, it was also shown that while a stubborn type of relativism and nihilism is indeed once and for all refuted, for instance, by Bernard Williams, the same refutation does not fully apply to more nuanced versions of relativism, namely, those stemming from Heidegger’s and Jaspers’s tradition of thought culminating in Derrida. Encountering this tradition critically would at least amount to a need to modify the Williamsian and MacIntyrean type of *reductio ad absurdum* versus relativism. In the following discussion the focus will first move from MacIntyre’s rational method of postliberalism to its more fully-fledged critique from the point of view of Heideggerian thinking; then we will encounter the upshot of that critique leading, which leads us to a counter-criticism far exceeding the criticism from Williams’s and MacIntyre’s *reductio ad absurdum*; and, finally, I will outline an alternative postliberal model to that of MacIntyre on the grounds of this counter-criticism.

Obviously, in its simplicity a Heideggerian response would point out that MacIntyre’s account of tradition-constituted rationality is itself a product of one finite and particular human tradition. The whole range of possible Heideggerian clarifications of this basic statement is not at issue here, but suffice it to say, first, that the MacIntyrean account might be seen roughly as one instance, and perhaps in its many-sidedness even a quite attractive instance, in the sequence of Western traditions to safeguard the role of a context-transcending subject who may rationally decide between different particular traditions, MacIntyre’s rational moderate-ness notwithstanding. Second, and more important, there is no way to show a Heideggerian that there are indeed similar rational aspirations in other traditions than Western ones at least when they confront a rival tradition. A Heideggerian may respond to such a claim in two ways. One is to consider the alleged similarity to be superficial so that the more we genuinely internalize the other tradition’s ‘Being’ as our second first language, to use both Heideggerian and MacIntyrean terminology, the more we come to recognize that the foreign tradition’s external language akin to our speaking of rationality actually means something completely different from what our term “rationality” connotes. This is precisely because ‘Being’, the horizon of thought at the deepest and most elementary level, is incommensurably different. The other is to interpret the alleged similarities in the aspiration for rationality in such a way that insofar as these similarities exist, they actually reflect the same traditions as our own at a deep level.

The point is that, for Heidegger, there is a deeper dimension of human existence than rationality, namely, the finite revelation of ‘Being’ that cannot, consequently, be addressed in rational terms. This was illustrated in Heidegger’s treatment of Hegel’s system earlier in this study, but the same may also be applied to the kind of Kuhnian concept of rationality that Macintyre endorses: both display their philosophical patterns within the framework of a finite revelation of ‘Being’.

Furthermore, even if the whole world were to discover that it has a genuinely common aspiration to decide rationally between rival traditions, this would still not show a Heideggerian that there is any value in such an aspiration as long as it is closely connected with human
temporality. In the future another type of horizon may emerge that has no place for such an aspiration. Perhaps MacIntyre would not deny this possibility, but it is important to see that the value of any rational enquiry is, from a Heideggerian point of view, crucially relativized in light of this possibility that temporality causes. Here it is worth returning to some aspects of MacIntyre’s account of pre-Enlightenment history.

In that account Plato endorsed an unconditional type of rationality, but proved incapable of realizing such a goal in practice; he lacked a substantive account of the good as arche that would yield to the prerequisites of the rational dialectics thus established. The promise of mathematics thus appeared irrelevant in the sphere of ethics and politics. Augustine seemed to understand rationality in much the same way as Plato, yet, as opposed to Plato, openly acknowledged its inability to reach conclusions. But Augustine ascribed this predicament to human depravity and sin, to the wicked will that guides the attention of both intellect and passions to false objects. As a result of this corruption of will, one may conjecture along the lines of Augustine, that a person, rather than actually reaching the unconditional rational truth, may only, genuinely but falsely, believe to have reached it. This is why there may be proponents of mutually incompatible rationalities who each claim their truth in the name of rationality without there being any rational way to show the superiority of one truth.

MacIntyre would not deny such a possibility either. Instead, he introduces an understanding of rationality that is attainable in the finite world of humans and claims, at least by implication, that the flaw in Plato and Augustine was to adhere to a concept of rationality that was unrealistically perfectionist from the outset. MacIntyre is indeed right in insisting that the following dichotomy applies to Plato as well as to Augustine and, one would like to add in the spirit of MacIntyre, also to most of the modern thinkers from Descartes to Heidegger: either there is ultimately an unconditional mode of rational enquiry or there is no rational enquiry.

At this point, a Platonist would pose a counter-question: what is the value of a rationality that does not prove to be fully acceptable by the standards of every tradition involved in a particular controversy? The point is that it is problematic to judge whether any rejection of one’s own tradition and adoption of some rival is rational progress if there are no tradition-independent criteria against which progress or the lack thereof could be measured. Nothing seems to preclude the idea that the tradition-constitutive mode of progress is about writing the history of the victors instead of providing history with criteria for genuine victors and losers. MacIntyre indeed seems to base his model of rational enquiry upon its retrospective consideration. In order to illuminate this bias further and show the problems entailed, it is important to quote at considerable length the four-stage model of rational enquiry with which MacIntyre challenges Platonian enquiry, for it may be taken to imply the basic idea behind a tradition-constituted rational enquiry. For a start, MacIntyre urges us to consider retrospectively a gradual process of rational enquiry, which in our view, seems to have had a clear direction, proceeding step by step, in contrast to a process that only involves arguments and counter-arguments without any clear direction. For us to consider this process a progressive one, it would have to include four features:
First, the latter stages of enquiry would have to presuppose the findings of the earlier . . . some at least of the later stages would afford us a point of view from which it would be possible to identify and to characterize the findings of earlier stages in a way in which that would not have been possible at those stages. . . .

Second, where there has been at an earlier stage unresolved and, at that stage, unresolvable disagreement, it must at some later stage become possible to provide an explanation both of why the disagreement occurred and of why it was then and with those resources unresolvable. . . .

Third, it has to become possible to provide at later stages a successively more adequate conception of the good of the enquiry. By “more adequate” I do not mean merely a conceptually richer and more detailed characterization but also one which enables the enquiry to be better directed. Thus successive retrospective examinations of the enquiry so far would provide fuller accounts of the goal of the enquiry, and in turn successive characterizations of that goal would furnish stronger grounds for directing enquiry in one way rather than another.

Fourth, this gradually enriched conception of the goal is a conception of what it would be to have completed the enquiry. One and the same conception is to provide both the enquiry with its telos and the subject matter of the enquiry with its explanation. . . . Let us call the conception which provides this explanation the arche . . . the arche will also provide an understanding of why each of the successive stages by which it was approached was distinct from it as well as a characterization of the specific type of error that would have been involved in mistaking each of these stages for the completion of the enquiry. For each of these stages will have been marked both by less and less partial insight and yet also by continuing one-sidedness. Only from the standpoint of the completion of the enquiry, of the finally and fully adequate conception of the arche, is such one-sidedness left behind. Does it follow that to adopt this view of what progress in rational enquiry consists in commits one to holding that one can finally exempt oneself from the one-sidedness of a point of view? Not at all. . . . although one can definitely progress toward the final completion of rational enquiry, that completion lies at a point which cannot itself be attained. Hence we would be rescued by the progress of that enquiry from the one-sidedness of any particular point of view; we would still be guided by a conception of what it would be to understand things as they are absolutely, and not just relating to some standpoint, even if such final understanding is not in fact to be attained.794

At some decisive points of this interpretation it is possible to find similar ambiguities in Nussbaum’s long quotation cited in the previous chapter. The irony, of course, is that both draw on Aristotelianism in quite opposite ways. But what is of interest now is principally independent of Nussbaum’s ambiguities. The paradox in MacIntyre’s four-stage account of rational enquiry is this: is only possible to carry out the justified evaluation of these comparative terms as more “adequate,” “fuller,” “richer” and so on in light of the arche, which in fact is never attained. Without a grasp of the arche, we are forced to ask at every particular stage of the enquiry, from which point of view is there “less and less partial insight” and to note that this question necessarily reveals an unresolved disagreement instead of clear progress. And it is not enough to refer to persons who have now abandoned the point of view of the former stage for the sake of the latter in order to show the superiority of the latter from the point of view of the former because we do not know which is first – the personal adoption of the latter stage at the cost of the former (in the Heideggerian sense of non-rational ‘revelation’) or the rational explanation or justification of that adoption. And as long as we do not have the complete arche before us there is always a possibility that what we take to be parts of that arche, as a result of our supposed progressive enquiry, may prove to be something else altogether in light of the complete arche where our one-sided and partial insight would be completely left behind. In that specific sense, a partial arche is not an arche at all! And in light of this, it is

794 MacIntyre 1988, 80, 81.
not at all clear whether one would be able to “reason” oneself out of the former stage of enquiry into the latter. At least for a Platonian, Augustinian, or Heideggerian, this is what makes MacIntyre’s disassociation from Kierkegaard questionable: both seem to display retrospective rationality, albeit the latter does it more openly.\(^795\)

MacIntyre, unsurprisingly, considers it obvious that an epistemological crisis is not always acknowledged by the proponents of the earlier tradition; it may sometimes be recognized only after a new tradition is adopted. For Heidegger, this would confirm his revelatory understanding of ‘Being’, which precludes any deeply rational evaluation across traditions that are, in effect, genuinely adopted only through revelatory conversions. All in all, from a Heideggerian point of view, MacIntyre provides us with a historical account of how the concept of rational enquiry has de facto been used effectively, in a very generalized sense, by those who have had a non-Platonian concept of it. But he does not, indeed, he cannot, address the fundamental prescriptive question, namely, what is the real value – one might say the “rationality” – of such effectiveness. The question of whether tradition-constitutiveness entails radical incommensurability and whether incommensurability excludes genuine rational dialectics of whatever kind seems at least to be open.

MacIntyre may have refuted sophistic arguments in one of their later forms, namely, in the Scottish tradition.\(^796\) After all, there is another tradition that does not emphasize, or at least emphasizes only partly, the all-importance of individual preference as is the case with Scottish liberalism, among other modes of liberalism. Nor is the question primarily about historical types of prerequisites for rationality as in tradition-constitutive rationality. Rather, the fo-

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\(^795\) This claim virtually provides a means for constructive dialogue between MacIntyre and Kierkegaard in a very different manner from the attempts of some (in Davenport and Rudd, eds., 2001). In that book MacIntyre, it seems, successfully defends his earlier critique that Kierkegaard endorses criterionless choice as the basis for moving from aesthetic stage to ethical stage against those who see Kierkegaard as endorsing a rational type of teleology that is less at odds with MacIntyre. In turn, what is at stake above in my analysis is the reverse claim, namely, that MacIntyre cannot sufficiently do away with criterionless choice in his own theory insofar as a MacIntyrean moral enquirer cannot sufficiently “reason” himself forward other than retrospectively in the way that MacIntyre ascribes to Kierkegaard with reference to Augustine. Note that my claim concerns both the first-order level of MacIntyre’s criticism, namely, the Aristotelian-Thomistic dialectics against Kierkegaard’s “Augustinianism,” and the second-order level, namely, MacIntyre’s claim that Kierkegaard has a stake in dismantling the rational moral enquiry in general and against which MacIntyre himself sets his tradition-constitutive meta-theory. This is because at both levels of dialectics there are the similar central characteristics. Indeed, MacIntyre even, at least indirectly, bases his second-order claim on his analysis of the first-order claims.

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\(^796\) Before going deeper into Aristotle as heir to the Homeric-Platonic project, MacIntyre reminds us that “My thesis has of course been that the post-Homeric debates and conflicts within Athenian society of the fifth and fourth century generated not one subsequent tradition but two. But the non-Aristotelian, the anti-Aristotelian tradition, whose founding authors are the sophists and Thucydides, has now for the purposes of my immediate argument to be put aside.” (MacIntyre 1988, 100.) MacIntyre may be seen to return to the sophist tradition of thought with ideas of cooperative effectiveness, thorough cultural relativism and untutored human nature as the foundation of morality when he discusses the evolution of later Scottish tradition with Hume as its fully-fledged culmination. However, I consider MacIntyre (1988) indirectly to reveal strong reasons for rejecting this line of thought by showing that it could not resolve the fundamental tension between the claim for naturally correct moral inclinations in all humans and the salient disagreement on morality between humans.
cus is on *phenomenological* prerequisites for rationality, which cause one to emphasize the relativity of human apprehension far more broadly than the Aristotelianism MacIntyre is after. This is the tradition of what I have called *transcendental* philosophy, a tradition descending all the way from Kant through Hegel to Heidegger and Derrida. MacIntyre partly alludes to the significance of this tradition:

... I have tried to give Hume his due respect of his accounts of justice and of the place of reasoning in the genesis of action. Had I tried to do the same for Kant, this work would have become impossibly long. But the whole Prussian tradition in which public law and Lutheran theology were blended, a tradition which Kant and Fichte, and Hegel tried but failed to universalize, is clearly of the same order of importance as the Scottish tradition of which I have given an account. So that once again more needs to be done.797

In fact MacIntyre touches indirectly upon Heidegger’s challenge in his analysis of Edith Stein. According to MacIntyre, these two contemporaries represented rival alternatives to transcend the problems that the Husserlian school had left unanswered. In contrast to Husserl, both Heidegger and Stein emphasized the significance of inter-subjectivity as the basic ingredient of phenomenological enquiry, but in radically different ways; it was above all Stein’s peculiar application of the idea of empathy that was at odds with Heidegger.

Earlier I have in the context of Derrida, summarized Husserl’s revolutionary rejoinder to Cartesian-Humean-Kantian dualism between subjective and objective reality. Extending this basic notion of Husserl’s through further stages, Stein was finally in a position to argue that the inseparable presupposition of Husserlian phenomenology is the human ability to grasp genuinely the intentional acts of other persons.798 What was particularly significant from the point of view of the Heideggerian challenge was Stein’s emphasis on the social environment as fostering particular qualities in the active development of the individual aesthetic, intellectual, and moral character.799 This rather Aristotelian mode of proposal may indeed provide the resources to counter critically the more Platonism-oriented view of the passive finitude of human *Dasein* and its contrast to Heidegger’s unconditional insight, while still drawing on the phenomenological tradition.800

It goes without saying that Heidegger is an incomparably greater philosopher than Stein. But history of philosophy is punctuated by the interventions of genuinely great philosophers who have redirected and misdirected philosophical enquiry. And if, as I take to be the case, Heidegger was one of these, then the question of what it would be to set out from Husserl’s starting-point in the *Logical Investigations*, to criticize and to reject some of the central theses of *Ideen*, and to open up a

797 MacIntyre 1988, 11.

798 MacIntyre 2006, 75–87.

799 MacIntyre 2006, 109–137.

800 Stein’s critique of Heidegger on the question of death and dying is sketched by MacIntyre (2006, 183–185) who shows that this controversy was an elementary part of their controversy over the questions of empathy and *Dasein*. It is interesting that Rudolf Bultmann addressed the same kind of problem in Heidegger’s thought basing his criticism on Kierkegaard. (Wilson 2007, 198.) Thus, at least this part of Stein’s confrontation with Heidegger was not peculiar to the rational method alone.
philosophical path forward which is other than and alternative to Heidegger’s becomes of some philosophical importance.\textsuperscript{801}

It is no doubt true that Stein’s extension beyond phenomenology is a significant alternative to Heideggerian relativism that is sometimes almost solipsism. However, the insufficiency in Stein’s account, and MacIntyre’s sympathetic endorsement of it, is, and indeed MacIntyre readily admits, that although Stein’s suggestions may show the direction in which one would have to proceed from Husserl in order to avoid the Heideggerian alternative, she does not clearly specify this direction such that one could use it as a rationale for not adopting Heidegger’s alternative points. This dilemma left wide open is tantamount to the dilemma MacIntyre presented earlier as a crucial deficiency in Plato’s argument against the sophists. Heidegger is not refuted philosophically. In this sense what MacIntyre says about Stein more generally may be seen to apply also to her controversy with Heidegger:

The philosophical psychology that [Stein] constructed in the first essay is also incomplete in another way. What she provided was a first sketch, one that drew not only on Husserl and Dilthey, but also on Wundt and Bergson, integrating elements from each into a single account. And she contrasts her conclusions with those of some associationist psychologists and with the account of psychology given by Hugo Münsterberg. But, as in her dissertation, she did not consider adequately and most often not at all the key objections that might be advanced against the view that she is taking. So her next philosophical step should perhaps have been to enter into critical dialogue with at least some rival accounts. This she did not do.\textsuperscript{802}

There is a question of principle here: either Heideggerian phenomenological transcendentalism or MacIntyrean rationalism is to be endorsed, but it is important to see that they are mutually exclusive. And it would seem obvious that the argument between them cannot be decided rationally. Some may take this notion to reinforce the victory of Heidegger over MacIntyre. However, there is also an opportunity for MacIntyre to show that insofar as the Heideggerian position is invoked as a rival ideological tradition to his own, this is in itself sufficient to show that there is a presupposition of the kind of rational evaluation between them that MacIntyre himself has described as a tradition-constituted enquiry. Moreover, at a more general level, there is a convincing opportunity for an indirect critique of Heidegger’s thinking by suggesting that his political undertakings, or the fatal lack of them, during a period of glaring immorality in the Third Reich and immediately thereafter are necessarily intertwined with his theoretical insights, or lack of them, as a philosopher.\textsuperscript{803} And what is more, it is even possible to describe the ethico-political question mark on Heidegger so that it appears to be entangled precisely with Heidegger’s refusal to go beyond phenomenology to inter-subjective empathy as the basis for human moral development as Stein did.

After all, this by no means has to amount to a presupposition that the only philosophically defensible legacy of Husserl lies in Stein’s mode of transcending phenomenology while

\textsuperscript{801} MacIntyre 2006, 185, 186.

\textsuperscript{802} MacIntyre 2006, 117.

\textsuperscript{803} MacIntyre 2006, 5, 6.
abandoning the Heideggerian alternative. At most what it amounts to is a more general claim that phenomenology as such should be transcended, as it does not seem to provide us with sufficient ethical resources. The point is that Heidegger’s failure is not shown to be understood to reflect Stein’s success, but Heideggerian claims appear, by and large, to remain unrefuted by Stein. If this be true, then the failure of the Heideggerian line of thought is located at a later phase than the split between Heidegger and Stein, namely, at the point of Derrida’s revised Heidegger, and, even more significantly, at the philosophical problems that become explicated through that revision.

Insofar as the political dimension of Heidegger is considered in light of Derrida, it is worth noting that his influential philosophical predecessor, Emmanuel Levinas, like Stein, a Jew, also left an account of the reasons for the political ignorance of Nazi immorality that appears to be in significant conflict with Macintyre’s criticism of Heidegger’s political ignorance in the same period. Levinas no doubt also saw that Heidegger’s ignorance confirmed Levinas’s thesis, precisely because this ignorance followed from Heidegger’s philosophical principles. Already this suggests that Levinas was critical of Heidegger’s philosophy – but in a significantly contrary manner to Stein. It is thus easy to imagine Levinas and Stein criticizing each other for the moral ignorance during the Holocaust precisely because each viewed the other as an ally of Heidegger’s philosophy at a crucial point – albeit this point of alliance would, of course, be located differently by each. The following juxtaposition of Derrida with MacIntyre will illustrate this point. It will, if possible, amount to an even more radical critique of MacIntyre’s tradition-constituted model than Heidegger’s.

Earlier I showed that Heidegger is himself not consistent with the basic ideas of human finitude. But whereas Heidegger still may be seen to be subject to the critique of relativism by way of reductio ad absurdum, the situation is different in Derrida’s revised version of Heidegger, which takes the self-negation of metaphysics to its culmination. It was, moreover, Levinas who played a crucial role in that project. From the Derridean-Levinasian point of view there opens up a possibility not only to criticize Heidegger, but also to take the Heideggerian critique of MacIntyre to its extreme. From Derrida’s point of view the problem of the tradition-constituted enquiry is not just that it does not sufficiently fulfill the prerequisites of any rational enquiry. It is rather that tradition-constituted enquiry is a fiction. That is to say, Derrida may be seen to provide the means for a rather striking claim – that it is not possible to acquire the point of view of any “tradition” whatsoever, even in the non-rational and revelatory sense of Heidegger, a possibility that is, of course, the most elementary prerequisite of the tradition-constituted enquiry.

MacIntyre acknowledges the necessity of responding to the most basic question of how it is possible even to understand the other tradition genuinely in order to start a tradition-constitutive rational enquiry between it and one’s own – and this same question could also be posed to Heidegger. The problem is that there is no neutral point of view to be adopted from which one could understand both traditions. Instead, according to MacIntyre, the way to communication is through man’s ability to adopt more than one language-in-use at the same
time. As to the language-in-use of the alien tradition, one has to become like a child, not referring to one’s first language-in-use in order to understand and explain the thinking characteristic of the new language-in-use; hence, MacIntyre calls the new language-in-use the second first language. This type of heuristic learning of a second first language has been documented, for instance, in cultural-anthropological field work.\textsuperscript{804}

The relevant characteristic of language as such can best be explained by considering the difference between the utterances of someone who has mastered a particular language, whether as first first language or as second first language, and the utterances of someone who is using a phrase-book to speak in a language which he or she has not mastered.

The latter speaks in units in which each sentence or short set of sentences has a discrete function, so that when sentences or short sets of sentences (types, not tokens) are matched to sentences or similar short sets in the speaker’s language, and both are matched to certain types of well-defined and easily recognized context, the speaker can reasonably expect to produce some desired effect by the use of corresponding tokens. The measure of success in the matching is therefore pragmatic. Does the use of this set of sentences result in the purchase of a clay pot? Does the use of that set ensure that I am at the bus station on time? . . .

What cannot be learned from the matching of sentence with sentence and of sentence with context, no matter how sophisticated the phrase book writer, is not only how the . . . system of naming and classificatory schemes . . . are used but also and even more fundamentally how a grasp of a language-in-use enables a competent language user to move from one kind of use of expression in the context of one sentence to another notably different kind of use of the same expression in the context of another and perhaps then go on to innovate by inventing a third kind of use for that very same expression in yet another sentential context. It is this knowing how to go on and go further which is the badge of elementary linguistic competence. . . .

Knowing how to go on and to go further in the use of the expressions of a language is that part of the ability of every language-user which is poetic. The poet by profession merely has this ability in a pre-eminent degree. . . .\textsuperscript{805}

Now, it seems self-evident that genuine learning of other languages as thus depicted occurs. But the poststructuralist intervention in this taken-for-granted hypothesis is more striking: philosophically considered, nothing guarantees that what is rendered above as a qualitative difference between the pragmatic and poetic learning of language is in fact not quantitative in the sense that one never learns the alien language from within, but only so that the use of it causes the intended reaction in other(s). It is difficult to prove that the transition from sentences or sets of sentences to poetic use of language is not in fact tantamount to the transition from an elementary phrase-book-type of understanding to one that is more complex, but still remains at the pragmatic level instead of achieving genuine internalization. In other words, the same kind of problem returns in the question of translation that was identified in MacIntyre’s argument for a rational enquiry between traditions: there remains a fundamental circularity in his answer to the question, “how can and do the members of one such linguistic community come to understand the language of some other very different and alien such community.”\textsuperscript{806} The argument for the possibility of successful translation seems to rely too much on already decided or still open evaluative premises:

\textsuperscript{804} MacIntyre 1988, 374.

\textsuperscript{805} MacIntyre 1988, 381, 382.

\textsuperscript{806} MacIntyre 1988, 374.
But it seems clear that where we have sufficient textual and other materials from a culture which no longer exists, those with the requisite linguistic and historical skills can so immerse themselves that they can become almost, if not quite, surrogate participants in such societies as those of fifth-century Athens or twelfth-century Iceland. The acquisition of this kind of second first language is going to be testable in ways analogous to that in which the anthropologist’s knowledge is testable. In the latter case we ask: How far can he or she pass as a native? In the former the corresponding question might be, for example: Can he or she, when acting in a play by Aristophanes, introduce a piece of comic improvisation in which the best scholarship could detect no relevant difference from the original?  

This basic dilemma is of even broader scope when it is considered in light of Derrida’s thinking. Here we come to the Levinasian proclamation elaborated on earlier: it is a fatal fiction for me to suppose that I genuinely understand the Other inasmuch as this results in defining the Other by my standards and marginalizing the otherness of the other. This is the idea of ‘sameness’ as ‘othering’ to which Levinas radically objects first and foremost for ethical reasons. Heidegger was unable to cut the bonds of othering owing to his preoccupation with ‘Being’, and in this he was at one with the whole continuum of Western philosophy, which he criticized. But one may see the same problem in Stein’s concept of empathy from a Levinasian point of view: it is indeed a morally fatal fiction to suppose that one is able to know the intentional acts of Others. And what makes Levinas a counter-pole for interpreting Heidegger’s political flops vis-à-vis MacIntyre is that Levinas would see Stein’s concept of empathy as reflecting the same ethical hypocrisy that lead to moral ignorance in the Nazi period as is the case with liberalism and Heidegger: an ambition to totality as sameness at the cost of responsibility toward the Other.

According to this Derridean type of account, in contrast to MacIntyre’s proposal when he rebukes the poststructuralist tradition, it is not so much that “The indefinite multiplicity of possible interpretations is matched by the indefinite multiplicity of translations, since every translation is an interpretation” would result in “mistraslation becomes in these circumstances increasingly difficult to achieve, since the canons of accuracy are necessarily relaxed in the name of creativity and interpretation.” While this rendering of postmodernism, which MacIntyre bases mainly on his brief sketch of Roland Barthes, has a point, it ignores an aspect that may indeed reflect the peculiarly Derridean contribution to postmodernism: there is a “chiasm” of translation and mistranslation, an infinite tension that cannot be discharged. The way MacIntyre lumps modernism and postmodernism together does not meet the peculiar challenge of deconstructionism wherein the chasm between traditions is taken to the extreme and, moreover, the dilemma of inter-traditional communication is reduced to inter-personal communication on the basis of radical interpretation of a human finitude: there is no philosophical justification for locating the radically Other outside my tradition; rather to identify the Other as belonging to a “tradition” or, indeed, an identification of any tradition as such is an essential mode of othering. It is possible to see that this Levinasian point of view plays at

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807 MacIntyre 1988, 374, 375.
808 MacIntyre 1988, 386, 387.
least a partial role in the Derridean application of the claim that everything is interpretation. And it provides a counter-refutation of what MacIntyre says about the alliance of modernism and postmodernism. MacIntyre says first:

The thought which modernity, whether conservative or radical, rejects is that there may be traditional modes of social, cultural, and intellectual life which are as such inaccessible to it and to its translators. The argument that only insofar as we can come to understand what it is that is allegedly inaccessible to us could we have grounds for believing in such inaccessibility, and that the acquisition of such understanding is of itself sufficient to show that what was alleged to be inaccessible is in fact not so, carries conviction only when it is supposed that the acquisition of the understanding of the inaccessible is a matter of translating it into our own language-in-use. But if it is the case, as I have argued here, that a condition of discovering the inaccessible is in fact a matter of two stages, in the first of which we acquire a second language-in-use as a second first language and only in the second of which can we learn that we are unable to translate what we are now able to say in our second first language into our first first language, then this argument loses all its force.809

But precisely this possibility to adopt a second first language in the first place has been challenged above. The upshot of this is not that there are no inaccessible languages-in-use and no obstacles to translation, as in modernism, but the radicalized Heideggerian claim that everything that is is entangled with inaccessibility and mistranslation and that we cannot and need not come to understand the nature of that inaccessibility by considering the other traditions, but rather must grasp the very finitude of our own condition as such. This finite human condition in itself being the rationale for claiming radical inaccessibility and mistranslation, there is no logical need to call for more specific elaboration on the nature of such inaccessibility as its prerequisite, as it is supposed in the above quotation by both MacIntyre and his critics.

Thus, we have come back to the problem found in the quotation concerning the Ricoeuran contra Derridean understanding of language and metaphor in the beginning of previous section. Ricoeur points out that one cannot aspire to any authentic understanding of the text without creatively using intermediary languages that aim to bridge the gap between the original intention of the author and the interpreter and the particular context of interpretation; through such heuristic intermediate interpretations it is possible to approach, although not fully embrace, the objective intention of the author.810 MacIntyre would obviously say the same thing, and neither he nor Ricoeur is defeated by Nietzschean nihilism with its rigid concept of relativism and metaphorical interpretation. This was stated earlier in the context of the MacIntyrean opposition to genealogy and the Ricoeurian critique of dead metaphor. After all, 

809 MacIntyre 1988, 387.

810 Simms 2003, 132: “For Ricoeur . . . although in literature ‘language seems to glorify itself at the expense of the referential function of ordinary discourse,’ nevertheless ‘there is no discourse so fictional that it does not connect up with reality.’ And not only does Ricoeur rescue referential meaning for appropriation by understanding, he also goes some way towards rescuing the author from his own Barthesian assault. It would be wrong, he says, simply to dismiss authorial intention as a criterion for the interpretation of a work, and put in its place ‘the fallacy of the absolute text: the fallacy of hypostatising the text as an authorless entity’ . . . Rather, the relationship between meaning in the sense of ‘what the author intended’ and meaning in the sense of ‘what the text says’ must also be conceived of dialectically: ‘the authorial meaning is the dialectical counterpart of the verbal meaning, and they have to be construed in terms of each other’ . . .”
Derrida is not refuted by this critique of Nietzsche either, precisely because of his dissociation from the latter’s rigidity.  

The difficulty is that there appear to be no satisfactory philosophical ways to settle this disagreement. Both Ricoeur and Derrida emphasize the significance of interpretation in contrast to Fregean-Tarskian dualism, on the one hand, and objective reality-orientedness contra Humean-Kantian dualism, on the other – both aspects of Ricoeur and Derrida drawing on Husserl’s phenomenological findings. At the same time, the emphasis in Derrida is on the critique of Frege-Tarski and in Ricoeur on the critique of Hume-Kant in such a way that makes it difficult to decide. The same difficulty penetrates also through Simms’s following recapitulation:

For Ricoeur, the dialectic is between the text and the reader: when a reader engages in dialectical relation with a text, the result “is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self” . . . Hence, the dialectic increases understanding. For Derrida, the dialectic is played out within the text itself, between its capacity for meaning and the dependence of that capacity on the possibility of the text’s meaning something else. Hence, the dialectic only increases understanding by simultaneously diminishing it, through our being dazzled by the myriad display of other possible interpretations. Moreover, the two terms of this dialectic (meaning and its possible other) do not resolve themselves into one, but are maintained in inerminable suspense. The laying bare of that suspense constitutes the critical activity that is deconstruction. Ricoeur appeals to those who would cling to some sort of authority for referential meaning in the face of the alleged assault upon it (upon the authority, if not upon the referential meaning) by Derridean deconstruction.

This recapitulation by Karl Simms illustrates the difficulty in arguing more precisely for the nature of the relationship between meaning and interpretation, both of which are creatively

811 To what has been said of MacIntyre’s critique of genealogy earlier, and the Derridean mode of escaping it, one should add the same type of Derridean rejoinder to the quotation at the beginning of the previous section: “We recall from Chapter 4 that Ricoeur criticised Derrida’s theory of metaphor, accusing Derrida of being a ‘philosopher of suspicion.’ According to Ricoeur’s reading, for Derrida all metaphor is dead metaphor, and since all language is essentially metaphorical, all language is ‘dead,’ in the sense that its users are led into a false belief that they are controlling it, while in reality the true meanings of words have been forgotten, and the referential function of language (its ability to refer to things in the real world) is always already, necessarily and irrevocably compromised. Consequently philosophy, as an activity expressed through the medium of language, deceives itself when it claims to arrive at incontrovertible truths. . . . If Derrida was already putting into question Nietzsche’s concept of the dead metaphor and its catastrophic consequences for philosophical discourse in ‘White Mythology,’ it does not follow that this putting into question leads to the opposite position, advocated by Ricoeur, that living metaphor is the lively expression that keeps philosophical discourse alive. Rather, Derrida wishes to question, or ‘deconstruct,’ the received opposition between ‘dead’ and ‘living,’ and not only between the words ‘dead’ and ‘living,’ but also between the philosophical concepts that lie behind them. Instead of merely opposing to one another the concepts of dead and living metaphors, Derrida introduces the concept of a ‘re-trait’ of metaphor. The French word retrait means ‘retreat,’ but is left untranslated to make visible its indebtedness to the word trait, which is lost in English. For Derrida, metaphor is constantly in retreat – each time a metaphor is coined, it begins to die. But this is a paradoxical process: it means that language becomes ever more metaphorical (in the Nietzschean sense that the words in any given language have lost their original meanings) and simultaneously ever less metaphorical (in the Ricoeurean sense that if a metaphor is dead, then it is no longer a metaphor – it is just language). It is this self-contradictory double movement, or trait crossing its own path (re-trait), of language that fascinates Derrida, and precisely for a metaphysical reason.” (Simms 2003, 129.)

812 Simms 2003, 131, 132.
present in both authors: should one see the relationship in a Derridean way, which presents it as a “negative” double movement or in Ricoeur’s way who sees it as “positive” dialectics? The unsettled characteristics of the Ricoeur-Derrida controversy is also evident in the way how MacIntyre dissociates himself from Sartre without, however, offering any justification: “There is nonetheless an important point of agreement between my thesis and that of Sartre/Roquentin. We agree in identifying the intelligibility of an action with its place in a narrative sequence. Only Sartre/Roquentin takes it that human actions are as such unintelligible occurrences . . .” This is obviously because Sartre denies existence of any single or coherent narrative “sequence” that would penetrate any action or identity of the self.

An action is a moment in a possible or actual history or in a number of such histories. The notion of a history is as fundamental a notion as the notion of an action. Each requires the other. But I cannot say this without noticing that it is precisely this that Sartre denies – as indeed his whole theory of the self, which captures so well the spirit of modernity, requires that he should. Instead, if Sartre is taken as a serious alternative to MacIntyre, then the fact that Sartre reflects the spirit of modernity is not enough to refute him because the way he does it confirms rather than denies MacIntyre’s refutation of Enlightenment project. Sartre only embodies a different conclusion of that refutation and that is not refuted by MacIntyre. Sartre’s more comprehensive position is not, however, the focus of this study; he has a role only insofar as his position vis-à-vis MacIntyre illuminates the controversy between MacIntyre and the Heideggerian legacy. Heidegger’s phenomenological transcendentalism provides the resources for relativizing any rational sequence and reduces it to radical finitude instead of keeping the door open to some sequence to take paramount status among other sequences, be they rational or not. This was shown earlier to be the Heideggerian critique of Hegel by Kolb who provides a convincing confirmation of his criticism by noting the mutual incompatibility of Hegel’s different versions of logical sequences. What is of interest here, however, is the Derridean revision of Heidegger that radicalizes not only the relativity of coherent sequences to the point where self becomes fully fragmented, by fragmenting any tradition of interpretation from within, but also radicalizes the ‘retreat of Being’, which amounts to a double movement as the self-negation of metaphysics. For Derrida, the question is not about nihilism, but about deconstructionism. And deconstruction amounts to a programmatic necessity for unifying the self through interpretation – tradition – in the face of self’s equally necessary fragmentation.

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813 MacIntyre 1985, 214.
814 MacIntyre 1985, 214.
2. The Positive Method: The Augustinian Line

2.1. Transcendental Thomism and Dialectical Theology

As it is shown earlier, this kind of Derridean double movement that aspires to transcend the dichotomies of rigid relativism and subjectivism, on the one hand, and objectivism, on the other, seems to survive in the face of *reductio ad absurdum* critique of relativism. A second criticism of Derrida, also addressed earlier, is the virtual political paralysis of deconstructionism; deconstructionism is in no position to give an account of reasonable persuasion for action. This criticism seems to be turning deconstructionism against itself in terms of its ability to provide positive alternative global ethics. However, deconstructionism survives even here as the dismantling of *any* political alternative whatsoever, albeit this is a defeat insofar as poststructuralism has political ambitions. The situation is slightly different when it comes to Ricoeur’s and MacIntyre’s view of language and interpretation; both are seen as inevitably imperfect with regard to objectivity, but, as opposed to Derrida, still capable of approaching objectivity to some degree. This is a controversy that seems to be very difficult to resolve philosophically and is the reason why, on the one hand, the rational method should be taken seriously in the face of deconstructionist critique, but also conversely: there is no clear way to persuade a deconstructionist to adopt the principles of rational dialectics and truth-aspiring narrativity given the former’s radical emphasis on the Heideggerian idea of the finitude of human inference and communication. Hence, it would seem better to counter the charge of deconstructionism through addressing the problem of finitude in a more radical way than within the framework of the inductive type of rational method.

Some Heideggerian paths opened up by recent interpretations in the Thomist tradition seem to lead in directions not in line with the classical Thomist version presented through MacIntyre. For instance, so-called transcendental Thomism, in line with Küng, acknowledges the dimension of unconditionality, as the ground of ethics more than does the MacIntyrean dialectical model indebted to Aristotle. Indeed, it is telling to juxtapose the idea of ‘basic trust’ in PWE with Bernard Lonergan’s and Karl Rahner’s Thomism, which, in significant respects, is more akin to what I call the positive method as opposed to the rational method.

The person is both agent and subject. Especially in the light of the biblical renewal, conversion has been stressed as the fundamental response of the Christian to the call of God. Conversion or change of heart makes one a disciple of Jesus who will then walk in the way of discipleship. From a more philosophical perspective, conversion has been seen in the light of Lonergan’s understanding of the self-transcending subject. A very significant development is the concept of fundamental option which is most often construed in the light of transcendental Thomism. In Thomistic moral theology the basic human choice is that of the ultimate end and this choice then directs and governs the other particular choices that one makes. One either loves God above all things and directs all other actions to that end or one chooses a creature, ultimately oneself, as the last end and directs all other actions to that end. Transcendental Thomism sees the basic option on the level of the subject and of transcendental freedom as distinguished from the level of the object and of categorical freedom. In every categorical act (e.g., walking, praying, lying) there is also present the I who performs the act. The fundamental option or the relationship with God is on the level of transcendental freedom. The subject is related to God not as object but as the absolute horizon of hu-
man reality. The concept of fundamental option as the basic orientation of the person can then serve as the philosophical starting point for a more positive and dynamic moral theology.\textsuperscript{815}

The added value of Karl Rahner to Heidegger is the former’s distinction between God as infinite being and Heidegger’s ‘Being’ as finite event; it is Rahner who gives a full explication of what all finite human horizons of meaning anticipate in divine revelation.\textsuperscript{816} Rahner’s inclusivist rendering of the relationship between Christian revelation and finite revelation of ‘Being’ in natural theology heavily emphasizes the positive role of natural theology and thus has some affinities with the inductive model of the rational method above, but the decisive difference is Heideggerian phenomenology set against Aristotelian dialectics: one cannot reason toward divine truth. It is also important that any inclusivist rendering of Heidegger is necessarily strongly exclusivist. This becomes evident when Rahner’s Protestant ally, Heinrich Ott takes the Heideggerian concept of “horizon” as the key focus of his theology. Ott emphasizes the wholeness of truth and meaning deriving from the New Testament witness of Christ as the “exclusive horizon” of theology; the message of Christianity is not just a message, but also that which determines any understanding of how the world and its possibilities are.\textsuperscript{817} And indeed the whole point of this deep Heideggerian sense of “clearance” of the world as a meaningful whole is that there are only exclusive horizons; one cannot possibly reconcile them.

How the positive status of non-Christian world views is articulated depends on how pessimistically Heidegger’s understanding of finitude is seen. At the same time it is not easy to resolve these matters without subordinating Heidegger to a particular theological view in which he is used to reflect natural theology, either positively or negatively. Philosophically, it has been inferred earlier that Derrida represents a consistent development of Heidegger. The contribution of that discussion is perhaps the opening of further possibilities for making theological solutions more attuned to Heidegger in his own right. Thus, a slightly different way to respond to the Heideggerian challenge within the positive method is related to, first, taking deconstructionism itself to its extreme conclusions in an existential manner and, then, providing a theological answer to its own problems now apparent. Earlier I already proposed that the actual upshot of deconstructionism as double movement is despair. This conclusion alludes to a Kierkegaardian direction within our present context of postliberal positive method.

One possible encountering of Heideggerian thought along the lines of the positive method is what Gerhard Ebeling has to say about the philosophical role of Lutheranism in the framework of the Heideggerian legacy. Whereas the thinking of late Heidegger was penetrated more and more by the role of language in the finite clearance of ‘Being’, depriving humans any firm meaning for life, for Ebeling, Martin Luther’s classical distinction between law

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\textsuperscript{815} Curran, 1986, 391.
\textsuperscript{816} Wilson 2007, 263, 264.
\textsuperscript{817} Wilson 2007, 265–267.
\end{flushleft}
and gospel provides a release from this predicament. By the spiritual use of law Luther meant the disclosure of the total human predicament in fulfilling the divine commandments and living a genuinely good moral life. Yet Ebeling invokes Luther’s idea in order to illuminate the broader scope of finding meaning in life and its surrounding reality. It is the word of God as gospel, coming from outside human finitude, which is now introduced as a divine antidote to the radical relativity of the human language, and thus endowing *Dasein* with a clear meaning. In that sense the Lutheran idea of gospel as liberation from law is updated by Ebeling to address the existential dilemma in Heideggerian philosophy.

We thus have examples of the positive method in postliberalism, both in transcendental Thomism and, through Ebeling, dialectical theology. In the introduction I mentioned that Küng, in his preliminary statements on the theology of religions, was under the influence of Rahner. On the other hand, there is no question, given Küng’s theological background in Karl Barth’s writings, that dialectical theology is one way to develop further PWE’s idea of “only the unconditional can oblige unconditionally.” Owing to the related but slightly differently emphasized aspect of PWE, expressed in the concept ‘reasonable (or rational) trust’ as the instrument for reaching this unconditional transcendent ground of meaning and obligation, one cannot avoid taking some stance with respect to the classical controversy between the major figures of dialectical theology, Barth and Emil Brunner – in support of the latter and against the former. In Brunner the elements of both Rahner and Barth – both being influential figures in Küng’s theological development – are present in a peculiar way. Rahner speaks of human existence as naturally oriented toward its divine ground on the basis of his account of the Heideggerian transcendence of ‘Being’. As Wilson puts it: “Human *Vorgriff* defines, so to speak, what it means to have human ears, whether they hear the Word [of God] or not.”

This Rahnerian idea is also present in Brunner’s positive elaboration of *Anknüpfungspunkt* to oppose Barthian fideism. Nonetheless, both Rahner’s and Brunner’s indirect presence in PWE embodies its potential for the positive rather than the rational method of postliberalism.

According to Küng, man has to believe personally in the existence of an unconditional source of ethics. Along the lines of dialectical theology, reason and faith, nature and grace are viewed as more or less opposite or incommensurable concepts. The opposite and absolute

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818 Wilson 2007, 262.


side of the human subject is called God in many religions. Trust in God does not, though, mean thorough refutation of human reason. On the contrary, Küng even emphasizes the continuity between reason and faith, which relates him to Emil Brunner’s version of dialectical theology.


Basic trust is a crucial concept in Küng’s theology; for him, basic trust is ultimately directed toward God.823 Religion only makes this existential trust more explicit. In this light it is understandable that Küng does not hesitate to take religion as an existential, non-rational, and non-propositional value-experience.824 This is tied to a personal choice for God; thus faith, value-experience, and personal decision are mutually connected.825

The central appeal of PWE to absolute counterpoint at the opposite side of human subject as the precondition of normative morality may be situated in a Barthian context where it is not concrete, all-human religious history, but a particular, exclusive divine revelation, which articulates the absolute and normative obligation universally. This supernatural moral and verbal intervention is not seen as overruling the all-human moral capacities. Instead, in an Augustinian manner the faith cures or illuminates the otherwise numb or distorted moral reason, and thus the morality informed by supernatural revelation enables one to make use of one’s natural moral capacities. The problem with Barth’s dialectical theology is, that while there may not be any (philosophical) proof of his implausibility as such, it is of no help to work out his arguments between the junction point of philosophy and pure theology. One may think of Brunner’s dialectical theology as a more appropriate alternative for these aims. Moreover, in view of PWE’s conception of Vernünftigen Vertrauen, Brunner would appear to have greater relevance.826

Still, Küng personally acknowledges Barth as the theologian to whom he is most indebted. It is important to bear in mind that dialectical theology along the lines of Barth is in


sharp contrast to the views of early Schleiermacher and Jaspers presented earlier. Küng criticizes Schleiermacherian subject-laden anthropological theology on points akin to similar Barthian criticism. For Küng, it is natural to ask whether Schleiermacher is after the fundamental principles of Christianity, such as the subordination of philosophy to theology and God as the non-psychological reality and the internal trinity of equal persons, at the opposite pole to humans. These questions, as well as the question posed by Küng with respect to Schleiermacher concerning the historical significance of Jesus, were the focus of Barth’s own critique of Schleiermacher. In addition, Küng treats Luther’s doctrine of justification as a non-ethical question, opposed to neo-Kantian and to some extent a liberal existentialist view. In this question, Küng bases his views on his dissertation *Rechtfertigung*, which concerned Barth’s view of justification vis-à-vis the Catholic view. Küng would thus seem close to his original theological position, which drew heavily on Barth. Evidently, Küng and his sympathizers do not see any peculiarity in combining existential views with the traditional dialectical theology. Nor should there be – up to a point. The point in a study such as this, which contrasts liberal and postliberal accounts, is to show some clear and necessary limits to that combination. The limit is found in the principal attitude toward religious (and ideological) exclusivism: there is no way to reconcile the non-exclusivistic existential view endorsed by Jaspers with the characteristically exclusivistic view of dialectical theology. Nor should there be – up to a point. The point in a study such as this, which contrasts liberal and postliberal accounts, is to show some clear and necessary limits to that combination. The limit is found in the principal attitude toward religious (and ideological) exclusivism: there is no way to reconcile the non-exclusivistic existential view endorsed by Jaspers with the characteristically exclusivistic view of dialectical theology.

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827 Cf. CC, 201.
828 C, 802.
neutrality at any level is flawed on the grounds of internal inconsistency in the liberalist doctrine itself. This last point should by now be obvious.831

The second perspective with which the postliberal interpretation of PWE is incompatible – despite some contrary allusions in PWE itself – is, of course, the more concrete social and political philosophy of liberalism. The re-unification of Christianity and humanism in modern times is for Küng a complete victory for the church. Whereas humanism has rediscovered its secure foundation, Christianity has re-discovered its humanum.832 This statement in its generality may be understood either as giving liberalism priority in determining humanum in Christianity or the other way around; my point is that it cannot be both. In the event, postliberally, that Christianity is allowed to determine the right humanum, then the following notion of F. W. J. Schelling is rather correct vantage point. “. . . in man, in the creature . . . freedom can turn against its own divine substance, its own divine ground. . . . This fall is the breaking away from the creative ground from which we come in the power of freedom.”833

In fact, in Schelling’s philosophical development there is one significant example of how a constructive, yet asymmetrical relationship between Enlightenment or humanism and classical Christianity may be formulated. It is precisely this asymmetrical, but genuine dialectic of faith and reason that makes Schelling a classical modern representative of Augustinianism. My point from PWE’s more generally religious perspective is that Schelling not only gives an account of how unconditional transcendence is the only solid basis for reason, but also, and this is what is constructive in Schelling’s model by contrast with the more stubborn fideism, of how reason has a clear stake in the articulation and arguments for the view that originally follows from faith.

What makes Schelling an important modern instance of the Augustinian alternative contra the Aristotelian-Thomistic view is that in Schelling, the articulation of how faith seeks understanding is presented in the aftermath of the Enlightenment. Hence, he uses philosophical equipment that Augustine could not have, but which is nonetheless needed in some form to be able to respond, not only to the charge the Enlightenment makes upon religion in particular, but also to the later Heideggerian-Derridean challenge to metaphysics more generally.

In a moment, I will turn to late Schelling’s reaction to the Enlightenment’s challenge in order to shed more light on the challenge presented by Heidegger-Derrida and the reaction to it by dialectical theology. In other words, I would like to invoke late Schelling as a necessary,

831 On the relationships between Küng’s Catholicism, Barth’s dialectical theology and Bultmann’s existential theology, see Hempel 1976 as well as Kuschel 1993a.


833 Tillich 1967, 149.
or at least a highly useful, philosophical resource for a Brunnerian type of dialectical theology in order to develop counter-arguments against deconstructionism. In Schelling, there is a philosophically intriguing way to present those elements that I consider to be essential to the positive method without incurring the extreme fideism of, say, Barth or perhaps even Kierkegaard. This will be the first reason to dwell on the late Schelling: he presents a philosophically rather consistent and elaborate version of how PWE’s central concept of ‘rational trust’ may be developed in the framework of the positive method of postliberalism.

The second reason to take up Schelling at considerable length here is related to PWE’s desire to create a historical analysis of religions. To do justice to this aspiration it will not be enough to refer to dialectical theology and revelation alone. I will need to show how all this is related to the evolution of particular traditions right up to our time. I briefly discussed the Kuhnian echo of both MacIntyre and Küng in the previous chapter. It is indeed possible to develop Küng’s historical argument for *humanum* in a way that is more attuned to a properly Kuhnian pattern of enquiry, which MacIntyre applies to the sphere of inter-cultural ethics. It seems likewise to be clear, however, that Küng does not factually endorse *this* kind of Kuhnian pattern, but rather connects his Kuhnian rhetoric with a Hegelian type of progressive view of the development of history, somewhat akin to Kojève or even Fukuyama, as we saw in part II. As we have also seen, this kind of enterprise does not appear to succeed, owing to its unrealistic formality with respect to deep self-identification with the ethics of religions. The problem is related to the Hegelian synthesizing tendency of history, which, in the final analysis, downplays historical contingencies and differences.

There is, however, another, postliberal, way of calling for historical argument akin to Hegelian idealism. Late Schelling’s idealism offers a more constructive alternative to a non-absolutist, even to some extent relativist, Kuhnian/MacIntyrean model than Hegel and without downplaying the contingent differences it draws on a similar desire for an unconditional and absolute view of history. To recapitulate: given the implausibility of the liberal application of the paradigm theory to the historical analysis of religions, two different, postliberal ways remain to understand history; one (the rational method) draws on the Kuhnian potential of PWE, and the other (the positive method) draws on its Idealist potential.

While both means are, in principle, present in the liberal interpretation of PWE’s historical argument concerning world religions, it is the postliberal one that will be in a position to yield philosophically more promising results. It is important to observe one thing before proceeding to a positive postliberal rendering, namely, that the degree of *neutrality* in the historical argument decreases as one goes from liberal argument to rational postliberal argument to positive postliberal one. The liberal type of historical argument, in all its forms, attempts either to ignore or to transcend the particular self-identifications of the religious or cultural traditions taken as a whole in order to escape the evident ideological contest for the sake of impartiality or neutrality. It either concentrates narrowly on some “elementary ethics” or “minimal ethos” instead of on the “maximal” ethics. Global ethics is here seen as principally independent of any ‘comprehensive doctrines’ in a Kantian way. Or another kind of liberal his-
historical argument sets out to detect, in a quasi-Hegelian neutral empirical manner, the factual development toward the liberal “paradigm” of a particular tradition as a whole despite the more or less contradictory, or at least the not so clearly liberal, tendencies found in the factual traditions themselves.

Instead, the rational mode of the postliberal approach does not attempt to deny the indispensable status of the exclusive articulations of particular traditions as a whole, and thus engages openly in the evaluation of ‘comprehensive doctrines’ as a part of the ongoing ideological contest as the only way to carry out the task of ethically designing the (global) society. But as seen by implication in the previous section, MacIntyre’s model as well as Ricoeur’s and Sandel’s for that evaluation still remains at quite a general level: its focus is to argue for the right general terms of the rational procedure, which will enable one to decide which tradition is the best. It is not that the latter dimension of engaging in the contest itself would be somehow avoidable, as one would see it from the liberal perspective. Rather the characteristic task of the rational method within postliberalism is merely to articulate philosophically the inevitability and more specific nature of that contest, without yet fully engaging in it.

The use of late Schelling is to illustrate that, to incorporate historical arguments into the postive postliberal method is to take the last step beyond formality and neutrality toward engaging in this very contest. It may sometimes seem that Schelling’s historical rendering throughout is analogous to the Hegelian type of Idealism within the positive liberal approach; both use their own models to demonstrate objective insight of any historical development, despite and beyond the contrary self-identification of the many traditions they deal with. But there is a significant difference between the continuum from German Idealism, early Schelling and Hegel included, to such neo-Hegelian figures as Kojève and Fukuyama, on the one hand, and the continuum that begins with late Schelling, on the other.834 The latter, in a characteristically Augustinian manner, acknowledges that a historically particular and exclusive tradition of Biblical revelation precedes any opportunity to transcend historical particularity and ascend to an objective view of the factual traditions and their “actual” historical development. The possibility of context-transcending objectivity is substantially subordinated to the possibility of Divine historical particularity. In the liberal rendering of Hegelian tradition the particularity of traditions is transcended directly, either by way of rational inference (like Hegel and Kojève) or by empirical observation (like Fukuyama and, it seems, Küng).

2.2. Schelling
Before turning to Schelling’s historical argument in his later years, it is important introduce Schelling’s idealist world of concepts through his earlier philosophical phases. This I will do

834 I have restricted myself to Schelling without taking up any of his contemporary Protestant and Catholic followers because I have an interest in showing only the rough nature of the potential historical argument within what I call the positive postliberal method.
below mainly with the help of John E. Wilson’s presentation of Schelling. As I have already shown by implication, the controversy between the rational and the positive methods in post-liberalism is intermingled with the Platonian versus Aristotelian controversy over rationality. Hence, it is important that, from the outset, Schelling is to a considerable extent a Platonian.

One of the three Platonistic ingredients found in Schelling were already noted in Kant, namely, the uncompromising unconditionality of all rational enquiry. It was, however, precisely on this issue that Schelling’s teacher, J. G. Fichte, criticized Kant for harboring remnants of subject-independent reality instead of the idealist subjectivism that Kant’s overall theory had finalized. The other more or less Platonistic element in Kant which Fichte in turn reinforced was a more concrete unconditional basis for all action and thinking at the noumenal level of human freedom, which is grasped by the so-called ‘intellectual intuition’. Through ‘intellectual intuition’ the subject as a spontaneous, completely free and creative will, becomes aware of its noumenal unconstrainedness to conditional reality and even to the transcendental concepts of mind. On the basis of these two revisions, Fichte went on to argue that the active ego, the noumenal and unlimited will, is the sole constructor of reality.835

Now, early Schelling’s inflection on this is that the creator of a highly complex reality cannot be reducible to finite human subject. Rather human ego must be the reflection or image of an infinite absolute subject, which the ‘intellectual intuition’ grasps at the level of the noumenal. Because Schelling still cannot but accept Fichte’s two principal revisions of Kant, he cannot place the unconditional Absolute outside the human subject. Instead, he reduces every object in the external world to the subjective sphere of voluntary construction and then, in turn, to the Absolute God. Consequently, Schelling ends up arguing the fundamental identity of everything in the Absolute. Through ‘intellectual intuition’ one is able to see that the ultimate identity of any subject-object distinction is in complete unity in the unconditional Absolute, an Absolute that is “no thing or nothing, yet it is original power or ‘potence,’ the ‘possibility’ of an existing world. . . . As the possibility of everything the Absolute is the ‘ground’ of the world.”836

All the same, Schelling sets out to give an account of the existence of external reality in its multiplicity as well. This he does by introducing the potentiality of external multiplicity in the ultimate unity of the Absolute. The first “potency” of the Absolute is “unlimited, unconditional expansion,” and this is countered by a second potency of limitation or condition. The synthesis of these potencies is the third, which unites the two and thereby engenders things that have duration in existence. “It brings into existence inorganic and organic stages of a world constantly in becoming and passing away.”837 It is this last additional aspect of the relationship between the Absolute and the world that Schelling takes directly from Plato rather

835 Wilson 2007, 40–42.
836 Wilson 2007, 43, 44.
837 Wilson 2007, 44.
than Fichte. While this third Platonistic element in Schelling is more exclusively his own contribution than the two earlier ones, it is also the most exclusively Platonian. The key here is the radical identity of all external reality with its divine ground. 

The idea of radical ontological identity becomes more understandable on realizing that divinity for Schelling is not something “actual” but “potential.” The creation is about actualizing the potential. As potencies, the divine trinity naturally moves toward realizing what is potential in its innermost essence. Therefore, there exists an identity between God and reality similar to that between intention and action. Ontological difference can be demonstrated only between actual essences, that is, between the substances of created, external reality. Although Schelling’s early formulations radically changed over the time, he never fully abandoned this peculiar idea of identity. Significantly, Schelling’s identity philosophy is a remarkable contribution to what has been discussed about the planetarian ambitions of PWE. Through Schelling’s natural philosophy one may see how the Platonistic ‘intellectual intuition’ provides an alternative to the natural philosophy of the Aristotelian ecologist potential presented in the previous chapter through MacIntyre.

Humanity is able to actualize its own potentialities in forming its cultural world, but according to Schelling, in doing so, it can and does misrepresent its relationship to God and therefore it also errs or sins. As the ground of the finite world or of nature God is the source not only of all being but also of all meaning, and meaning can suffer diminution and loss. Nature is unconscious spirit [Geist], in itself meaningful and intimately related to human life. Meaning is also mediated through art and religion, both of which are naturally related to nature and neither of which is objective like natural science. In art, music, and religion the world is experienced as (subject-object) unity. A great work of art is a visible illustration of “intellectual intuition,” the unity of subjective and objective. The same unity is experienced in living nature itself, as Schelling expressed especially in Bruno, published in 1802. Modern humanity, however, has lost this experience, and with it nature too bears the consequence.

While Schelling anticipates a rebirth of Christianity that will include the rebirth of nature, Christianity has contributed to a general disregard for nature. Christianity is distinguished from nature religion both by its perception of God as other than and beyond nature and by its message that each person is in personal relationship with God. In modernity the cultural heritage of this tradition has become seriously problematic. The preachers of Christianity continue to require, as “the highest tribute of Christian piety,” that God be “outside” of nature. The problem is that this tradition has become part of a culture that devalues nature by “using” it, depriving nature of its life source, so that its meaning is lost and it simply exists. Nature has become a dead thing at the disposal of the “highest irreligiosity.” This also has consequences for human life: “the modern world begins with humanity tearing itself away from nature, but, since humanity knows no other home, it feels itself abandoned.” Schelling’s emphasis on nature is expressed in his own designation of this phase in his philosophy, namely, Naturphilosophie, philosophy of nature.

In several of his works after 1800, Schelling so much concentrated on the “identity” of all in the Absolute that they earned his philosophy the name Identitätsphilosophie, philosophy of identity. . . .

While identity philosophy, a dimension that would be one of the underlying ideas of Schelling’s later philosophy as well, provides a powerful counter-force to Kantian transcendental philosophy and lays the foundations for the Romantic objection to the Enlightenment, clear problems also emerged, which would influence not only some of Schelling’s critical col-

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838 Wilson 2007, 44.

leagues but also Schelling himself. The problem is, naturally, the downplaying of particularity and external reality. The identity philosophy best illustrates Schelling’s extremist Platonist enterprise in its ambition to escape the cave of material multiplicity.\(^{840}\)

\[840\] Wilson 2007, 44.

\[841\] Wilson 2007, 44note31.

\[842\] Wilson 2007, 51.


\[840\] Wilson 2007, 44.

\[841\] Wilson 2007, 44note31.

\[842\] Wilson 2007, 51.

ground, instead of viewing itself only as an image of the balance with the second potency, which is found in the trinity of the Absolute.  

[Schelling] construed two or three principles in the ground of the divine, the unconscious or dark principle, the principle of will which is able to contradict itself, on the one hand, and the principle of logos, or the principle of light, on the other hand. There is here the possibility that the unconscious will, the drive in the depths of the divine life, might break away from the identity. But it cannot do so in the divine life itself. The spiritual unity of the two principles keeps them always together. But in man, in the creature, it can break away. In the creature freedom can turn against its own divine substance, its own divine ground. . . . This fall is the breaking away from the creative ground form which we come in the power of freedom. 

After all, the above described self-revision proved to be insufficient for Schelling. The problem that Schelling obviously struggled with after the publication of On Human Freedom was that he was still reasoning about God in a manner that rested on no ground that would provide the final truth of the matter. In the third and final stage of his philosophical development, Schelling set out to introduce a dichotomy between negative or rational philosophy, on the one hand, and positive philosophy, on the other. This marks his skepticism of any post-Enlightenment philosophy, including his own, with regard to their ability to provide a plausible metaphysical argument in reality.

Negative philosophy concerns rational inference and is marked with the requirement of logical coherence. It is by nature abstract. Therefore, for Schelling, it is never in a position to get to the question of how things are in reality. Instead, it is positive philosophy that has the ability to address this question because its focus is on the existence of reality instead of on the abstract logical coherence of the arguments. Late Schelling’s discovery is that reality-orientedness must be prior to the logic of reason. The most striking corollary of this claim from the point of view of negative philosophy is that thought itself is an existential category, which entails the idea that thinking cannot be a judge of matters that concern the actual existence of things. To do this, thinking itself would have to rise above ordinary existential categories, which it cannot do. Reason is able to operate within its own framework and determine what the possible modes of existence are – anything that exists must exist in logically possible ways. But reason cannot say that something actually exists among those many logical possibilities.

With the help of the reality-oriented approach, one can immediately say that certain things exist in the world, among them, reason and thought. But within the same pattern of positive philosophy one must also conjecture that everything that exists must have come into existence by a free act of a transcendent being who is not part of the existing reality that we are able to observe. Moreover there is, of course, no access to determine this transcendent source of existence more precisely by way of thoughts as such; this will be possible only

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845 Tillich 1967, 149.
846 Wilson 2007, 64, 65.
through the free act of revelation by the transcendent origin as God, an act by which God is 
willing and capable of communicating metaphysical truths to human beings on their own 
terms, that is, in effect, through human language. This source of existence is the sole source 
of metaphysical knowledge, of how the world actually is, what is its essence, its meaning, and 
so on. “In fact revelation is the true source for the knowledge of all reality.” The metaphysi-
cal truths endowed by divine revelation are, again, not discovered by rational thinking, but by 
faith. What is more, confidence in the truth of revelation is not to be gained outside of revela-
tion, but “the only convincing proof of the Scripture’s truth is the testimony of the Holy Spirit 
that works the faith that the testimony of Scripture is true . . .”

In expressing these theses, Schelling retains, rather than relinquishes, the status of ra-
tional philosophy, albeit he simultaneously relativizes that status to a significant extent. The 
positive role of reason is already present in the above note on Schelling’s appreciation of rea-
son as the judge of possible ways of existence in a prospective sense of the quest for truth (the 
“what”). Related to this, Schelling, however, also attributes a retrospective role to rational 
thinking:

. . . human being is also reasoning being who must think and engage in science. Faith must be 
comprehensible for reason. Comprehension of the subject matter of faith is the word of theology, 
“the scientific mind of the church.” Good theology is sorely needed in the church. Through it be-
lievers should have their reasoning perception of what is believed extended “by a system of Chris-
tian insights” and hence be truly “edified,” . . . 
. . . the faith that seeks understanding has, from the beginning, a content that from the begin-
ing was made possible to science. . . . It belongs to faith to be “courageously willed,” for revela-
tion transcends “our usual concepts.” But it is for Schelling always also “plausible to reason and 
the strictest science.”

In articulating this alliance of philosophy and faith, Schelling seems to go even further than 
Brunner. There is not only a need to attach faith to some preliminary surface of reason, but 
also a genuine need to articulate the objects of faith in a philosophically plausible manner. 
Indeed, Schelling goes even further: he advocates the classical religious self-consciousness of 
German Idealism in a way that the contents of revelation are to be conceptualized through 
Idealism in a comprehensive philosophical system, as it were, as the final word of philoso-
phical enquiry. This Schelling himself accomplished in his quasi-apologetic method of unco-
vering the ultimate essence of religious history from the beginnings of the world to his own 
time, albeit solely in light of divine revelation.

The idea underlying Schelling’s history of religions is his early, thoroughly Idealist ren-
dering of history as a context for the gradual and evolutionary emergence of human con-

848 Wilson 2007, 64, 65.
850 Tillich 1974, 114, 115.
sciousness; what is new is that he now justifies and revises that account completely on the basis of Biblical sources.\textsuperscript{852} Schelling’s extraordinary contribution to all philosophy in general and to German idealism as the philosophy of progressively evolving consciousness in particular is to invoke the idea of unconsciousness – akin to Freudian sub-consciousness and contrary to mere ignorance or obliviousness in Hegelian fashion – as the counter-pole of consciousness.\textsuperscript{853} This was already present in Schelling’s middle-phase voluntarism but it is now developed further.

Schelling views the beginning of history as we understand it as the result of the supra-historical “Fall” of humankind. At that point the original harmony in the human spirit between the first potency as will and the second potency as understanding in the image of divine harmony was broken, and the first potency began to dominate. This resulted in the emergence of irrational and wanton unconscionness, because the first principle, without the balancing power of the second, is “the dark principle,” that is, a pure will without consciousness; and without consciousness the will is without firm direction. With the Fall the human spirit lapsed into a condition of complete unconsciousness. Hence, there resulted only an apparent or external unity with God, fellow humans, and rest of creation; there were no intentional actions whatsoever that would have ultimately broken the harmony.\textsuperscript{854}

Nonetheless, the disharmony of the human spirit actually separated the world from the unity with God and human will and was its own god, as it were, the spurious source of its own being. Therefore, when the second potency of God began making its way back to its place within the human spirit, the mutually incompatible multiplicity of idolatry was finally revealed. This free act of love by God’s second potency to begin restoring the balance in human spirit by making itself known is the beginning of consciousness and the end of “pre-history.” When rays of consciousness arrived in the sinfully disorganized human spirit, the potential of the dark principle was revealed: unconscious arbitrariness and self-affirmation ruled over the authentic conscious striving toward the fulfillment of consciousness in unity with God. This resulted in the characteristically mythological nature of world history; the ultimate aim of history is the victory of spiritual religion over mythology by the second potency, which progressively realizes this victory only as a cosmic potency through these very mythologies before finally revealing itself fully as the opposite of all mythologies. It was only through this

\textsuperscript{852} Wilson 2007, 66: “Schelling contrasts a rationalized Christianity of general concepts to Christianity ‘in its complete concreteness’ or conditionedness . . . as expressed in the New Testament. His method in the ‘philosophy of revelation’ is to proceed from this concreteness to the general understanding of the truth of the world and to this truth as the center of all sciences: Christ is the key to understanding the truth of all things, and so also of history”; Wilson 2007, 68, 69: “. . . through the power of the Holy Spirit [the church] recognizes the sinful belief systems in itself and the world and knows the truth of their being overcome in Christ. Therefore according to Schelling the only viable apologetics of Christianity is the philosophy of mythology: the analysis and disclosure of sin.”

\textsuperscript{853} Tillich 1967, 151, 152.

\textsuperscript{854} Tillich 1974, 78.
gradual unmasking of human sinfulness as self-affirmative idolatry against its true ground that
the second potency could regain its place in the human spirit. For Schelling, the whole history
of religions reflects the progressive resistance of the second potency to the first in order to
restore full consciousness by restoring the balance of the human spirit and the unity of God
with its creation.855

Because the arbitrary self-affirmation of individuals is the unconscious motive behind
the radical plurality of mythologies, the crucial stages in overcoming mythology are monothe-
ism and universal moral law. Both are placed opposite the multiple ways of individual self-
affirmation that operate somewhat deceptively in the name of religion. Monotheism and mor-
al law are found in Greek mysteries and Judaism before the Diaspora but only in embryo.
According to Schelling, in ancient Greece monotheism and universal morality gained its supe-
rior status somewhat in the same way that MacIntyre outlines it (albeit with the strong stoic
flavor of Schelling): individual self-affirmation conflicts with natural order between humans
and nature as a whole, creating a need for state control over individuals in the name of morali-
ty. Polis-centered morality in turn cannot be sustained, because the need arises to transcend
the external constraints of one particular polis, which then encounters the moral law that go-
vers the universe as a whole.856

The same process of universalization happens by and large contemporaneously in post-
captivity Judaism. It is here that what Schelling calls rational process emerges. He evidently
believes it to have taken place not only in the philosophy of ancient Greece, presumably in
Plato or Aristotle, but also in his own time, indeed in his own earlier philosophy. I will let
Paul Tillich describe Schelling’s evolutionary view of history in this question:

The task of rational philosophy is to investigate that which is, potentiated threefold [das dreifach
potenzierte Seiende], in all the possible combinations of the potencies with one another. It must
continue its investigation until it has overcome every indeterminacy and every possibility that is
still concealed, and until it reaches being as an ultimate principle that precedes all thought and is
not bound by any potency (11: 560). By actualizing principles that are mere possibilities, negative

855 Tillich 1974, 78, 79. Ibid., 79, 80: “Inasmuch as the potencies have trinitarian significance, this process, oc-
curring in human consciousness, is theogonic, as was the natural process, and it is analogous to it in its outcome.
‘The primary task of philosophy of mythology is . . . to identify in the successive mythologies of the races the
different moments of theogonic process, that process which generates mythology’. . . .” See also p. 164, N.24:
“‘In [Schelling’s] presentation of the doctrine of the trinity the following points are worthy of note: 1) the pecu-
liar synthesis of economic and immanent aspects of the trinity that the concept of potency makes possible; 2) the
conquest of the opposition of the immanence and transcendence of God by emphasizing the unity of cosmic and
trinitarian events without weakening the transcendence of the divine self; 3) the joining of an empirical (economi-
cic trinity) and a speculative (immanent trinity) element based upon the character of the positive philosophy; 4)
the founding of the triad in a three-fold act of will, cf. Thomasius, 1:105: ‘There are three absolute acts of will
by virtue of which God . . . posits himself. . . threefold, and just because they are acts of will they establish a real
distinction’; 5) the affinity with the kenotic formula which, e.g., according to Hofmann, must be shown to be
directly dependent upon the trinitarian construction, cf. Schriftbeweis, Lehrgang 2: 1: ‘The trinity that has be-
come unequal to itself has posited along with its first act of self-manifestation the beginning of the historical
realization of the eternal will of God.’ ”

856 Tillich 1974, 99, 100.
philosophy develops a series of objects and their respective sciences whose status and task it defines (see below). After the potencies are deduced from the intellectual intuition of the concept of being, and the possibility of a process is perceived in the ambiguous character of the first potency, rational philosophy assumes that this possibility is realized, and the philosophy of nature reflects upon the unfolding process of realization. The ambiguity of the outcome of the philosophy of nature, of man as a natural being, leads to the assumption of the Fall, and with it, a new process in human consciousness, the cultural process. According to this construction the cultural process is nothing but the mythological process viewed from a specific standpoint. Whereas the mythological process is the history of God-consciousness, the rational process is the history of world-consciousness.  

In this way rational philosophy provides elements for unmasking the mythological process. Monotheism and universal moral law were indeed the discoveries, not only of ancient Greece, but also of the Enlightenment and German Idealism, which Schelling took to be the death blow to mythology. Yet the principal work of unmasking introduced a new problem, namely, that there was no real possibility to live according to this discovery – to reach ultimate freedom, which would not be constrained by anything, not even by moral law, and yet would be simultaneously attuned to inescapable moral law. Moral law remained an external force that restricted human freedom precisely because in the light of it man necessarily recognizes a natural lack of allegiance to it.  

Again, for the rational process, a chance emerges to escape from this desperate paradox into the world of contemplation. Here contemplation obviously alludes to Schelling’s attempts in his earlier philosophy as well as ancient philosophy. This is what can be detected from Schelling’s description of the contemplative escape, among other terms, as characteristically reflecting the Platonistic vocabulary of German Idealism in the term ‘intellectual intuition’. However, the fundamental problem of the rational process as contemplation, according to Schelling, is that, while it no doubt apprehends the metaphysical truth in principle in order to realize the distorting effect of previous mythology, it still does not grasp in reality the ultimate source of being. Here in effect, we have come full circle back to Schelling’s distinction between negative and positive philosophy: rationally-oriented metaphysics endorses the Absolute ground merely as an ideal possibility, but cannot become convinced or take advantage of the divine source as a power that would actually counteract the moral distress at hand. This is  

857 Tillich 1974, 98.  
858 Tillich 1974, 99, 100: “Liberation from the predominance of the selfish principle, which lives in consciousness as a sense of freedom, can occur only by means of a power that outwardly destroys individuality, and that brings along with it a sense of coercion. Under the protection of the power of the state, a conscious, free, and spiritual attitude toward the natural potencies develops in inner correlation with the progress of mythology. It gives rise to values that raise the individual above the state. The state becomes known in its purely external significance for the restoration of ideal humanity. . . . Thus this construction of the rational process cannot remain at a standstill; it progresses toward an inward and individual relationship to the law that breaks through the barriers of national culture. ‘No one becomes the property of the state, but every one belongs unconditionally to the moral law’ . . . But now it can be clearly seen ‘what happened to the ego when it escaped from God. . . . Its initial and natural attitude is hatred and rebelliousness toward the law. . . . For, being universal and impersonal, the law cannot avoid being harsh. . . . Whoever wills to be himself shall see himself subject to the universal.’ ”
the final paradox that the rational process is bound to leave, a paradox that cries for a solution beyond the resources that paganism affords.  

While Schelling here describes the paralysis of rationality in reaching for the essential metaphysical truths in reality, it is important to note that for Schelling, just as for Augustine, this paralysis is first and foremost caused by a sinful will that still directs human inference in a false direction. The Platonistic kind of contemplative rationality is indeed the original medium for metaphysical truths in general, for Schelling as it is for Augustine. But in light of revelation, it proves to have lost its positive function once the unconscious distorted will has entered the picture – aside, of course, from purely formal logic and mathematics. In other words, ‘intellectual intuition’ was the way to the divine ground of being before the Fall, but thereafter, the external world as actualized potencies of God, embodied in necessary realizations of every will in concrete action, was detached from its ontological ground in the Absolute potency of being. After the dissolution of the unity between potential ground and actual creation, there has been no way to embrace God by directly contemplating the realm of potencies from the realm of actual existence.

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859 Tillich 1974, 100–102: “A turning point is reached at the moment when the curse of the law becomes known: ‘The possibility exists for the ego not to annul itself in its unholy situation outside God, but nevertheless to annul its active nature, to renounce its selfhood.’ ‘With this step from the active to the contemplative life, the ego also comes over to the side of God. Without knowing God it seeks a godly life in this ungodly world. And because this quest takes place in conjunction with the abandonment of selfhood, the ego regains its connection with God, for on account of its selfhood it had become separated from God’ . . . The transition described here occurs in three stages: mystical, quietistic piety; aesthetic intuition; and contemplative science culminating in intellectual intuition . . . Now once more the ego possesses God and, in him, an ideal by means of which it becomes free from itself. ‘But the ego has only an ideal relationship to this God. . . for contemplative science leads only to God who is the goal, therefore not to the God who actually is . . . not to the living God who is near’ . . . ‘This is the ultimate crisis: That God who has at last been found is excluded from the idea, and himself forsakes rational science’ . . . That which truly is, is more than the idea . . . [here Tillich uses Aristotle’s Greek conception that refers to positive theology: God is greater than thought, my addition] This is what the ego demands: ‘It wants to have Him, and Him only, the God who acts, who is providential, who being himself actual can oppose the actuality of the Fall, in short, the ego desires Him who is Lord of being’ . . . ‘For person desires person’; it does not want a God who is confined to the idea, ‘in which it cannot stir.’ Rather, the ego desires a God ‘who is outside of and above reason, to whom is possible what is impossible to reason, who is equal to the law, that is, a God who can set one free from the law’ . . . The ego finds its salvation only when it possesses God in actuality, and when it is united (reconciled) to him, that is, when it is united to him by means of religion, that is, by means of a voluntary, spiritual, personal religion that brings the old world in its entirety to an end . . . The catastrophe of the rational process is the true end of paganism.”

860 Tillich 1974, 101: “If it could remain in the contemplative life, the ego might find refuge with this merely ideal God. ‘But the ego must be permitted to act . . . and with that the former despair returns, for its duality is not annulled’ . . . It is not annulled because the act by which potential will becomes actual will cannot be taken back. Everything that happens in this estranged world is nothing else but the realization of the act of will. But the mystical intuitive relationship to God rests upon the immediate apprehension of the divine in the finite, which indeed was justified in the original order of nature in which God was immediately realized in the process of nature. But ever since the potencies of nature received a reality outside God, leaving that original world with only an ideal significance, nature has been unable to guide the ego to the divine itself.”
An additional, a somewhat contradictory observation is that Schelling all the same would seem to give some positive role to the rational process in grasping the divine truth, at least at an ideal level. One related element not directly stated in Schelling’s general account, but which nonetheless would appear to be important in relativizing the capacity of reason even at an ideal level is how Schelling describes the results of the Fall through humanity’s linguistic fragmentation. Schelling refers to the Biblical account of the mixture of tongues in the aftermath of the construction of the Tower of Babel as an example of what happened when arbitrary will in the abyss of unconsciousness began to guide the conscious life of humans: communicative unity was effectively lost because of human pride as unconscious self-affirmation.

Now, as we have seen earlier, this dimension of linguistic fragmentation is precisely what receives the paramount role in the later articulation of Schelling’s idea by Heidegger, the structuralists and the poststructuralists. After all, one may now think in Schellingian terms: without the final knowledge provided by revelation, it is possible to realize the linguistic fragmentation of humans, although not the unconscious source of it in the first potency. It is precisely by virtue of that self-consciousness of one’s own mythological fragmentation that Heidegger as well as Derrida is in a position to relativize even the identity philosophy of earlier Schelling. It is not that the latter is not rationally defensible, but rather that the identity philosophy can be proved rational only within one finite horizon opened up by a particular system of language. While Schelling, at least according to Tillich’s rendering, does not hold open the possibility that the confusion of tongues could function as the basis for relativizing the epistemological importance of the rational process in general, including German Idealism, this is nevertheless a possible application of his overall theory. In any case, the very relativization of reason is present all the same in Schelling, resulting in roughly the same con-

861 Tillich 1974, 78, 79: “Prehistoric time came to an end as soon as the second potency began to have an effect upon consciousness in order to break the predominance of the first. Then came the time of transition, which was fulfilled ‘by that tremendous vibration of human feeling and knowledge that produced the images of the folk-gods’ . . . – folk-gods, because corresponding to the religious confusion that was just beginning, there was a dissolution of the unity of mankind into nations, tribes, and races. Nothing can separate a race or a nation from another except mythology, which defines the inmost essence of the spirit . . . Even language, the direct expression of spirit, depends upon mythology. This is typically portrayed in the story of the Tower of Babel, which manifests a genuine recollection of that moment when the second potency appeared from afar to consciousness, and mankind was seized by a fear of the loss of unity . . . Paganism, like folk-culture, is a confusion of tongues . . . The transition to history was now complete, so that every race broke away from the common humanity and identified itself with that stage of the mythological process whose representative it was destined to become . . .”

862 This type of anti-relativistic element is, of course, related to Schelling’s progressive view of theogonic history; see Tillich 1974, 79: “However, the mythological process is not confined to the primary bearers of its development. With every advance there is a common vibration in the entire consciousness of mankind, whose traces can be found everywhere among races that either represent a higher stage of the mythological process or among those who do not participate in the principal development of history. This development itself is conditioned by the successive advances of the potencies that were united in original consciousness and are being progressively reunited . . . Moreover, there is an incessant struggle of the second, forward-driving potency against the first that resists it, a struggle that will not end until the third potency is fully realized.”
clusion as in the Heideggerian line of thought: the rationality of metaphysics does not guarantee its truth in reality.

From the Schellingian perspective, what Heidegger has lost sight of by denouncing the philosophy of revelation is the ultimate rationale for the radical fragmentation of ‘Being’ within finitude. Now proper theologians must show, in light of the divine revelation, that what Heidegger, and for that matter Derrida, ascribes to humans *qua* humans is, in effect, the work of the unconscious abyss of uncontrolled freedom. To be sure, there is no denial, but rather a reinforcement of the primordial role of unconsciousness in both existentialist and structuralist lines of thought, both of which draw more or less on Heidegger. What neither of these liberally-oriented approaches is ready to assume is unconsciousness as a non-essential aspect of humans in general, that is, as being the fruit of the Fall and not of existence as such. In this way the positive method is able to confirm the fragmentation of humanity in the manner described by Heideggerian thinking, yet at the same time identify this fragmentation as an ineradicable, but terminable condition. Here Schelling’s and Augustine’s “rejoinders,” to use an anachronistic term, are that radical finitude is the mark of sin, and in the original unity with its divine ground, humanity would itself be united as well. This is Schelling’s peculiarly Augustinian contribution: addressing the *moral* problems behind unconsciousness and finitude. “Through the power of the Holy Spirit [the church] recognizes the sinful belief systems in itself and the world and knows the truth of their being overcome in Christ. Therefore according to Schelling the only viable apologetics of Christianity is the philosophy of mythology: the analysis and disclosure of sin.”

However, one might think that there is an element of the “fullness of time,” as Schelling terms it, in a Heideggerian interpretation and even more, in a paradoxical Derridean rendering, both of which reflect the Kierkegaardian indissoluble tension between the finite and infinite, at least when supplemented with Schellingian moral element. Schelling describes the fullness of time as the historical advent of the final unmasking of mythologies and the simul-
taneous incapability of transcending them: man’s actual captivity in the externality of mythology, despite the principal denouncement of its truthfulness, creates a condition of guilt and despair and a consequent demand (Forderung) for freedom in full unity with the real God.865 “The first principle is not cut off at its root; its right to be is not annulled. It is the right of this principle, aroused by man, to have the power over him to destroy him. And God’s righteousness does not allow this right to be taken from it.”866 This paradoxical “half-heartedness” brings forth the fullness of time in which divine second potency is in a position to appear as the Son of God rather than mere cosmic potency, as has been the case during the evolutionary mythological process. Finally, the divine act of salvation sets the world free from the bondage of self-affirmation by the unconscious first potency in the relatively classic manner of redemption. As Tillich explains it:

But the power and right of the potency of selfhood culminate in the destruction of the creature. Therefore, both its power and right are exhausted when it has killed him who has become lord of being, and in whom everything finite is sacrificed to the infinite. Because Christ is the Lord of being, his death is a sacrificial death in behalf of being. Because Christ makes possible the existence of all creatures, and because all life is comprehended within him, so that light is wrought out of darkness, therefore his death signifies the complete exhaustion of the principle of darkness ... The power of darkness, which was unleashed by the Fall, possesses the right of divine wrath against that victorious [second] potency which had reached the summit of natural and spiritual dominion over the principle of nature [that is, over the mythology] at the end of the pagan period [as unmasking the mythological dynamics and enabling the rational process]. The power of the selfhood was shattered upon the self-sacrifice and self-surrender of all lordship external to God, upon the personal act of the logos, which surpasses all that is natural.867

Now, how Schelling treats the distortions of the rational process after the fullness of time, that is, after the redemptive work of Christ and the restoration of unity between God and creation is also important. One aspect of this particular history was dealt with earlier in the context of Schelling’s self-criticism. But there is another aspect, and that is that Schelling offers a crucially different account of the historical development that led to modernity’s predicament from what was suggested in the previous chapter from the viewpoint of MacIntyre’s Aristotelianism. Schelling’s historical interpretation is first of all based on the criticism of the view of rationality that is endorsed not only by Kantians and Hegelians, but also by Aristotelians and Thomists. Once more, I will let Tillich explain:

Reason is the source of the final and definitive liberation. Its way was prepared by the rationalism that originated in the Aristotelian metaphysics of Scholasticism. “But consciousness that has fled from revelation has recourse only to natural knowledge which does not increase freedom, and to natural reason which, as the Apostle says, learns nothing from the Spirit of God, but is only formally and externally related to the divine. Therefore, consciousness has recourse only to another necessity, to another law, and to more presuppositions, namely, those of its unrealized capability for knowledge” ... Rationalists have no justification to call themselves, among other things, free thinkers ... “For, as before, consciousness was destined to be free from revelation, so it was destined once again to be free from natural reason” ... It was Kant’s deed to have accomplished this

865 Tillich 1974, 107, 108.
866 Tillich 1974, 110.
867 Tillich 1974, 110, 111.
liberation. As Hamann said of Socrates, Schelling said of Kant’s Critique: “The seed of corn of our wisdom must die and must disappear in unwisdom, so that from this death and this nothingness the life and being of a higher knowledge may spring forth and be created anew”...

In fact, one finds, in Schelling’s personal development a resonance of the reverse dynamics from Platonism to Aristotelianism to Augustinianism vis-à-vis what MacIntyre proposes outright for these three classical figures. To be sure, there are crucial elements in that development that are crucially different in the Schellingian perspective vis-à-vis MacIntyre’s. Nevertheless, a significant similarity remains, at least for my purposes. Briefly put, Schelling’s own intellectual journey may be placed parallel with the development from Plato to Aristotle to Augustine so that the final victory is ascribed to the latter. It has already become clear how Schelling’s early phase is tantamount to Plato in this comparison. Also the presence of Augustinianism is quite clear in the last phase of the philosophy of revelation as a positive philosophy. What is most illuminating is that the intermediary period of Schelling, the one marked by On Human Freedom, may be seen roughly in the same way as having proved to be unsatisfactory as would be true of Aristotle’s dialectics seen from Augustine’s point of view.

What Schelling set out to do in the years he wrote On Human Freedom was to give an account of reality by means of reason, to proceed from particulars (the fact of human freedom and the world’s contingency) to a more general level (the supposed potential element of contingency in divine substance and the rendering of divine trinity accordingly). This inductive method would be generally rather Aristotelian. Furthermore, from Aristotle’s general point of view as outlined by MacIntyre, this might in principle have been a sufficient argument in the face of Aristotelian dialectical requirements as the best theory available, or, in MacIntyre’s terms, a rationally consistent tradition of thought without having to face an epistemological crisis. In the final analysis this was not enough for Schelling because inductive reasoning from a particular level toward more general truths still actually embodies the same formal rationality present in more deductive models, such as in Plato or Enlightenment liberalism, contrary to MacIntyre’s contentions. Reason does not add anything decisive or secure to the facts of empirical reality. This is a serious deficiency of reason and, from Schellingian point of view, would also be the problem with MacIntyre’s tradition-constitutive rationality: there is no way to evaluate different rationalities by way of reason itself. One needs transcendent revelation that comes from outside human thought.

Thus, Schelling is in a position actually to invoke a very different understanding of the theologic- and philosophic-historical process leading to the contemporary moral predicament. From that perspective, while it is true that the liberalist type of formal Aristotelianism indeed results in internal contradictions, as MacIntyre has aptly pointed out, it is still possible that Aristotelianism or Thomism does not do any better and that both of these rationalistic counterparts are parasitic upon each others’ defects. While there might after all be rational plausibility in the claims of MacIntyre to a particular non-formal ethics, that is, Thomism, another

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kind of formality still remains that is akin to what has been considered in the case of Hegel: rationality of a metaphysical system is not tantamount to its being true in reality. What is true of Hegel also applies to Aristotelian Scholasticism: metaphysics is jeopardized by remaining at a decisively ideal level.

To summarize what has been said, Schelling represents the original critique of Hegel in the manner akin to Heidegger, as discussed in the first chapter, to which Heidegger is but the heir. But while Heidegger shares the critique of rationality with Schelling, he does not follow the Schellingian-Kierkegaardian root, which ultimately provides a remedy, not only for Hegel, but also for Heidegger as well as for Derrida. Where the Schellingian and Kierkegaardian lines differ from either Sartre or Derrida is not the radicalizing of the Heideggerian idea of finitude – this is the ambition of both. Instead, the Schellingian line not only takes this radicalization to its most devastating conclusion, but also, and even more importantly, introduces a dimension with which the self is able to transcend its finite condition. Neither of these last two is present in Heidegger, Sartre, or Derrida.

Schelling’s conviction throughout his career is that one has to take seriously not only the challenge of Kantian epistemology, but also the rejoinder from German Idealism. From Kant to Fichte to Hegel, German Idealism, in some form or another, embraced the idea of the objective identity of all things – but this only as an idea and not as reality; in order for this idea to become concrete reality, empirical analysis, that is, a positive philosophy, is needed. Hegel did have some sort of combination of these two, but it was insufficient and in a confusing and inarticulate form. His emphasis on the rational system led him in practice to downplay positive philosophy, that is, concrete history and particularly its radical contingency. Along Schellingian lines one could also argue that Hegel downplayed the individual personality and the consequential significance of love and evil – all of which are also related to the Kierkegaardian later criticism of Hegel. It might be thought that late Schelling is not the only plausible corollary of these general notions. There is also what I would call a liberal version of this Schellingian critique of Hegel represented by the so-called Young Hegelians, such as Feuerbach and Marx. As Wilson observes:

The second point revived the claim made by some of Hegel’s earlier critics that the “Absolute” can only have its existence as “Son” not in a particular human being Christ, but in all humanity. Hegel’s universal [allgemeine] “Spirit” [Geist] that comes to itself in the process of history is nothing other than the “spirit” of humanity. Feuerbach and Marx, who focused on human experience and history, agreed with the later Schelling’s critique that Hegel wrongly made the concept prior to existence . . . but they entirely rejected the late Schelling’s “philosophy of revelation,” and they considered Hegel, however much he needed correcting, superior to all previous philosophers.
Marxist hostility to the metaphysical aspects in Schelling’s late theory was, however, shown to reflect the hopeless effort to find a consistent articulation of the second formulation of the categorical imperative directly at the “horizontal” level. Hence, it is indeed worth taking the postliberal type of late Schellingian position as a *more plausible* alternative to Hegel than the leftist Hegelian position.

For Schelling, the estrangement of God from himself and the related fatalistic scheme for reconciliation in Hegel did not give sufficient reason either for the origin of this estrangement or for a rationale for accomplishing the reconciliation. The indisputable achievement of German Idealism for Schelling was no doubt the discovery of objective idealism with its inherent appeal to both the ultimate identity of all things and the related presupposition of ultimate being as the source or substance of that identity. But in order to combine the personal, contingent, and ethical elements that Hegel downplayed or misconceived, Schelling outlined a Trinitarian structure of God arising from the postulate of radically free will. The observation of reality by positive philosophy as a contingent embodiment of human free will had to have effects on conjectures about God, owing to the additional presupposition of negative philosophy, that is, the ultimate identity of God, man, and the world. This interplay of identity and contingent difference lays the foundation for Schelling’s late philosophy; there he finally set out to prove the divinity of this God through the empirical history of religions after having inferred that all history is religious in its nature.

Thus, Schelling’s is an intriguing endeavor to combine the rational and positive methods – a task which the previous chapter showed liberalism to be incapable of accomplishing. Moreover, the combination is a one that does not resort exclusively to supernatural explanation, but rather prepares the way and gives every reason to make the required leap of faith. Schelling proceeds from supra-historical creation to a temporary history of religions. Only then does there arise the deadlock of rational philosophy and the resulting requirement of a leap of faith. This Schellingian understanding would then be one plausible way of articulating philosophically Küng’s ‘rational trust’. Along these lines Schelling might indeed offer an entire theological middle way between Hegel and Barth, which Küng sought during his earlier ecumenical period. Kuschel points to a theological synthesis of these two in Küng in a way that raises the question of whether Schelling might be the needed mediator between these two counterpoles, despite the apparent ignorance of Schelling on the part of Kuschel and Küng.

On the other hand, the understanding of rationality in Schelling remains crucially at a retrospective level, and in this he reflects the essence of positive philosophy. For one thing, one might ask Schelling the reasons why God does not unite all people with himself through

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873 Tillich 1967, 141–150.
874 Tillich 1974, 65.
875 Kuschel 1993.
Christ instead of uniting only those “who sacrifice their self-will” in faith through the gift of justification.\(^\text{876}\) The Schellingian rejoinder would be to refer to the radicality of personal free will as the result of the empirical inference of positive philosophy. God does not coerce anyone in Schelling’s model as opposed to Hegel’s. Moreover, it is empirically too obvious to deny that many humans do not use their will to subscribe to the gifts endowed by Christ. The personal ethical accountability of this choice is also experientially considered inevitable. Another issue is how is it possible that certain people are convinced of the divine revelation, while others are not. It seems logical that, since God will have all the credit for acts of reconciliation, including the emergence of faith and personal conversion, why is it that he does not convert everyone? Notably, at this point Schelling does not claim that positive philosophy is able to account for every mystery. In this sense he shows some affinities to the *via moderna*:

“...God as absolutely transcendent being is the principle of positive philosophy. ... It does not belong to positive philosophy to prove the prius of the divinity itself; ‘it is beyond proof, it is the absolute beginning known only by itself’... God can be proved only if he proved himself, and whether he proves himself depends upon his will.”\(^\text{877}\) The positive philosophy in general can be seen as somewhat analogous to nominalism as well to the *via moderna*, but the noteworthy Schellingian peculiarity, no doubt related to his Idealist heritage, is the interplay of the idea of ontological identity and negative philosophy, with its corollaries concerning the possibility of natural theology and rationality of faith.\(^\text{878}\)

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\(^\text{876}\) Tillich 1974, 111.

\(^\text{877}\) Tillich 1974, 65.

\(^\text{878}\) In light of what has been said, it is possible to discern an Augustinian-Schellingian line of thought distinct from that of Kierkegaard and Barth in that the former is principally more on the side of the Thomist, Romanus Cessario O.P., in his criticism of nominalism, which in turn is identified more with Kierkegaardian-Barthian fideism: “There are historical reasons that persuade the moral realist to describe eternal law as how God knows the world to be. For example a realist theologian wants to avoid interpreting eternal law by appeal to the distinction between divine “absolute” and “ordained” powers that late fourteenth-century Nominalists such as Gabriel Biel introduced into Western theology. Biel defines the *potentia absoluta Dei*, the divine absolute powers as God’s power to do whatever does not imply a contradiction, without regard to whether God has in fact committed himself to this activity – that is, without regard to *de potentia ordinata*, to the ordained power. In contrast to the infinite range of possibilities which the *potentia absoluta* foresees, the “ordained power” signifies that course of action to which God has in fact freely committed himself. While voluntarism represents a basically Christian phenomenon, born on meditation upon a God who acts freely and a Christ who announces the will of the same God, its unlimited volitional emphasis does not afford an appropriate context for understanding eternal law as an expression of the divine creative wisdom that comprehends but transcends the practical order of human willing.” (Cessario 2001, 60.) Conversely, along the lines of nominalism, Kierkegaard “does not extend certain idealistic conceptions’ use into theories about God whose ‘infinite qualitative difference from human being makes such speculation impossible’ in contrast to what Schelling contends.” (Wilson 2007, 79.) The same is evident in Barth in his denouncement of natural theology of whatever sort. (See for example Tillich 1967, 241.) See also Tillich 1974, 171, N.25: “Schelling is a nominalist insofar as he gives priority to the absolute individual, to the primordial ‘that.’ The infinite idea has reality only because it is the absolute individual. However, he is also a thoroughgoing positivist because he maintains that the principles of being, in which God has placed his will, comprise what is actually real in all events and because he regards the particular products of the natural and historical process as only conditioned reality.”
2.3. Positive and/or Rational Method?

The main point in introducing an Augustinian type of alternative within a postliberal paradigm is that it may be argued that rational enquiry remains too half-hearted. As with Ricoeur and Sandel, the same also applies to MacIntyre in that introducing the dialectical relationship still does not—and indeed cannot—show how it is possible to arrive at any particular understanding of the good in a rational manner. The proposal remains to a significant degree at a formal level. And what is more, it is not easy to see why this kind of proposal would differ substantially from the formal virtue-ethics by such Aristotelians as Nussbaum. To call for particular virtue-ethics, which would be justifiable by way of antecedent reasoning, without articulating it or showing the precise chain of reasoning leading to it, is somewhat self-refuting, or at least unsatisfactory for the very reasons that MacIntyre has chastised Plato.

It is here that the positive method introduces a supernatural element. From Augustine to Schelling to various versions of contemporary dialectical theology, perhaps the most important presupposition of all is divine illumination as the necessary source of all genuine knowledge. It is precisely because the transcendental, unconditional Absolute is able to intervene in the human finitude by means of language without at the same time reducing that communication to finite fragmentation, that is, by means of incarnatory revelation, that Schelling is able to say that truth is representation. This divine element is already presupposed in the Heideggerian line of thought by Heidegger’s contention that only God can release us from the fragmentation of ‘Being’.

Terry Pinkard argues like Sandel but along even more Hegelian lines that there is a need to reconcile the two equally necessary aspects, namely, the self-government against communal encumbrance as individual freedom, on the one hand, and the substantive dependence of...

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879 I argued that the other side of the dialectics is always the retrospective dimension of rationality.

880 On MacIntyre’s charge concerning the formalism of Plato, see MacIntyre 1988, 82–84. The proposal that Ricoeur as well as MacIntyre and Sandel are incapable of actually showing, more concretely, how it is possible to transcend the particularity of traditions—by way of imaginative distanciation (Ricoeur) or an Aristotelian type of dialectics (MacIntyre)—supports of course Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Heideggerian type of arguments, not only against those of the Habermasian kind that more directly oppose Gadamerian relativism, but also those of Ricoeur who attempts to tread a narrow path between the two. MacIntyre seems to be more willing to accept the thoroughness of the tradition-constitutive enquiry than Ricoeur, who appreciates the Habermasian transcending of ideologies to some extent. Yet as proposed above, the same problem of inter-traditional evaluation in rational terms also applies to MacIntyre. Indeed, the claim here is that while Habermas is incapable of refuting Gadamer, a more successful use of his general method of transcending particular traditions would be the only way to make a rational evaluation from the point of view of Platonian understanding of rationality. In other words, there is no third alternative; Ricoeurian distanciation reduces to intra-traditional operations. On this account, the fundamental line of controversy lies between Plato/Augustine/Habermas and Sophism/Heidegger/Gadamer. On the Habermas-Gadamer debate, see Gadamer 2002; Ricoeur 2002; Scheibler 2002; Jay 2002; Warnke 2002. On Ricoeur’s intermediate alternative to this debate, see for example Ricoeur 1986; Kaplan 2003.

881 On this view, see for example Matthews 2001, 180–185.

882 Kolb 1986, 227.
one’s community as responsibility and need for care, on the other.\footnote{Pinkard 1995.} However, while Hegelianism manages to establish this general framework, it does not succeed as well in providing them with more concrete content. Instead, the Augustinian model begins to rise to the latter challenge as well. It is noteworthy that in Augustine, dependence on God generates freedom, rather than restricting it. To fight against the addictive, indeed enslaving forces of sin is the real way to personal emancipation. Typically, “sin” here is equated with selfish desires. The freedom is not that one is to make up one’s own life with respect to the good, as Kant more or less thought.

According to Augustine, we are not to make up our lives completely, but only partially. Put differently, the other side of the coin of choosing one’s ends is surrendering one’s subjective desires to the selflessness demanded by the moral imperatives. On the other hand, in our contemporary liberal culture, it is too easy to forget how altruistic Kantianism proper really is – or was.\footnote{Cf. here what Schelling says about the universal moral law’s external force as a \textit{counter-force} to freedom and therefore woefully insufficient. (Tillich 1974, 100, 102.)} But the problem with Kantianism is – and was – that the lack of a particular narrative structure concerning the good \textit{leads} to the contemporary interpretation of liberalism. The a-metaphysical nature of the categorical imperative with its more detailed corollaries is not capable of warranting itself, at least in the long run. From the experiential point of view deontological ethics may hold in theory, but it does not hold in practice. People do not find it reasonable to stick to the objective side of morality – at least in today’s radically pluralistic situation – without any substantive \textit{telos} as a narrative rationale. Although deontological global ethics might have a strict theoretical coherence, it “hovers in the air,” that is, it does not have a sufficient grasp of reality.

With Rawls the situation might seem to be different. Indeed, his mission is to purify the Kantian ethics of its idealism stemming from noumenal demands of conscience. In a way this means purifying Kant from the last remnants of the transcendent method as enigmatic echoes from the era when philosophy still included remnants of substantive rationality. However, this purification was the wrong way to bring Kantianism more down to earth. The question remains: who would consent to go behind the veil of ignorance \textit{in real life}? Certainly, only few or none. Indeed, the way out of the Kantian practical dilemma is not to do away with the transcendent dimension, but to reinforce it in a way that Kant and all his liberal successors refuse to do.

On the other hand, the proponents of positive liberal method refuse to do this as well, though in a different manner and, consequently, with different results. According to the positive method in liberalism, society has a considerable stake in individual assets and goods. But this is realized not in some undemocratic sense. Rather what we have are echoes of Rousseau. The democracy of the positive method within liberal paradigm taken to its extreme is a com-
plete self-government of the people. But while in the deontological method the independence of the individual swallows the communal aspect, here the situation is the other way around: the aspect of autonomy becomes practically immersed in social encumbrance. Now duties are not compatible with freedom, because society has every possible control over the individual. There is precisely the same overall mechanism as in the deontological method: despite the salient aim of self-government, individual freedom does not hold in practice. Of course, the most attractive liberalist positions mediate between the individualist and collectivist extremes, but they are not in a position to dissolve the tension.

Indeed, the Augustinian claim is that there seems to be no way to reconcile the two opposite necessities for a moral life, the choice-preceding encumbrance and genuine freedom, by liberal means; one would need transcendent intervention. As has already been mentioned, the Augustinian concept of dependence is compatible with independence, but to make use of this notion the essential question is how this compatibility is established. The important

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885 Pinkard (1995) seems to identify himself – with Hegel – quite firmly on the side of a liberal type of the positive method. Just consider this phrase on page 123: “For Hegel, the way of securing these moral certainties anchors for conscience – as those things that are simply required or simply ruled out – cannot lie in our elaborating some kind of moral philosophy that would put us in touch with eternal moral truths or give us a new version of the Cartesian idea of a ‘method’ with which we could crank out unambiguous moral certainties. It must lie rather in the structure of mutual recognition of society – in social practices and institutions that make up what he called Sittlichkeit, ‘ethical life,’ a sense that ‘this is the way we do things’ which provides the context around which our appeals to conscience, broad as they may be in the modern world, circulate and in which they find certain resting points. There must, that is, be a set of institutions that structure our desires and our expectations such that we have a firm sense of what sets boundaries to our consciences.”

Similarly than Pinkard (1995) from the ground of Hegel (see for example p. 123), Sandel (1998, 56–59) recognizes the requirement for an account of how the independent side of the self would not be swallowed entirely by the community. Related to this, Sandel outspokenly denounces any type of conventional communitarianism or relativism. In this light the republicanism Sandel advocates is crucially different than Rousseau’s, namely, a kind of multi-voicedness in the public sphere. His ambiguity at this question may – at least partly – stem from the fact that he has not offered any comprehensive positive alternative to liberalism that would differ substantially from Hegelianism. This incompleteness in turn may indeed be a result of an inadequate recognition of the need for a transcendent dimension. To be sure, there are hints of this need for transcending the reason and experience by Sandel. The following quotation from Sandel (1998, 180) offers a good bridge for the transcendent method as it indirectly alludes to theological solution for this basic problem: “When I act out of more or less enduring qualities of character, by contrast, my choice of ends is not arbitrary in the same way. In consulting my preferences, I have not only to weigh their intensity but also to assess their suitability to the person I (already) am. I ask, as I deliberate, not only what I really want but who I really am, and this last question takes me beyond an attention to my desires alone to reflect on my identity itself. While the contours of my identity will in some ways be open and subject to revision, they are not wholly without shape. And the fact that they are not enables me to discriminate among my more immediate wants and desires; some now appear essential, others merely incidental to my defining projects and commitments. Although there may be a certain ultimate contingency in my having wound up the person I am – only theology can say for sure – it makes a moral difference none the less that, being the person I am, I affirm these ends rather than those, turn this way rather than that. While the notion of constitutive attachments may at first seem an obstacle to agency – the self, now encumbered, is no longer strictly prior – some relative fixity of character appears essential to prevent the lapse into arbitrariness which the deontological self is unable to avoid.”

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886 Elshtain 1995b illustrates the individual vis-à-vis the communal aspects of early Christians. Luther’s classical statement in The Freedom of a Christian reflects the same dualism.
tools to use here are Augustine’s classical distinction between love as enjoyment (frui), on the one hand, and as instrumental (uti), on the other, the former referring to loving things for their own sake and the latter to loving earthly things, including neighbors, for God’s sake.887

Applied to our discussion, this means that the Augustinian transcendent vantage point does not subscribe to the absolute rule of civitate hominis, because that would be idolatry. Incorporating the aspect of love as well as divine illumination into freedom as transcendent dependence decisively distinguishes Augustinian freedom from that of Jaspers described earlier. While Jaspers also bases the possibility of genuine human freedom on its fideistic resort to a transcendent Being, it is difficult to believe that Jaspers would affirm, as the ultimate purpose of metaphysics, the Augustinian idea of a personal God being the object of love. This is indeed what Jaspers opposes in Martin Buber’s dialogical existentialism.888 But what is more, the original Augustinian understanding also challenges Buber’s and Levinas’s absolutization of the inter-personal level in that it significantly relativizes the heteronomy caused by the other human being to the subject. Whereas for Levinas, the Other is the absolute and infinite source of ethical dependence, for Augustine that status is ascribed solely to God whose creatures are to be loved only in light of God’s unconditional love and the divine illumination that more concretely guides our love towards our neighbors in the right direction.

I am here outlining my opposition to Hannah Arendt, who criticizes Augustine for instrumentalizing the love of one’s neighbor by introducing the fundamental distinction between frui and uti in his hierarchical order of love.889 It is noteworthy that Arendt was under the heavy influence of Jaspers in her criticism of Augustine,890 which may have led her to underestimate the role of revelation at play in this issue: concrete divine illumination has to guide our otherwise perverted nature to the right understanding of what it means to love our neighbors in the first place. This idea is one of the significant differences between Augustine and the liberalist approach, as the latter characteristically gives more ethical status to the ‘man-as-he-happens-to-be’ idea rather than the ‘man-as-he-would-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature/telos’. Jaspers’s understanding of human finitude leads him to undermine any sort of essentialism, even if its source is revelation.891 It is easy to see how in this constellation any endorsement of love as uti is rendered as a fatal instrumentalization of one’s neigh-

887 Augustine 1997, 8–29. Cf. Wilson 2007, 63 on Schelling: “Through Christ sinful human being comes to trust and have confidence in God in an act of faith that is both free and ‘excludes all choice,’ for faith is the necessity of its reborn self. . . . Schelling reflects the tradition of Augustine (and New Testament) that only true freedom chooses the good, and only Christian freedom is true freedom.”


889 Arendt 1996, 36–44. I am also, in effect, suggesting that the Augustinian order of love as frui and uti does not have to lead to the kind of Platonian “numb love” of one’s neighbors, whereas passionate love is reserved solely for God. This is also what Arendt contends.


891 Ehrlich 1975, 76, 77.
bor because, in practice, there are no sources of knowledge for how to love one’s neighbor other than the neighbor herself.

In conclusion, keeping with Augustinian social ethics, absolute dependence as ethical encumbrance is to be placed in the transcendent realm, while absolute independence as ethical autonomy in turn is placed in the immanent, that is, the societal realm. In other words, the Christian has no obligations for the well-being of others based on their demands – as is the case in both of the liberal methods – but the Christian does have obligations to God for the well-being of these same people. Further, because the individual is ultimately tied to the transcendent end, she is totally independent of communal expectations that do not reflect this end. Consequently, there is in fact a mutually critical relationship between the community and the individual. In light of transcendent divine illumination it is possible to give a concrete answer to the question of how an individual is dependent on a community antecedent of personal choices and in what way she is able to transcend this dependence by personal choices.

Yet while Schelling (and other authors presented within the positive postliberal method) may be seen to refute MacIntyre’s overall thesis once and for all, using its very own standards, there is also the other side of the coin. MacIntyre may claim that owing to the fact that, in reality, the transcendent proposal is carried out within the framework of what he calls tradition-constituted enquiry, the proposal also has validity only so far, that is, as the best argument so far. There is even a MacIntyrean reply to the question of divine illumination as the guarantee of unconditional knowledge, namely, that Scripture needs interpretation, which in any case is a tradition-constitutive operation. One would perhaps best see the Augustinian model not so much as a complete subversion of rational postliberalism, but rather as being able to reverse the direction of the role of interpretation from Derridean pessimism as a double movement to the Ricoeurian positive hermeneutic circle. Earlier I hinted that the rational method is incapable of showing the chain of argument at least in this regard. Eberhard Jüngel reflects an Augustinian alternative that would perhaps be in a better position to meet both the criticism of the positive method by the rational method and the criticism of the rational method by the positive method. I will let Wilson describe, albeit in a slightly different context, Jüngel’s idea of divine intervention in negation as radical opening of possibilities at some length:

892 There is in fact a mention of late Schelling in MacIntyre’s use of four stories of religious conversion by contemporary German Jewish intellectuals, one of the stories being Edith Stein’s conversion to Catholicism. Schelling’s influence appears in the conversion of Franz Rosenzweig to Judaism. A reader may get the impression – albeit it is as important to note that there is no clear sign that this would be MacIntyre’s intention – that while Stein’s conversion is rendered as the rationally consistent upshot of her philosophical development the other conversions are set to embody, in contrast, either quixotic rationalism in a Platonian sense (Reinach’s unaccomplished vision to lay the philosophically incontestable foundation to his religious experience) or arbitrary voluntarism in a Kierkegaardian sense (Lucas’s real motives for adopting Bolshevism) or uncritical conventionalism (Rosenzweig’s return to his childhood religion). (MacIntyre 2006, 143–175.) Of course, as has become clear above, late Schelling is not supportive of adopting one’s natural heritage without rational criticism. On the contrary, one of the key features of Judaism according to late Schelling is precisely what he considers the problematic externality and conventionalism, which are incapable of cutting the bonds of mythology.
The “death of God” does not mean simply doing away with theism. Hegel rightly points theology toward a definition of God that “enables and allows the divine essence to be thought of as a being in history. For without negation [death] there is no history!” . . . What Jüngel means is that because Christ is a being in history and suffers negation, God is in history and suffers negation. All historical life is temporal, “perishable” [vergänglich]. In Christ God has subjected God’s self to “perishability” . . . But mortality is not only a negative concept. “That which is ontologically positive about perishability is the possibility” . . . and “possibility is the capability of becoming” . . . Only in temporal life, in its being born and peri- schability. In Christ God has subjected God’s self to “perishability” . . . But mortality is not only a negative concept. “That which is ontologically positive about perishability is the possibility” . . . and “possibility is the capability of becoming” . . . Only in temporal life, in its being born and perishable, is there the coming to be of what is possible. The great threat of perishability is nothingness. Nothingness is “undetermined” [unbestimmt],” it has no definition. It is the abyss into which, according to Kant’s image, the question about the origin of God disappears. It “annihilates” all that exists. But in Christ’s perishing it is God who assumes or takes on nothingness, and in so doing God “gives nothingness a place within being,” “within the divine life.” God gives the nothing a “determination [Bestimmung],” a definition, a role to play in God’s being in and with Christ and the world . . . namely, that of producing a wholly new possibility in history.

The absorption of nothingness into God’s being has therefore positive meaning. The possibilities of temporal human life before Christ were limited by its sinful condition. Now, however, the role nothingness plays in the coming to be of the possible is empowered [potenziert] in a fully new way, for now the power of negation, the nothing, and therefore also the possibilities are under God’s lordship. . . . The new possibilities of Christian life are so radically new that they exceed and contradict any measure of them according to the world as it presently exists. They are no longer those of the “actual” or, as Paul says, “old” world of sinfulness. Rather the Christian experiences a change of consciousness and a new freedom through the Word that has made her or him a participant in the eschatological reality of the coming future of God. The possibilities of Christian life are new, alive, and expressions of Christian freedom . . . They are not developed out of human potential but are given as a gift of grace from outside the self by God.

Following his teachers Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling, Jüngel names these possibilities “events” of language. They are related to Advent: they open fully new perspectives for faith’s existence, and they are what make the “old” world “old.” The parables of Jesus, which are narrative metaphorical analogies, are paradigmatic for these events, indicating the way all human talk of God must be formulated . . . The language of faith uses words from the “actuality” of the “old” world, but it does so in the realization that these words can never directly express the new reality of faiths. The newness of faith’s reality and freedom, in which God comes utterly near . . . interrupts the normal course of words in order for faith to “say more than the actuality of the world is able to say.” This mode of speech can only be metaphorical and narrative. Therefore all of faith’s talk of God must be metaphorical, full of what is always new in time: the coming God. For Jüngel as for Karl Barth, these analogies are analogies of faith created in and through Christ . . . The gospel is “correspondence” to God, and the Jesus of the kerygma is himself (as Barth had also said) a “parable” or “analogy” [Gleichnis] of God . . . for again what God is cannot be directly expressed in human language. But it is God who establishes the “correspondence” to God in Jesus and the Word of God. In all aspects of the gospel “God comes from God” . . .

To this one might add an extra emphasis – yet perfectly in line with Jüngel’s thesis of all history, including human life, as temporal and “perishable” due to negativity – on how the dialectics between radical negativity and radically new possibilities are repeated in the Christian, “illuminated” subject, albeit now having a “Ricoeurian” positive direction contra the Heideggerian line; the possibilities are opened up through their negation in the manner of an Apophatic “theology of the cross” also in the life and interpretation of the followers of Christ and the committed readers of Scripture. When we apply Jüngel’s Barthian Hegelianism in this way, we find an element of radical appreciation of negativity in the positive method so that the Heideggerian-Derridean idea of ‘nothingness’ is incorporated into all aspects of the over-
all theory, but also decisively relativized. The introduction of negativity at the level of the interpretation of Scripture is to a significant degree at odds with a Schellingian self-consciousness of German Idealism as the final articulation of Biblical truth, and it is rather more in line with Ricoeur’s, more humble stance toward Bible hermeneutics.

In the previous chapter it was mentioned that the rational method has the advantage of attracting people in their natural state through its claim to provide reasons to adopt the metaphysical telos it advocates. The same cannot be said of Barthian fideism. This is not to say that fideism would not display a rationally consistent argument in principle. There is no way – either reasonably nor experientially – to refute antecedently the nominalist vision deriving from Occam and reflected more or less by other fideist religious patterns; there might always be the possibility that finite human inference does not have a final correspondence with reality. Nevertheless, even before a retrospective testing of reason and experience – the possibility that fideism downplays as well – there is already a practical problem, namely, it is non-attractive to advocate a view that from the beginning denies any points of contact between it and natural human dispositions and questions. In this sense, although the model offered by Schelling is not rational in the same way as MacIntyre’s, it nonetheless dedicates a place to reason as far as possible in the generally Augustinian tradition contra fideism.

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894 It is interesting to juxtapose this idea with Stein’s ambivalent stance toward negativity, which is detected in her critique of Heideggerian nothingness as the final end of phenomenology (MacIntyre 2006, 184), on the other hand, and her phenomenological endorsement of John of the Cross (MacIntyre 2006, 182), on the other. This ambivalence might, in fact, reflect some potential in Stein for a Derridean double movement between positivity and negativity. On this intriguing question there might indeed be found a junction point between Stein and Jüngel. MacIntyre alludes to a similar direction himself when he proposes the need to incorporate a Sophoclesian mode of tragedy into the otherwise too rigid and perfectionist systems of Aristotle and Aquinas. (MacIntyre 1985, 179.) Thus, something of a similar kind may be developed within the framework of the rational method. Nevertheless, it would seem impossible to push the negativity as far as in the positive method, because, according to MacIntyre, one all the same has to be able reason oneself forward in the moral process toward a final telos. An additional theological note, although not supported by sufficient examination, is that the negativity found in John of the Cross is still more moderate with respect to Luther’s application of the theology of the cross owing to the former’s more progressive understanding of Christian life. Luther as the advocate of extreme negativity, where the dimension of progress lies hidden behind the extreme regression, seems to be a major source of Jüngel’s account of Christian negativity, although Luther should not be directly identified with all that is said about the positive method.

895 This may be applied to the Schellingian method in the form of acknowledging the following incompletenesses within both rational and positive philosophies: “Reason concerns itself with knowledge of the in-itself, of the concept, of the essence of things. It deduces a priori the content, the material of that which is, and in this connection it is entirely incidental to the concept whether something actually exists. Indeed, if anything exists, it must exist just as thought necessarily conceives it. In grasping the real, reason does not comprehend reality . . . . The entire rational or negative philosophy moves about in [the realm of] potency. Negative philosophy can never attain to the status of act or of actual existence. It would never even occur to it to choose to prove that an object of experience exists. It would be as superfluous as it is unnecessary . . . . Experience is the only means of proof in positive philosophy. It does not belong to positive philosophy to prove the praevis of divinity itself; ‘it is beyond all proof, it is the absolute beginning known only by itself’ . . . . But because ‘the realm of actuality is incomplete . . . . the proof is also never complete’ . . . .” (Tillich 1974, 64, 65.)

But, as stated in connection with Brunner, something similar may apply even to revised Schellingianism, namely, the positively laden dialectics of ‘nothingness’ and ‘possibility’ on the basis of Hegelian negativity in Jüngel. While this mode of positive philosophy may betray strict Schellingian principles for the sake of fideism, at the same time it provides a point of conjunction between revelation and humanity in another way, that is, in incorporating the radical finitude of human life into the very concept of Christianity. It is this experience of finitude that God personally has to adopt in order to attract the attention of humans. This was Küng’s motive for his interest in Hegel in his pre-PWE period – God coming to finite history instead of remaining far from humans within the transcendence – and he intends to work this out together with Barthian “transcendentism” into a creative whole. But in light of all that has been said in this study, Hegel as such, no more than any other version of liberalism, cannot be reconciled with Barth, no more than any other postliberal account. In the postliberal use of Hegel his liberal face is downplayed, while other Hegelian elements are applied in the context of a fully-fledged dialectical theology with its ultimately exclusivistic religious flavor. Pursuing this is to develop Robert J. Schreiter’s agenda in his advocacy of “asymmetries” as the juncture of Christianity and postmodern man:

It seems to me that theology of culture will have to focus especially on the moments of change rather than the moments of stasis. For it is in the experience of moving from one place to another, of cobbled together identities out of the old ones, of negotiating multiple identities and logics that insight into where God is at work in a globalized culture will be found. It will be a study in surprise, in turning up the unexpected, in celebrating the small victories, for the experience of a globalized world lies in its peripheries, in the moments of risk and change, in celebration of survival yet another day.

Most especially, there will be a need to look at the asymmetries of culture rather than dwelling on the symmetries. The presence of asymmetry can signal a relationship of domination and oppression, but it can also portend novelty, the creation of the new. Symmetries tend to come to stasis, while asymmetries exhibit a restlessness that seeks new possibilities.

Two central Christian doctrines provide resources for exploring such a theology of culture, precisely through the endless creativity that flows from their asymmetries. The first is the doctrine of the Trinity, of God’s triune existence. . . .

The second doctrine that brings creativity in its asymmetry is the Paschal Mystery itself – the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This doctrine has particular potential because it speaks of suffering, death, descend into the abyss of death, and being brought by the power of the resurrection not to the status quo ante (which would have been a symmetrical circle), but into an utterly new place. It is that move to utter newness that reveals the asymmetry of the process. Christians have, I believe, a master narrative in this story for a time without master narratives; the story can help account for the suffering and death that stalk the world in a globalized era. It can accompany those who move through death into the bright light of the resurrection. The passion narrative itself brims with postcolonial ironies of betrayal, denial, mistaken identifications, and abandonment. And it ends in a great surprise.898


898 Schreiter 1997, 59, 60; see also 71, 72: “Globalized concepts of culture, drawing especially on postcolonial and globalization theory, propose cultures as a ground of contests in relations where we struggle, with sameness and difference, comparability and incommensurability, cohesion and dispersion, collaboration and resistance. Diversity and difference are of great importance. . . . What do these concepts of culture contribute to a study of syncretism and religious identity? . . . First, their descriptions of the world as one of struggle, multiple belongings, constant change, and only partial closure in the formation of identity come much closer to the experience of people everywhere today. Disruption rather than harmony is the day-to-day experience. Partial rather than total
The point is that it is not only the natural need for rational justification but, increasingly, the fragmentation of rational structures, both in theory and in practical life, that must be met by postliberal metaphysics; the radical human finitude that Heidegger depicts as anxiety and that deconstructionism calls the monstrous paradox between structure and free-play may increasingly reflect the deep estrangement of the real citizens of the postmodern world. This being the case, the more Kierkegaardian theological patterns may, in a peculiarly postmodern way, provide the kind of Anknüpfungspunkt that neither MacIntyre nor Brunner has in mind. The counterpart, albeit somewhat more moderately paradoxical, within the rational postliberal approach in this regard would be the articulation of at least some degree of fragmentation along the lines of Sophoclean tragedy endorsed by MacIntyre as a necessary revision of the Aristotelian perfectionist hierarchy of virtues found also in Aquinas. 899

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formation of self and community is the rule. Such descriptions allow the interlocutors in the intercultural situation to express their doubts, their puzzlements, and their misgivings about their understandings of faith rather than present them as imagined wholes.” Schreiter continues (p. 129): “. . . the concerns of the speaker about the integrity of the message have to be met by equal concerns of the hearer about identity. Without this communication has not taken place. Policies that allow for little or no experimentation, that permit unilateral judgment on the results of an experiment rather than what has been called here “social judgment” (in which an extended exchange between speaker and hearer takes place) fail to be communicative in a new catholicity. To borrow that biblical image used by Peter Schineller, our attitude toward cultures and the formation of religious identities must be that we are seeking hidden treasures. Failure to communicate in this fashion is more than a strategic flaw in a communication event. It is also a theological flaw, in that not respecting intercultural communication is casting doubt on the ability of the culture to be able to receive the Gospel.”

899 See my brief mention of this in n. 890.
3. The Postliberal Approach and Exclusivism

The principal objective of this study has been to demonstrate the need for fleshing out a more concrete content of global ethics than is found in PWE, even at the elementary level, in order to have any substantial value in practical situations in which there are conflicting interpretations of the relevant ethical principles. I have suggested two alternative types of postliberal solutions to this question. One is after rational enquiry, while the other is after a will-centered revelatory view. Both types of solutions involve rationality and experience (in a more feasible manner than in the liberalist project), but with a rather different emphasis. What is striking from the perspective of global ethics is that both of these postliberal viewpoints stress the particularity and exclusivity of any moral viewpoint, so that it is not possible to dismantle their mutually radically contesting natures by way of some societal superstructure, for instance, the Deweyan common good.

The societal upshot of the Hegelian and Kantian patterns, with their existentialist and other liberal counterparts, is a somewhat harmonizing and unifying societal view. But even though all of the contemporary liberal philosophical models discussed here contain some relevant criticism of Kantian (individual) liberalism, they ultimately prove incapable of determining normative ethics or politics. Nevertheless, it appears that the better model for global ethics, namely, that of postliberalism, can also be traced within the PWE argument. But this view is crucially more conflict-oriented than liberalism. There is simply no escape to a paramount societal view such that would reconcile between the contesting ideological traditions from above. Thus, according to my more postliberal hypothesis, global ethics should be constructed upon a full acknowledgment of the prevailing radical conflict instead of moderating the conflict on the basis of liberalism. Paradoxically, as I will argue below, only then will it be realistic to foster peace and solidarity in our contemporary world, which has been described as a radical pluralism of ideologies. In this light, inter-cultural dialogue is not to be controlled by the liberal means of exclusion of (exclusive) comprehensive doctrinal commitments, but rather by weighing up the truth claims of each between them. This evaluation is to be carried out either by way of rational dialectics, according to the principles of the rational method, or by what John Milbank calls “out-narration,” which reflects the ethos of the positive method.900

To come back to a core term in PWE, the concept of responsibility, we may observe an antithetical method in terms of the relationship between ethics and politics. I have shown, against the background of the ambitions of the positive liberal method, that it is not possible to renounce the principle of the right over the good in order to bring an ethical dimension back into the public sphere without accepting the necessity of absolutizing an ultimate substantive telos, with the corollary of also accepting the competition of the particular telos in a pluralistic situation. Now, this mode of observation also holds true for the opposite claim:

900 See D’Costa’s (2000, 1–15) discussion on the controversy between MacIntyre and Milbank.
given the particular *telos* as an absolute ultimate value, we are forced to advocate the corol-
lary values involved in the public sphere with the result being the exclusion of respective rival
views. Here we come to the question of responsibility that is central to PWE. Küng – and
Arendt as well – seem just to drop out the exclusive ways of underpinning a particular meta-
physical *telos* apparently on the basis of a given fact of pluralistic situation; the result is that
rights or “secular” values in general become the central issue. Yet preventing the civic indif-
ference and passivity in the Western liberal societies is possible *only* with the help of respon-
sibility interpreted in light of a particular but absolute, and thus exclusive, pattern, that is, in
light of substantive metaphysical *telos*. Otherwise, the concept of responsibility and ethical
action becomes virtually paralyzed. It is not possible to strive for responsible action without
knowing the concrete direction of that responsibility, *how* one should be responsible. It is not
possible to fight against evil without naming what is evil – and naming it metaphysically, as
shown in the criticism of liberalism in the previous chapters. But this fact also amounts to
acknowledging that the competition of mutually exclusive ideologies is inevitable in a plura-
listic situation.

The same question of formalism applies to the planetarian issues in PWE. Both MacIn-
tyrean and Schellingian renderings of planetarianism presuppose particular metaphysics.
What is more, it is precisely the incorporation of metaphysics that make them preferable to
those proposed earlier in the context of liberalist planetarianism. Without a metaphysical vantage
point there is no means of incorporating ecological issues into ethics because without
particular metaphysics, the ultimate *telos* of the planet is not consistently clarified. This
amounts to the fact that consistent planetarianism accepts, rather than downplays, exclusiv-
ism, the centrality of public contest between ideologies.

In light of the discussion above, I would like add some observations about the postliber-
al concept of ethical and political responsibility and its relation to human rights as an overlap-
ning consensus of particular comprehensive doctrines, to use Rawls’s terminology. This ques-
tion touches after all on the very core of PWE. PWE’s religiously-laden rendering of human
rights is founded upon a claim that universally valid rights cannot be realized without their
being conceived as characteristically ethical principles. Belonging to a religious community
generates certain social and theological factors that determine a person’s place in the world
and the meaning of life. Religions offer a *telos* that overrides the transcendental limits of Kan-
tian rational morality. In this sense Küng’s conception comes close to communitarianism.
Owing to the social nature of ethics, it may be unthinkable to express morality in a universal
pattern. Accordingly, for Küng human rights ought to be considered in a way that the com-
mon moral conscience of humankind is expressed verbally in the best possible form common
to all cultures, that is, within the framework of rights language. In this rendering, judicial ter-
minology has been used because it is seen as best illustrating the corresponding ethical re-
sponsibility of all humans for other people, an idea ensuing from the belief in the equal worth
of all humans. For Küng the actual essence of human rights is not, however, judicial, but ethi-
cal. The question is about what is morally right, instead of merely an agreement on certain
laws to be made and a related common consent to obey them, the ethical value of these laws notwithstanding. Against this kind of judicial positivism Küng proposes that if people are really to act upon the principles of human rights, then those means must be at hand with the help of which the rights will be subscribed to voluntarily, "from the bottom of their hearts," not merely judicially. There is a need for ethical legitimation of laws without which their judicial legitimation will have no significance. People will have to acknowledge the importance of human rights for reasons of conscience in order to act upon them. Merely laying down regulations and the external sanctions arising from them does not help, at least on a global scale. Religions could offer powerful motivations as well as justifications precisely for this “internal” or personal legitimation of human rights. Grounds for the ethical acceptance of human rights may vary substantially according to different religions, but what is essential is that the motivation and content are the same. Ethical motivation in turn is characteristically an acknowledgment of responsibility for other people. As this is the key to ethical legitimation of human rights, Küng emphasizes that rights need a subsidiary concept of duty in their argument. The emphasis on responsibility as an ethical demand, instead of a mere corollary, a duty to respect the rights of others, especially supports the interpretation that PWE represents a more teleological standpoint than liberalism. Along the lines of this kind of interpretation of PWE, religions function together as sources of the overall telos necessary for genuinely executing human rights.901

This interpretation of PWE as striving for the potential ethical legitimation of laws by indicating the ends provided by different substantive moral goods such as religions presupposes as its counterpart that there is sufficient overlap between religions and other ideologies concerning basic morality so that any laws may be formulated on this basis. In such an interpretation Küng would take human rights to be a primary example of this potential for overlap. Indeed, it would seem a remarkable overlapping of traditions were clear articles of human rights to be universally agreed upon and international law instituted on that basis. After all, MacIntyre proposes in connection with his general thesis that Supreme Courts and other judicial institutions are to be seen as arenas of mutually conflicting ethical concepts, such as justice, in modern society. The point is that judicial decisions often reflect a compromise between fundamentally incompatible views of what is just adjudication in the first place.902 As MacIntyre says of one of his examples:

The Supreme Court in *Bakke*, as on occasion in other cases, played the role of a peacemaking or truce-keeping body by negotiating its way through an impasse of conflict, not by invoking our shared moral first principles. For our society as a whole has none.

901 Slotte 2005. According to Slotte, PWE has the potential for communitarianism. On the other hand, it is also true that Küng has strong reservations about strong communitarianism; see Küng 1990, 65. The underlying role of responsibility and duty versus right-language in PWE is reinforced by the publication of a *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (Schmidt 1997), a document closely related to PWE.

902 MacIntyre 1985, 253.
What this brings out is that modern politics cannot be a matter of genuine moral consensus. And it is not. Modern politics is civil war carried on by other means, and Bakke was an engagement whose antecedents were at Gettysburg and Shiloh. The truth on this matter was set out by Adam Ferguson: ‘We are not to expect that the laws of any country are to be framed as so many lessons of morality . . . Laws, whether civil or political, are expedients of policy to adjust the pretensions of parties, and to secure the peace of society. The expedient is accommodated to special circumstances. . . . The nature of any society therefore is not to be deciphered from its laws alone, but from those understood as an index of its conflicts. What laws show is the extent and degree to which conflict has to be suppressed.’

MacIntyre shows that, in truth, there is no sufficient overlap between different moral conceptions, deriving from different moral traditions, such that a genuine moral community could be created in an Enlightenment-oriented modern society. This in turn amounts to the fact that *modus vivendi* and negotiated balance of power take the place of ethically-based jurisdiction, at least to a significant degree. But MacIntyre is in agreement with PWE’s contention that ethical legitimation of laws is necessary for laws to be legitimate in the first place. Therefore, given his accurate analysis of the modern situation in reality, he goes on to argue that the modern state with its inability to create moral community cannot legitimately expect its citizens to follow the rules made by positive law. This is because there is no sufficiently genuine overlap between different moral conceptions.

It is instructive to consider Paul A. Brink’s historical account of the birth process of UDHR in light of MacIntyre’s general claim. The fundamental problem early on was being caught up in a vicious circle. When it came to the concrete content of the planned UDHR, the question of a rationale for supporting it was unavoidable; at the same time different justifications entailed different articulations of the content. For instance, in the matter of basic liberties against state control, some took these as amounting to negative rights; others saw them in a socialist manner that required more active government. Still, other parties associated liberties with the religious doctrine of creation in a way that took a divinely endowed human telos to override any religious liberties. In this way, discussion remained at the second-order level and never proceeded to concrete formulations. Brink quotes one commentator as saying, “‘We are raising the fundamental question, what is man?’ Disagreements were not about matters of fact, or conflicts of interests, but the very nature of the person. ‘Is man merely a social being?’ asked Malik. ‘Is he merely an animal? Is he an economic being?’”

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903 MacIntyre 1985, 253, 254. See also MacIntyre 1988, 347.

904 Earlier I presented how MacIntyre takes an example of this from political philosophy: he contends that Nozick’s theory of legitimate entitlements and Rawls’s theory of just distribution of primary goods (in equality of opportunities as well as in the difference principle) are simultaneously incompatible and incommensurable because their unnoticed, but more fundamental prerequisites for the concept of justice reside in different substantive philosophical traditions, in Nozick’s case, Aristotelianism and in Rawls’s, Christianity. (MacIntyre 1985, 244–251.)

905 MacIntyre 1985, 254. See also ibid., 172.

906 Brink 2003, 15: See also for example Samnoy 1999, 10–14.
The impasse was finally resolved in a rather unexpected manner. The committee that was appointed to resolve these philosophical disagreements soon noticed the interminability of the controversies and, instead of aspiring to philosophical and religious agreement, ended up proposing a highly practical solution: every party would retain their own differing justifications for human rights. This solution is now evident in the charter itself: there is no justification for why the proposed human rights are inviolable and universal. Instead, it was left to every tradition to provide UDHR with its own particular justifications. What was to prove crucial was that at the time the concrete formulation was on the table, every party was ready to sign it. This minimal condition was accepted as a sufficient impetus in the General Council, and the historic UDHR was born.907

Brink seeks a positive solution to the problem of justifying global ethics by considering the practical process that resulted in UDHR. It is understandable that one of the strongest motives for the concrete formulation of universal human rights followed from the need caused by World War II to protect individuals from arbitrary totalitarianism.908 Brink takes the process described above to mean that the acceptance of the UDHR took place in a different atmosphere than does the liberalist type of overlapping consensus. This is because every party was allowed to interpret it openly, even in an anti-liberalist manner. At the same time, however, another problem emerges, namely, formalism. Although in theory it would appear that the consensus is fundamental, problems immediately arise whenever different cultures arrive at different concrete decisions and different interpretations of what it means to violate human rights. Still, this does not do away with the psychological value of the UDHR. Its birth was a global expression of intent for the sake of peace and against oppression and violence with more or less successive effects on post-war international relations. At the same time the more specific usefulness of the UDHR has remained open until now.909

Brink bases his proposal of what he calls the “middle-ground” on this historical account of the UDHR. In effect, the middle ground is about returning to the primary meaning of politics, namely, negotiation, compromise, “commitment to work towards the text,” striving toward as broad a common overlapping telos as possible through negotiation and dialogue.910 This process is by no means non-ethical by being political. On the other hand, it is indeed a compromise from the perspective of a particular ideology, although it is not a compromise in the sense that the respective ideology would have to give up some doctrines, but rather in the sense that the doctrines are not included in the formal agreement. The motives behind UDHR

908 Samnoy 1999, 3, 4.
909 See for example Samnoy 14–22. Koskenniemi 1999, 39: “Thus, it is entrenched in the kind of technical/institutional pragmatism that in this fin-de-siècle perpetuates itself in the interminable debate about institutional reform at the UN.”
are unambiguously ethical, but because the charter is the result of an agreement, the process in which the breadth and the substance of a common ethics is formed and defined is political as opposed to ethical. There are thus two mutually contrasting motives and interpretations of the same formulation: ethical and political. In short, the question is about an ethically buttressed modus vivendi.

There is some value in Brink’s historical proposal from the viewpoint of the postliberalist reconstruction of PWE by contrast with the liberalist proposals. The real use of overlapping consensus, according to the postliberal approach, is that it serves as a starting point for further negotiation and dialogue in the search for common (ethical) agenda without overlooking the crucial differences, exclusivism. It shows the path to take in a situation where, to be sure, there is an inescapable need to live together with different world views in a time of radical pluralism and to cope with that pluralism without resorting to the ideals of liberalism that are inconsistent with any particular (or at least any religious) world view. In general Küng’s attempt to propose a “middle-way” between politics and ethics, between “Real Politics” and “Ideal Politics,” is what I will endorse in this study as well. Yet it is precisely here that Küng’s substantial position needs more clarification and a modification away from the possible interpretation of the “exclusion of exclusivists” toward a completely different direction. I have invoked Brink’s proposal as on useful articulation of that middle way.

The postliberal dialogue for global ethics would consequently start from minimal conditions for inter-cultural and inter-religious peace. Significantly, “conditions” is less a normative conception than a liberalist term such as “justice,” for instance. “Conditions” refers to the “reactive” and practical dimensions of the dialogue and the consensus in question. It acknowledges the characteristically political way of defining the breadth and the substance of the global agreement. Ricoeur’s preference for “restorative justice” over “retributive justice” is an interesting contribution to this theme as well. Ricoeur’s idea of justice is more moderate than liberalist doctrines; it focuses on the practical dialogue of reconciliation and conflict resolution rather than on a general articulation of justice. This is no doubt to the point but, I would add, it still must be underpinned by acknowledgment of radical exclusivism; even the assumptions and ideals of the practical peace-dialogue must be relativized according to the prior metaphysical contest.

Whatever the concrete renderings of, say, human rights, may then be, one thing is clear: they cannot flow from the liberal understanding of morality. In other words, they have to represent substantive and as such exclusive doctrines of particular religions or ideologies so that these doctrines are not only referred to ex poste, but are held as categorical claims to be necessarily integrated into human rights as their right ideological basis and deeper interpretation. In religions, for instance, there is only an indirect way of speaking of rights in the first

911 For an English version of Küng’s synthesis of the two aspects, see GEWP.

912 Kaplan 2003, 162ff.
place. To take one example, Sandel’s mention of Vernon Bartlet’s description of understanding the concept of ownership by the early Christians will serve as an illustration:

The Rev. Vernon Bartlet (1915: 97-8) writes that “the essential Christian attitude” held the property rights of any individual to be “purely relative, not only as compared with God’s absolute rights as Producer and Owner both of all things and of all persons, but also as compared with the paramount human or derivative rights of Society as representing the common weal. Of this, the individual’s weal is only a dependent part, and should be limited by the rights of all others to the conditions of personal well-being . . . The resulting practical principles, viz. the stewardship of property on behalf both of God and Society, and the moral duty of fidelity in this relation as the condition of any correlative rights of private personal enjoyment, is too deeply embedded in Christ’s teaching, notably in the parables, to need demonstration.” Bartlet quotes St. Paul, I Corinthians iv. 71: “For who maketh thee to excel? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?”

This picture of a Christian understanding of property rights is one essential way of applying the postliberal approach to any sort of rights. Here one can observe a three-stage hierarchy. First, there is God as the absolute holder of rights. Second, there is community – society, if you will – as the “paramount,” but “derivative” holder of rights. And, finally, there is the individual as (communally) “dependent” holder – rather a steward – of rights. We could use this hierarchy in the following way, which I believe is compatible, in its basic attitude, not only with a Christian world view, but also with many other non-secularized or non-liberalized world views as well. First, there is a metaphysical principle as an ultimate end as the primary source of all human dependence. Second, there is the community as a representative of this metaphysical ultimate end from which it has also derived its mandate to have a paramount stake in individual possessions and ends, that is, the secondary source of individual dependence. Third, there is the individual as the realizer of these ends, whose independence is purely relative. The corollary for the notion that the community’s – or perhaps better, at least in the Christian context, the state’s – task is to represent the ultimate end, is that insofar as this does not happen, the state loses its mandate on the individual to the same extent. Proposing this constellation does not, of course, deny that the real challenge is to interpret where and when society does or does not genuinely foster the ultimate metaphysical end by its actions. Yet all the same there is no escape from this difficulty into liberalism.

In the hierarchy sketched above, we find the notion both of society’s control over the individual and the individual’s independence from the society, but not in the same way as in the liberal approach. From the viewpoint of the postliberal method, the power of society over the individual is perceived as merely having an instrumental status, as the representative of superior metaphysical end(s). On the other hand, individual liberties and respective rights as versus the society are also relative. Only insofar as they cohere with the ultimate end(s) are such liberties and rights justified. This concerns both negative and positive rights. If society restricts individual freedom more than is necessary in light of ultimate end(s), then it violates individual freedom and autonomy. If society does not care for its citizens in a way that pro-

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vides the individual with necessary goods, although it could do so in light of the ultimate end(s) and available resources, then the society violates the individual needs (one could say, along the lines of left-wing liberalist thinking, the needs for freedom and autonomy). In both negative and positive respects of rights, the question concerns individual dignity, which is to be respected by the state and the members of the community. On the other hand, dignity is derived from the metaphysical end in a way that its concrete theoretical articulations and practical implications are to be assessed in light of the ultimate telos.

Even though my examples have been largely Western or Christian, it is important to note that the same pattern of thinking applies, more or less, to other world religions. For instance, one possible criticism of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990), presented as an alternative to the proposed liberal rendering of the UDHR, is not to concentrate on the fact that the former, by introducing Shari’ah as the paramount commentary on human rights, contains a biased interpretation of the original idea of human rights. Instead, given that free-standing impartiality is itself a liberalist fiction, a plausible objection to the Cairo declaration would consist only of challenging the particular religious ‘comprehensive doctrine(s)’ behind Shari’ah itself by some other, say, Jewish or Christian, comprehensive religious or otherwise metaphysical traditions. The immediate corollary is the inevitability of exclusive truth claims in a global political discourse.

The postliberalist position is ready to acknowledge in principle both negative and positive rights, but they are given a relative status instead of an absolute one. In my view this relativity of (negative) rights prevents citizens from claiming more and more rights and services without being prepared to bear their own responsibilities to society – an inherently liberal problem on the rise today, which many see as the main cause for the rise of communitarianism. But the relativity of (positive) rights also prevents the state from abusing its power, that is, from controlling citizens without nurturing them – a frequent problem in collectivistic societies drawing on, say, Rousseau or Marx. To be sure, this combination is also the goal of most contemporary social and ethical models, be they under the banner of communitarianism, welfare state liberalism, cosmopolitanism, civil society, or whatever. However, in light of what has been presented above, the reason for endless debate and the desperate search for the final solution come from the systematic refusal to dwell on metaphysics.

The proposed radical contest of ultimately exclusive traditions in the public sphere runs counter to both Kantian and Hegelian types of liberalism. On the other hand, it is important to state the positive elements in each of the liberalist ethico-political models dealt with above, elements that appear in some way even in the postliberal model proposed here. Kantian substantive ethics and Hegelian metaphysics point toward the undeniable truth that the starting point for any feasible model is substantive as opposed to the more free-standing later alternatives to each of these classical statements. Moreover, Hegel is right in that metaphysics is.

914 See for example Etzioni 1995.
prior to ethics as the vantage point of any consistent global ethics. But Hegel also remains too formal. It is the multiculturalism of Walzer, Kymlicka, and Taylor that more fully recognizes that truly ethical politics in contemporary pluralistic societies will have to adopt a dialogical stance toward ‘comprehensive doctrines’ instead of pushing them over to the private sphere. However, postliberalism will challenge the multiculturalist dilution that “it isn’t necessary to adopt Carl Schmidt’s view of politics as a form of war to recognize that different interests and ideological commitments are often irreconcilable.” Indeed, the postliberal model necessarily moves toward the more radical *modus vivendi* proposed not only by Carl Schmidt, but also, for instance, by John Gray.

What is positive in Gray concerns the Hobbesian rendering of pluralism contra the liberalist ambition to be all-embracing. Postliberalism, as I have outlined it, interprets Hobbes in the manner akin to Gray, that is, differently than does Nussbaum, who takes Hobbes to endorse an ethically problematic egoistic anthropology. Hobbes’s rendering of the state of nature may be seen as recognizing the irreconcilable pluralism of substantive world views, and it is precisely in this sense that politics is necessarily always some kind of war. In this post-liberal account, Nussbaum’s attempt to charge Hobbes with egoism tells at least as much about the liberalist fiction of transcending the level of particular ideologies as about the interpretation of Hobbesian anthropology. What postliberalism opposes in Gray, however, is his

915 Walzer 2004, 103.


917 Of course, from the point of view of MacIntyrean virtue ethics, for instance, Hobbes is not the most, but rather the least accurate example of postliberalism because the Hobbesian state of nature as mutual competition is about external goods (MacIntyre 1985, 196), whereas moral virtues related to metaphysical goods as “practices of all practices” concern internal goods. “External goods are . . . characteristically objects of competition in which there must be losers as well as winners. Internal goods are indeed the outcome of competition to excel, but it is characteristic of them that their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice. So when Turner transformed the seascape in painting or W. G. Grace advanced the art of batting in cricket in a quite new way their achievement enriched the whole community.” (MacIntyre 190, 191.) But it is important that MacIntyre speaks here of practices *qua* practices: “We call [goods] internal for two reasons: first, as I have already suggested, because we can only specify them them in terms of chess or some other game of that specific kind and by means of examples from such fames (otherwise the meagerness of our vocabulary for speaking of such goods forces us into such devices as my own resort to writing of ‘a certain highly particular kind of’); and secondly because they can only be identified and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice. So when Turner transformed the seascape in painting or W. G. Grace advanced the art of batting in cricket in a quite new way their achievement enriched the whole community.” (MacIntyre 190, 191.) That is, the Hobbesian (external) account cannot be the innermost account of ethics and politics; it is infinitely far from that because it does not flow from the practices themselves, but from their external observance. Nonetheless, even in MacIntyre there is an acknowledgement of the other side of the story, and indeed this is necessary in any pluralistic society. First, MacIntyre reminds that his account of the practices does not by any means exclude the fact that practices themselves may be good or bad. (MacIntyre 1985, 200.) But because this kind of moral evaluation of the practices themselves also takes place within the framework of particular practices, there will necessarily flow mutually competing evaluations in a state of pluralism of practices. Moreover, MacIntyre straightforwardly admits that institutions, such as painting *schools* or cricket *clubs*, that characteristically compete for external goods such as money and power are necessary sustainers of practices, although the former tend to jeopardize the internally-laden goods of the latter, owing to their necessary mutual bond. Yet this last-mentioned unhappy side effect is exactly what happens within liberalism, because it deprives
value-pluralistic revision of Hobbes. The postliberal *modus vivendi* articulates a contest of substantive metaphysical truths in the public sphere in the plainest and most non-pluralistic sense of the term. There is no perspective from which it would be possible to suggest antecedently that the contesting parties each reflect truth, at least in some part. Of course, this is always possible, but taken as a vantage point, it crucially misrepresents what the genuine contest is about.

Here we come to the constructive potential in (later) Rawls, namely, the political type of ‘overlapping consensus’. The difference with Rawls is that postliberalism does not oppose, but rather endorses *modus vivendi* as the only plausible consensus in radically pluralistic societies. But for the sake of real ethical factors such as peace and human well-being, it is essential that a serious and continuous effort be made to gain political consensus among ‘comprehensive doctrines’ on as many issues as possible in light of the underlying substantive contest in the public sphere. Overlapping consensus is by nature a free-standing enterprise: it cannot be required, but only hoped for. Yet all the same it is a *minimal condition* for peaceful coexistence. Rawls’s strength is his ambition for human well-being and peace, while at the same time fully recognizing the inconclusiveness of disagreement at the level of comprehensive doctrines in contemporary societies.

Pogge’s added value to Rawls is in globalizing the focus of overlapping consensus. It is true that the most fundamental need is the well-being and peaceful coexistence at global level and that in today’s world there is no political consensus that could be seen as being independent of its global effects. The global focus is also Nussbaum’s strength; drawing on the idea of positive rights even more strongly than Rawls and Pogge, she adds still one more necessary ingredient to the agenda: the serious consideration of the needs of those who are not able to use political power in our world, namely, the disadvantaged and non-humans. In continuation of this idea, Habermas and Walzer particularly endorse the emancipatory notion that all truly existing parties in society are to be genuinely heard in formulating the principles of coexistence. In addition, both more or less emphasize the inconclusive nature of the overlapping consensus itself more than, say, Rawls; the emphasis on discourse takes the focus back to the historical situation from general and timeless constitutional principles. Taken together, all these liberalist models have some strengths, but they are crucially inadequate. A straightforward answer to Casanova’s urge for concretization of what PWE’s global ethics would con-
sist of runs as follows: in times of a global pluralism of world views, no such clarification is consistently thinkable other than an updated Hobbesian or, for that matter, a Schmidtian one.
4. **Encountering Exclusive Difference: A Starting Point for Dialogue**

Referring to Hobbes and Schmidt may sound rather uncomfortable, and there is every reason for unease insofar as my suggestion above radically frustrates any attempt to obtain ethico-political impartiality in a liberalist manner. At the same time, it needs to be repeated that an open inter-cultural dialogue would not be excluded from my postliberal constellation as an integral part. But postliberal dialogue is not to be characterized as a symmetrical give-and-take situation from the outset. The final chapter of this study will now further explore the philosophical clarification of what I mean by postliberal dialogue.

Earlier I mentioned that the particularity of Levinas is a problem for Derrida. Now, in light of the above analysis of Derrida, it seems important to approach Levinas’s Zionism from the opposite point of view: that of abstraction from the singular ethical encounter. There is a “deviance” from the primacy of every immediate encounter with the Other when Levinas invokes the concept of the “third person:” because dealing with one Other has its influences on other Others, the demand arises for justice, and the state with its institutions is the one to protect and implement justice in practice. Moreover, it is important that Levinas’s societal abstraction from the singular ethical encounter does not mean formality, that is, deconstruction of any totalities whatsoever. Instead, Levinas outlines a substantive societal vision whose point of departure is his model of one-to-one horizontal relationship but which ascends to vertical level: that of personal encounter with God, the first Other. Levinas’s theological vision of society is not merely a formal principle, but has its “incarnation” in the Messianic state of Israel in a manner comparable to Augustine’s Christian alternative. The purpose here is by no means to take a stand on the concrete political question of Israel nor on the theological question as such. Rather my point is to emphasize that by virtue of introducing a particular political vision by transcending the focus on the (horizontal) Other, Levinas avoids the above analyzed hubris of transcending ideology. And what is more, my argument against liberalism includes that even the Levinasian conception of ‘ethics as first philosophy’ is a problematic vantage point because the only consistent ethics will be derived ultimately from metaphysics. But whereas transcending ideology and metaphysics in a liberalist manner is also to denounce ideological conflict as such, endorsing metaphysics in the public sphere is to reckon with it. To recapitulate, ideological conflict in postliberalism is not in any sense apparent; the interplay of individual independence and social encumbrance amount to a contest of different ideologies in a realistic sense because there is necessarily an objective conception of truth at stake, even though it is never wholly realizable.

There is a potential counterpoint to the last-mentioned dialectical interplay between horizontal/ethical and vertical/metaphysical aspects in PWE: Küng recognizes the vicious circle of “smuggling” a particular Western ideology into *humanum* against the self-identification of religions properly understood. He sets out to eliminate this danger by introducing a *dialectical*

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918 Critchley 1999, 273, 274.
relationship between religion and humanum. There would be a one-way relationship in the event, for instance, that humanum would simply determine what is ethically acceptable religiosity. PWE suggests a different solution instead: “True humanity presupposes true religion,” whereas “True religion is the fulfillment of true humanity!” Again, Küng does not elaborate on this idea. His effort to avoid the formality and Westernization of global ethics in this sense, however, includes some affinities to what I will suggest. “Religion . . . is an optimal prerequisite for the realization of humanum: precisely religion (which is a maximal criterion) must be there, if one is to realize and concretize humanity as a truthfully unconditional and universal obligation.”

On this basis, there is still another way in which Levinas and the postliberal approach could be synthesized, this time, however, with a contrary emphasis. Even though the Levinasian one-to-one encounter is generalized on the level of ideology, ‘ethics as first philosophy’ against ideology still has its place. In this reading, the substantive status of ideology is only partial. That is, ideological exclusion – the ‘othering’ – which is inevitable, should always be “kept in check” by its counter-pole, the immediate encounter with the Other. To advance this claim is to say that there is indeed “a knowledge,” an intuition, which is absolute and independent of any particular ideology. However, the question of finding the right balance between these two is ultimately answerable from the point of view of a particular ideology. But as particular ideologies as wholes are always to be tested and criticized, either by dialectics (the rational method) or by out-narration (the positive method) as views somehow transcending their particularity, thereby creating a demand for exclusion and conflicts of ideologies, they are also to be tested and criticized by immediate interventions of outer reality in the face of the Other, creating a demand for constriction of these exclusions and conflicts. In any event, what follows from this two-fold dialectical synthesis, which is analogous to Ricoeur’s and MacIntyre’s accounts of the dialectical relationship between particular ideologies or traditions and their speculative or rational criticism, is a concept that none of these four authors – Levinas, Ricoeur, MacIntyre and Küng – has paid sufficient attention to: recognition of the exclusive Other, reckoning with exclusive difference. Poststructuralist authors draw heavily on the concept of (radical) difference. However, I showed earlier how poststructuralism arrives at grave systematic difficulties in trying to endorse a certain kind of political practice in the first place. Once more, in the words of Bronner:

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919 PW, 121: “... ein dialektisches Wechselverständnis” (italics added).

920 PW, 121: “Wahre Menschlichkeit ist die Voraussetzung wahrer Religion!... Wahre Religion ist Vollendung wahrer Menschlichkeit!”

921 PW, 121: “Religion... ist eine Optimalvoraussetzung für die Realisierung des Humanum: Gerade Religion (das ist ein Maximalkriterium) muss gegeben sein, wo man Humanität als wahrhaft unbedingte und universale Verpflichtung realisieren und konkretisieren will.”

922 See for example Butler, Laclau, Zizek 2000, 3, 4.
Various partisans of poststructuralism are content with substituting the emphasis upon “difference” for the notion of critique inherited from modern idealism. They are essentially unconcerned with “ethics” because of its inevitable reliance on logical categories, epistemological assumptions, and ontological foundations. Other poststructuralist thinkers, however, have noted the unsettling characteristics of this trend, and they have sought to deal with it. They have emphasized the importance of “tearing off the mask of illusions; the recognition of certain pretenses as false and certain objectives as neither attainable nor, for that matter, desirable.”

But that is simply inadequate. Critique or deconstruction is always the easy part; positive commitment and reconstruction are more difficult. And, as the positive concerns slip away, there is no place left for freedom to confront license, for the universal to confront the particular, for the idea of right to confront the stirring of desire, or for a common language with which to make sense of the world. Inquiries have been made into what Derrida has called an “ethics of ethics” predicated on a certain sensitivity underpinning the “relation to the Other.” Perhaps because he identifies discourse with reality, however, he has never even marginally articulated the character of that sensitivity and the nature of that relationship.923

The problem with any liberally oriented view – and this is clearly evident in the poststructuralist paralysis that Bronner rebukes here – is that the necessary articulation of difference is consistently done only from the perspective of comprehensive metaphysical ideology. My intention has been to show that the liberalistic approach is incapable of addressing the extraordinary nature of ideological exclusion versus the general concept of social exclusion.924

Within what has been called postliberalism, in turn, it is necessary to acknowledge the inevitability of ideological exclusion, whereas there is always a danger that other types of social exclusions flow from it as a negative side-effect.

An interesting supplement to Levinasian hostility to ‘sameness’ is K. E. Loegstrup’s rather conversely formulated socio-ethical relationships between humans. According to Loegstrup, ethical consideration must start from what is given to us objectively, namely, the ethical demand that arises in every situation in life toward other human beings. This demand is penetrated by the unconditional presupposition to demonstrate mutual trust in any action that is characteristically social in nature. Even though someone would act against this presupposition, that is, would not pay attention to being trustworthy or to fostering a trustworthy atmosphere in human relationships, the individual cannot escape the awareness of its being there as the horizon against which one’s untrustworthiness is necessarily mirrored.925

In line with Levinas is Loegstrup’s endorsement of ethics as an immediate response to an objective demand closely related to interpersonal relationships.926 At the same time, Loegstrup does not seem to emphasize personalism as strongly as Levinas. Rather, he stresses the impersonal element within interpersonality: he is after the objective nature of life as a gift and a demand independent of the thoughts and choices of any individuals, but which basically incarnates in immediate interpersonal relationships: this is the foundation of all ethics.927 This

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923 Bronner 1999, 199.
924 On the technical term of social exclusion in social sciences, see Byrne 1999.
925 Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xxix.
926 Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xxi, xxxiii–xxxv.
927 Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xxix.
is one reason that makes his position more inclusive; the vantage point is the recognition of
the sameness rather than the otherness of the other.

There is, however, a salient moderateness in Loegstrup’s idea of the ethical demand. He
does not say more than that there is an immediate demand on us concerning other humans.
The question of how I am going to react to that demand in any given situation is not the de-
mand’s to determine. It is precisely this moderateness that makes Loegstrup a potential
postliberal thinker. In other words, concrete articulations of the practical type of demand to
care for one’s fellowmen may be seen in postliberalism to be left to more particular meta-
physical ideologies to determine. In effect, Loegstrup recognizes the internal inconsistency of
democracy against the views of liberalism: impartiality toward comprehensive life-
philosophies of citizens is impossible to attain and democracy itself always represents some
particular ideology. This creates a problem for, say, democratic education, and one has to
be highly sensitive not to intrude on, what Loegstrup calls, the “untouchability zone” of indi-
viduals in the name of care and sameness. As Korsgaard has noted on Loegstrup:

Loegstrup regards it as an elementary phenomenon in human existence that “each of us needs to
[be] surrounded by an untouchability zone” . . . Children and young people are also surrounded by
such a zone, and it must be respected. Without respect for the untouchability zone we are in a total-
itarian culture, even if the regime or educational practice calls itself democratic. So, according to
Loegstrup, it is necessary to develop a political ethic which can reconcile the contradictions be-
tween propagating ideals and respecting the individual’s untouchability zone.

Thus, just as there is a reservation to Levinas’s radicality in his opposition to sameness, so is
there also a moderation of sameness in Loegstrup, both reflecting, postliberally, the relative
nature of the horizontal level or ‘ethics as first philosophy’. Loegstrup’s general idea is par-
ticularly akin to what has been said of Stein’s concept of empathy; indeed it is perhaps a fur-
ther elaboration on that idea. The juxtaposition with Stein has some relevance also historically,
because Loegstrup belongs to the same phenomenological school that tries to revise Hus-
serl in a direction different from what Heidegger had done. Similar to Levinas, Loegstrup
criticizes Heidegger for resorting too heavily to Kantian transcendentalism. This is indeed
correct insofar as Heidegger retains a critical stance toward objective perception of reality,
despite subscribing to Husserlian basic ideas of reality-orientedness against transcendent-
alism. This Kantianism is what caused Levinas, also correctly, to interpret Derrida as endorsing
Kantian rigoristic criticism alongside, or as a radical interpretation of, Levinasian phenome-
nology.

928 Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xxix.
929 Korsgaard 2008, 6, 7.
931 Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xvii–xix, xxi.
932 Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xx.
Heidegger and, even more, Derrida endorse both Husserl and Kant, both phenomenological realism and transcendental idealism, which makes them a considerable objection to the standard liberalism in the first place. They acknowledge both Loegstrup’s and Stein’s objective reality and its retrieval as the expression of radical finitude. Nevertheless, the Kantian element remains, and it has been the different types of objections to that dimension in Heidegger/Derrida that has been the focus of the rational and positive postliberal approaches. The radicalization of this Kantian element is, from the above account, not Levinas’s intention, and this makes his a considerable contribution to the postliberal method. What is more, because Levinas is not seen as totally dismantling the element of ‘sameness’, or the ‘othering’, in his political philosophy, he heis neither to be seen as an incompatible opposite to Loegstrup and Stein. Indeed, this would be the case in Derrida’s Levinasianism, because for Derrida, any presupposition of the possibility of recognizing the needs of the Other in a manner that would enable any degree of generalizations would incorporate metaphysics into the singular encounter, with the result being to frustrate the idea of the most immediate responsibility. In a postliberal rendering, however, Levinas is taken in the opposite direction of having metaphysics as the premise of ethics, in which case there is no absolute demarcation between otherness and sameness, only a relative one. The question between Levinas and Loegstrup then in postliberalism is a question of mutually supplementary emphasis: both aspects are needed.

Finally, there is a third figure who is close to Levinas and Loegstrup in starting from phenomenology, but transcending it, which makes him similarly critical of Heidegger: Hans Jonas. Of the three critics of Heidegger, it is Jonas who perhaps most strongly dissociates himself from the phenomenological tradition, and the way he does this, with emphasis on bodily aspect, he has an important affinity with Edith Stein. Jonas used his early study of Gnosticism, carried out under the supervision of Heidegger, as a vantage point for arguing that there is in fact a Gnostic element in traditional Western thought. It culminates in Heidegger and consists of the dualism of this world, seen as highly negative on the one hand, and something that transcends it, on the other. The result of this modern Gnosticism is that the finite reality, the Dasein, is seen as something with which one must not fully engage. This escapism is for Jonas, as it is also for Levinas, the origin of nihilism that in Heidegger’s case resulted in morally condemnable ignorance vis-à-vis the immoralities of the Nazis.933

As an alternative to “neo-Gnosticism,” Jonas invokes a noticeably biological view of life. In this he was no doubt influenced by Darwinism, but Jonas denounced its full-fledged ethical articulation in social Darwinism. Instead, Jonas works out a concept of responsibility in a seminal way on the basis of his biological account. This is done by creatively and unconventionally applying a Heideggerian existentialist tension between ‘Being’ and ‘nothingness’ to all organic nature. Jonas takes nature’s metabolic characteristic to reflect this tension between freedom as selfhood and ‘nothingness’: every organism strives for life against its in-

933 Wiese 2007, 93–99.
evitable fate, death, and it thus displays a desperate fight against the laws of entropy.\textsuperscript{934} In introducing a fundamental continuation between the human and the non-human world, Jonas intends to rediscover the consciousness of the symbiotic relationship between man and nature after the period of radical alienation between the two, owing to the distorting effects of “Gnostic” philosophy.\textsuperscript{935}

Jonas reverses the pessimist escapism of Gnosticism to achieve a positive rendering of material life: life is inherently sacred, and divinity is not something opposite to the creation.\textsuperscript{936} From this basis there naturally follows the responsibility that humans have for all of nature:

Jonas pointed to the inner coherence between his philosophy of biology and his ethics of responsibility for the future, stressing that in view of “the lightning flashes of an approaching storm,” originating in humankind’s behavior, the “reconciliation between our presumptuous special status as humans and the universe as a whole, which is the source of our life, is becoming a central concern of philosophy.”\textsuperscript{937}

For our purposes, Jonas’s added value to Levinas and Loegstrup is this planetarian dimension on the side of the inter-personal dimension. The former is also, as we have seen, PWE’s intention. Indeed, while Levinas and Loegstrup have indirect links to PWE’s insistence on inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, Jonas’s planetarian ethics of responsibility is directly invoked in PWE.\textsuperscript{938} Furthermore, as in PWE, Jonas ultimately places humanity at the center of his planetarianism. As Richard Wollin observes:

. . . there is nothing remotely anti-intellectual about Jonas’s approach. He does not seek to explain the current ecological threat, for example, by claiming that the culprit is a surfeit of human reason. To be sure, the one-sidedness of human rationality – its instrumental biases – plays an important role in his account. But Jonas firmly believes that the hand that has inflicted the world – in the case at issue, human ingenuity itself – can cure the disease.

In keeping himself with this avowedly anthropocentric orientation, Jonas defined the “imperative of responsibility” as follows: “Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life.” Expressed negatively, it reads: “Act so that the effects of your action are not destructive of the future possibility of such life.”\textsuperscript{939}

One of the testing grounds for humanity’s responsibility to nature is the development of technology. Jonas is not optimistic, but rather apocalyptic when it comes to the disastrous effects of technology on human and non-human life.\textsuperscript{940} Jonas’s combination of anthropocentrism and environmentalism is expressed in the classical Judeo-Christian formulation of stewardship of

\textsuperscript{934} Wollin 2003, 113–116.
\textsuperscript{935} Wiese 2007, 101, 102.
\textsuperscript{936} Wiese 2007, 104.
\textsuperscript{937} Wiese 2007, 102.
\textsuperscript{938} WWW, 331, 332.
\textsuperscript{939} Wolin 2003, 118.
\textsuperscript{940} Wollin 2003, 116–118.
God’s created world. In general, Jonas perhaps draws more openly on a particular meta-
physical tradition than either Levinas or Loegstrup, who, while having theological motiva-
tions for their philosophy, nevertheless are determined to make their case independent of the-
ology in principle. Jonas sets Biblical tradition against modern nihilism, an opposition that
also Heidegger in his ontology reflects with the result that he ignores Bible’s ethical dimen-
sion. At the same time, however, it would seem that Jonas is more on the liberal side, as he
advocates “survival” as the ultimate end of ethics. This kind of ecologism is indeed anti-
metaphysical. But one has to ask the reason why survival would have the paramount status of
all human goods, including metaphysical ones. Indeed, if there are metaphysical goods, they
would seem to override any naturalist goods. Or are there no metaphysical ends for Jonas?
Whatever the case, survival as an absolute end, as Wollin puts it, is a very impoverished pic-
ture of humanity.

In fact, Jonas would seem to invoke a metaphysical rationale for his ethics of survival,
indeed there would be no other possibility. He alludes to views akin to the so-called process
theology in which divinity does not rule the external world or nature, but instead is influenced
by its contingent changes. This type of metaphysics would, of course, give some rationale
to Jonas’s basic arguments for the priority of survival but, significantly, it would not amount
to anything other than a particular metaphysical claim against other such claims within the
ideological contest and thus reinforce of my basic postliberal claim.

Nevertheless, what is of interest here is the relative nature of the ethics of responsibility
with respect to a particular metaphysics in general. In other words, Jonas’s planetarianist po-
tential is the third contributor to what I would like to invoke as a motivator for inter-cultural
and inter-religious dialogue independent of particular metaphysical incentives, but still deter-
mined by those incentives when it comes to concrete questions arising in that dialogue. To
recapitulate: my intention behind resorting to such figures as Levinas, Loegstrup, and Jonas is
that they provide us with complementary ingredients for a second-order dimension in my
postliberal model whereby the exclusive type of contest between ideologies, cultures, and
religions in our radically pluralistic cultures is fully recognized. What is second-order about
them is that they do not do away with this contest at the first-order level as does the liberal

941 Wiese 2007, 103.
942 For Levinas, as we have already seen, Judaism is the prime example of Otherness. For Loegstrup, it is Luther
against pietism, with Kierkegaard as the particular representative of the latter, that penetrates the ethical demand
in its universal validity. (Loegstrup 1997, 239, 240.) All the same, as Levinas starts from ethics as first philoso-
phy and only thereafter proceeds to the metaphysical level, Loegstrup too argues for ethical demand without
referring to his theological convictions. (Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xxxv.)
943 Wiese 2007, 93.
944 Wolin 2003, 121.
945 Wiese 2007, 124–126.
approach in reversing the order of the two dimensions, but provide a preliminary ground for
dialogue amidst this contest. They are capable of providing such ground precisely because
they seek to provide universal incentives for ethical responsibility.

It is not easy to argue for the independence of those universal incentives from particular
metaphysical goods. It would seem better to adhere to a dialectical relationship. On the one
hand, while inter-personal and planetarian responsibility is universal, its concrete articulations
necessarily take on the form of much more comprehensive, and thereby particular, metaphysi-
cal truth claims. Thus, in practice, the universal level of responsibility is admittedly vague. On
the other hand, for all the vagueness, it functions as the critical eye of any particular ideology;
at least it necessarily invites particular traditions to curb their manipulative tendencies. One
cannot avoid the expansive aspect of exclusive ideologies, but this does not have to mean de-
structive expansion in the face of human well-being in general, although the term "destructive,"
again, is not an objective concept and is not determined independent of particular ideol-
ogies. This kind of universal responsibility invites inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue
for ethical reasons versus the instrumentalization of either fellow humans or the environment
– the latter at least as far as is possible in anthropocentric planetarianism.

In order to bring this study to close, let me now present a rough quasi-historical outline
that attempts to pull together the ideas behind all three major historically-laden, postliberal
proposals addressing the predicament of the Enlightenment project, namely, those of MacIn-
tyre, Schelling, and, as I hope, Küng. At the same time I also attempt to discern what is good
in the Enlightenment project, that is, in the views examined under the umbrella of liberalism
in this study.

The direct genesis of the Enlightenment goes back to the time when Christianity gradu-
ally began to be seen as only one of multiple world views, not only in theory, but also in prac-
tice. Yet the roots of my present quasi-historical argument are even further in the past, name-
ly, in the emergence of monotheism. It is a well recognized fact that polytheistic features pre-
dominated both in Judaism and in ancient Greece, and it was only gradually that monotheism
gained significance as the only convincing doctrine. In philosophical terms polytheism, with
its appreciation for radical difference, was the modus vivendi view of both reality and society.
There was no superior perspective on the ongoing contest of different divinities; at best one
could be a proponent of one specific religion and its divinity(ies) against others. To be sure,
one could even have a firm belief that one’s God was superior to all others, but the superiority
was seen in quantity: there was no guarantee that one god would in the end be something es-
sentially different from all the others.946

Ancient polytheism had one problem. It seemed to stress one-sidedly only sociological
reality at the cost of rational inference. In other words, it took for granted that because there
are different religions, there must be different divinities. Because there are different interpre-

946 On Greek polytheism in this philosophical sense, see Gray 2000, 4, 5.
tations of the same reality, the reality itself must be divided according to these interpretations. Such Greek philosophers as the Stoics, the Platonists and the Aristotelians were among those who began to think abstractly about these things, and as a result they found polytheistic thinking inconsistent. Rationally considered, there has to be one overall reality of which everything else is a part. Everything is not before our eyes; there has to be some unity in difference, which only abstraction from contingency will reveal. It is important to note that when speaking of monotheism, I am referring here to a kind of philosophical world view without taking into account different types of monotheism from the perspective of religious studies.

The emergence of monotheism radically changed the ideological climate. I will only concentrate on one aspect of that change, which is relevant to my argument. Monotheism abolished a radically differentiated concept of ultimate reality. For the first time the viewpoint became all-inclusive. At the same time, paradoxically, the rational significance of monotheism was related to the emergence of ideological exclusion: the claim of monotheism was seen as rationally paramount. Since then, the overall aim has been to give an account of the reality that explained the whole – not just part of it. Yet, significantly, monotheism also influenced the view of society in the same way. A remarkable culmination of the societal effects was the establishment of the Roman Empire with Christianity as its official state religion. Romana Christiana reflects the consequences that the victory of monotheism somewhat naturally engendered at the societal level, namely, the general aim to do away with the problem of modus vivendi once and for all by social exclusion. But the Christian Empire was itself destined to end up in a state of modus vivendi again as over time fundamental disagreements appeared in the Christian doctrine itself. The enlightenment arose politically from these ruins, motivated by the hope of putting an end to the endless religious wars.

In general, it is important to note that it is rationally acceptable, praiseworthy, and even morally binding to persuade others to embrace views that a person or community takes as rationally paramount. But of equal importance now is the experience of the enlightened man: the zeal of a religious statesman is not reconcilable to our social world. This was, at its root, a moral problem. It had begun to be obvious that it is against humanity to force people to accept any religion against their will. With regard to the previous polytheistic thinking, the problem with Medieval Christianity lay on the opposite side: now the rational aspect was overemphasized. The pluralism of religions, which was now beginning to be salient both inside and outside Christendom, forced people to recognize human differences and resist ideological and social exclusion, and it was to a certain extent obvious that the two kinds of exclusions were intertwined. At the same time previous Western crimes such as the Crusades were condemned – or at least, this turn was the mobilizing force that evoked such condemnation.

It is a general idea nowadays that quarrels should be about things, not persons. However, my proposal is that the singular political discovery of the Enlightenment was that it is a contradiction to disentangle people and things. Imposing convictions against personal consent is both an experiential and a rational contradiction: it was against the obvious structure of the human self. More, the desired subjection to the imposed doctrine was never authentic. Of
course, the classical articulation of this idea is Kant’s second version of the categorical imperative: one should always treat others as ends in themselves, and not merely as means. Practically, this means that one should provide others with reasons acceptable to them when persuading them of your convictions.

In contemporary liberalism the project of monotheism reaches its culmination point: the idea of an all-inclusive and rationally paramount viewpoint is incorporated into the universal and autonomous consent of different individuals. The former has always been the monotheistic aim, but now, in political contractarianism, it was finally articulated to accommodate human autonomy in a full-fledged form. It is precisely the inclusion of difference that is at the very core of Enlightenment ethics and politics, but the classical liberalist doctrine has aspired to prevent social exclusion by way of institutional arrangements, above all, by the minimal role of the state and political neutrality in the public sphere. After all, what has been salient since Kant is that in the modern, radically pluralistic society, it is ultimately an insuperable difficulty to identify any (all-inclusive) institutional arrangements that would take every “reasonable” political view reasonably into account.\footnote{For elaboration on the internal tensions within liberalism, I refer the reader to the earlier chapters in this study as well as to Sandel 1998, xiv–xvi, 195–218.}

The fundamental problem unfolding in the dynamics of Western ideological history is that while on the one hand, the rational and experiential aspects should play equal roles in constructing a plausible social model, on the other hand it appears impossible to combine them without significant problems. The monotheistic aspiration to an institutional all-embracing framework does not work in liberalism, because it is designed to include radically different identities of the phenomenological reality within its own monotheism in a very straightforward sense. Social reality \textit{de facto} resists this unifying tendency of reason.\footnote{Examples of this are found in Walzer 1985 and Walzer 2004.} In its search for a rationally unifying overall pattern, liberalism tends to ignore the need to cope with experiential matters on their own terms. More concretely, in trying to convert non-liberal groups, liberalism is reluctant to provide reasons to which these groups could internally and authentically subscribe. Thus, paradoxically, the problem that was characteristic of pre-Enlightenment monotheism and to which the Enlightenment was a reaction against reappears in Enlightenment monotheism in a different guise. There is no sufficient respect for the authenticity of the “conversion.” This problem is mainly an experiential one, and concentrating on institutional arrangements does not meet this challenge.

Because Western liberalism tends to emphasize reason over experience in its mission to include difference, it includes a political problem identified and emphasized by Levinas. His ground-breaking notion was that Enlightenment humanism is not sufficiently equipped to prevent even the crudest types of social exclusion, such as the Holocaust, because it is prone to overrule experiential recognition of difference for the sake of the logical overall structure.
of reason. Levinas traces this same tendency to exclude the radically different by way of their distorted inclusion within the paramount rational pattern back to ancient Greek philosophy. Even though the aim of Western liberalism is supposed to respect difference and resist exclusion, it will probably dissolve its own inconsistency by emphasizing rational universalism rather than particularity and radical difference, that is, the difference which will not abide by the logic of universal reason.949

Now, this rather loose historical outline brings us to my final conclusion. It is still significant that the original idea of the Enlightenment, namely, to combine the rational and experiential aspects within the same overall view, is used against ancient polytheism and medieval monotheism. The only way left to proceed is that which at a certain level opposes the modus vivendi, but does not intend to dissolve it once and for all. None of the religio-political models mentioned here have directly proposed such an idea. In fact, what is new in my proposal is that it divides one general societal view into two levels.

The first level is the one that recognizes the monotheistic aspiration to an all-embracing view of reality above any other, externally opposing comprehensive world views. This is what religions, in particular, are expected to provide, but not only religions, of course. As I have hinted, even the liberal account of social reality may have a stake in this constellation. The decisive point is that the different comprehensive doctrines necessarily contend for paramount status in determining the nature, not only of reality, but also, more specifically, of society. This does not exclude, but rather enhances the necessity of dialogue and mutual learning between conflicting ideologies, as it does not claim that any individual person or group would own the whole truth in its perfection. All the same, my assumption is that there is an ongoing dispute, and every person or group necessarily takes part in it; there is no impartial perspective, even in the public political sphere.

At the same time, at the second level of my two-dimensional postliberal proposal, there is a need in contemporary pluralistic societies to address how this contest is realized in practice. Whereas the former level was that of metaphysics, now the question is about both psychological and sociological reality, that is, empirical and immanent reality. After the Enlightenment criticism of medieval politics, the serious challenge of particular comprehensive doctrines has been to recognize distortions at this level. The persuasive pursuit of comprehensive doctrines is always at risk of becoming coercive or manipulative whereby persons are not treated as ends in themselves, that is, the reasons they are offered for adopting a new doctrine are not sufficient or intelligible. The conversion resulting from that kind of persuasion is never genuine. This type of pattern introduces a disposition to accept the modus vivendi, to acquiesce in it on the factual level of this world, though not at the metaphysical level. In this kind of modus vivendi, comprehensive doctrines do not try to defend and elevate their status and extrinsic power at any price whatsoever. All in all, my proposal reflects a combination of

resistance and non-resistance to the opposing doctrines for the sake of human treatment of individual autonomy.

The question immediately arises of how it would be possible to assess manipulation objectively other than by deconstructing the particular hegemonies of comprehensive doctrines in the public sphere. But this question ignores the experiential nature of the problem; the judgment is not to be made in light of abstract objectivity, but developed through experience and participating in life’s processes. All this indeed includes distancing reflection, but more in the sense of Dewey, not of Kant. Within the sphere of experiential inquiry, the quest for abstract objectivity is not only irrelevant, but also senseless and distorting, as it draws attention away from the concrete context without which no objective evaluation is possible. But even here anyone’s virtual ability for this experiential type of “immanent” criticism based on the principle of the second version of the categorical imperative is to be fully developed only in a dialectical relationship with particular ideologies wherein both aspects – that of particular metaphysics and that of horizontal recognition of the universal dignity of humans as well as of non-human nature – critically test one another.

It seems that religious traditions especially are the ones to foster this postliberal kind of autonomy. The danger is that religions are not allowed to foster these virtues, because, in the final analysis, they are harnessed to serve a liberal type of “monotheism.” In that case, the public role of religions is virtually reduced to the prevention of the modus vivendi. Instead, religions proper might have the potential to foster more complex public identities; they might be more profoundly geared to coping constructively with different truth claims without accepting them. Better than liberalism, they might acknowledge their embeddedness in the particularity and ongoing contest without once and for all insisting on one-dimensional monotheism. The non-violent resistance movements of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama are further examples of this.

Furthermore, as the lives of these three figures suggest, there is an element of suffering intertwined within the two-dimensional paradox of monotheistic reason and modus vivendi pluralism. The classical Christian example of this would be Jesus wailing for Jerusalem: “How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you didn’t want to!” (Matt. 23:37, International Standard Version, italics added.) Here the commitment of Jesus to a particular “comprehensive doctrine” and his respect for the autonomous will of his brethren create a psychological paradox – and the result is suffering. The reason for neglecting coercive persuasion is not only that the resulting conversion would not be authentic and thus of no worth. It is also, more positively, the sociological standpoint that violence generates violence. “Jesus said to [Peter], ‘Put your sword back in its place! For


951 To take a concrete example, Nwaomah 2008 examines how Jesus’s urge to turn the other cheek has inspired Christians in the peaceful reactions to violent hostility in Nigeria’s religious conflicts.
all who use a sword will be killed by a sword! . . .’ ” (Matt. 26:52, International Standard Version.)

The ethos of altruism depicted here moves the focus of inter-cultural and inter-religious ethics somewhat away from philosophical universalism and religious doctrinal ecumenism in the direction of psychological and interpersonal questions – such as Albert Ellis’s rational emotive behavior therapy\(^\text{952}\) or Marshal Rosenberg’s nonviolent communication\(^\text{953}\) – as primary contexts for conflict resolution. The opposite of the concept of altruism used here is not egoism, but rather narcissism. I already hinted that a more particularistic reading of Levinas vis-à-vis Derrida enables the former to avoid the hubris of liberalism. This refers to the critical line of Western political culture from Kant to poststructuralism, which unrealistically endeavors to transcend ideological conflict.

Now, there is a counterpart to this Western hubris in the sphere of theoretical philosophy identified by Ricoeur in his critique of that hubris. It may be considered Cartesian narcissism. Ricoeur uses psychoanalysis to claim that the concept of self-sufficient and self-reflecting subject is a fiction; in reality consciousness and reason are not self-sufficient, but guided by “uncontrollable” forces of the unconscious as well as by the surrounding social world caused by unconscious self-conceit under the mask of philosophical argument.\(^\text{954}\) This discovery may now be applied to the political theory to claim that transcending ideology reflects the same inflated self-view of liberal scholarship. Moreover, liberalism not only embodies this hubris, but also is geared to foster a narcissistic culture in general as citizens’ self-assertions as such become not only immune to constriction, but also laudable.\(^\text{955}\)

Consider, in this light, Axel Honneth who bases his societal view on object-relations theory. According to Honneth, just as a child needs recognition to develop healthy self-confidence, so societal groups and individuals need social recognition.\(^\text{956}\) However, two points are important here. First, the primary objects of societal recognition are not children, and, second, even children’s self-assertions should not only be recognized, but also constricted and resisted: they should be wholly recognized as persons, which is different from

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\(^{952}\) Blumberg et al. 2006, 80, 81: “The founding father of Rational Emotive Therapy, Albert Ellis, posits that RET can facilitate the acquisition of more peaceful attitudes and behaviours. He argues that RET can increase negotiation, compromise and altruism and help to overcome prejudice and hostility. RET uses emotive-experiential methods to help people achieve peaceful human relationships.”

\(^{953}\) Rosenberg 2003. On psychology’s contribution to conflict resolution, see Blumberg et al. 2006. These authors document a considerable discussion of altruism with respect to peace research (47–51), but the concept of altruism in the sense discussed above – as love of enemy and consequent refraining from violent reactions against aggressive or exclusive (truth) claims – is conspicuously absent. Ricoeur too contends that altruism plays a significant role in the peaceful working of a just society. (Simms 2003, 199, 120.)

\(^{954}\) Simms 2003, 53, 54.

\(^{955}\) On Western culture as narcissism in general, see Lasch 1979.

\(^{956}\) Anderson 1995, xii–xiv.
fully recognizing their opinions. Both of these critical observations reflect the need to address the question of narcissism besides the question of recognition and difference in Western political theory. In saying this, I am subscribing to what Sandel proposes as the postliberal type of dialogue and recognition:

If liberal public reason is too restrictive, it remains to ask whether a more spacious public reason would sacrifice the ideals that political liberalism seeks to promote, notably mutual respect among citizens who hold conflicting moral and religious views. Here it is necessary to distinguish two conceptions of mutual respect. On the liberal conception, we respect our fellow citizen’s moral and religious convictions by ignoring them (for political purposes), by leaving them undisturbed, by carrying on political debate without reference to them. To admit moral and religious ideals into political debate about justice would undermine mutual respect in this sense. But this is not the only, or perhaps even the most plausible, way of understanding the mutual respect on which democratic citizenship depends. On a different conception of respect – call it the deliberative conception – we respect our fellow citizen’s moral and religious convictions by engaging, or attending to, them – sometimes by challenging and contesting them, sometimes by listening and learning from them – especially when those convictions bear on important political questions. There is no guarantee that a deliberative mode of respect will lead in any given case to agreement with, or even appreciation of, the moral and religious convictions of others. It is always possible that learning more about a moral or religious doctrine will lead us to like it less. But the respect of deliberation and engagement affords a more spacious public reason than liberalism allows. It is also a more suitable ideal for a pluralist society. To the extent that our moral and religious disagreements reflect the ultimate plurality of human goods, a deliberative mode of respect will better enable us to appreciate the distinctive goods our different lives express.957

Applied in a postliberalist manner, Honneth is a useful example of how the primary focus of political theory should be moved away from systemic institutional arrangements – there will be no consistent agreement at this level – to the social psychology of human self-esteem. What I would like to add, against theories oriented toward either critical theory or poststructuralism, recognition of exclusive difference – contra radical difference – does not ascribe normative value to self-assertion of the other as such,958 but rather makes it dependent on the truth-value of a person’s ‘comprehensive doctrine’ as well as on its reconcilability to non-manipulative and non-violent intercourse with the other who may exclude him by her comprehensive doctrine. The claim here is that it is this postliberal kind of exclusive difference to which the concept of recognition should be attributed.959

The reverse of Honneth’s psychological rendering of recognition is René Girard’s theory of scapegoat mechanism. According to Girard, the basic characteristic in any human culture is that naturally inherent all-human aggression, deriving from a mimetic mechanism of people’s envious competition in pursuit of the same objects in a world marked by scarce resources, is projected onto a single, artificially invented victim. This projection enables the dissolution of aggression for a time in the community, but at the same time it maintains the

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957 Sandel 1998, 217, 218. Sandel’s rendering, particularly in the final sentences, allude to a multiculturalist position that is already refuted earlier for not sufficiently recognizing exclusivism. Nevertheless, the general point is analogous to my proposal here; indeed, that is the good part of multiculturalism.

958 One of liberalist rendering of recognition appears in Iris Young, for instance; see Kaplan 2003, 154–156.

959 One example of the use of Honneth’s and Taylor’s concept of recognition is articulated by Schreiter (1997, 95), who advocates a particularly Christian perspective.

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overall social system whereby the real nature and causes of aggression are never genuinely recognized. Strikingly, Girard proposes that Christianity’s main message was to unmask and denounce the single victim mechanism through the public persecution and crucifixion of an innocent Christ.\textsuperscript{960}

Girard sees Western culture as fostering this Christian legacy in its resistance to social exclusion: “The essential thing in what goes now as human rights is an indirect acknowledgment of the fact that every individual or every group of individuals can become the ‘scapegoat’ of their own community. Putting emphasis on human rights reflects the formerly unthinkable effort to control the uncontrollable processes of mimetic snowballing.”\textsuperscript{961} What makes Girard a postliberal advocate of social inclusion is that he is not uncritical of the modern and postmodern inversions of this Christian legacy:

We could use our insight discreetly with our neighbors, not humiliating those we catch in the very act of expelling a scapegoat. But more frequently we turn our knowledge into a weapon, a means not only of perpetuating old conflicts but of raising them to a new level of cunning, which the very existence of this knowledge and its propagation in the whole society demand. In short, we integrate the central concern of Judaism and Christianity into our systems of self-defense. Instead of criticizing ourselves, we use our knowledge in bad faith, turning it against others. Indeed, we practice a hunt for scapegoats to the second degree, a hunt for hunters of scapegoats. Our society’s obligatory compassion authorizes new forms of cruelty.\textsuperscript{962}

Here Girard indirectly expresses that the point of the scapegoat mechanism is not its reduction to a comprehensive system in which every possible condemnation, every moment of othering is seen as problematic. Instead, Girard seems to assume that the hunt for scapegoats is not to be turned against metaphysics and religion, but used as their servant. This is precisely, however, the way both modern and postmodern hegemony, from Kantian liberalism to poststructuralism applies its Christian heritage in its aspiration to attain neutrality and combat totalities. What in fact makes Levinas, Loegstrup, Honneth, and Girard such useful points of reference within the postliberal proposal of this study is that all four oppose the Enlightenment hubris of a functionalist rendering of both modernism and postmodernism,\textsuperscript{963} such all-embraciveness in the form of institutional arrangements should be replaced by a much more moderate concept of inter-cultural dialogue of a practical nature that does not downplay the inconclusively conflictual nature of society.

Given the unmasked Janus face of contemporary Western culture, it is useful to return to the same paradoxes in the contemporary problem between altruism and narcissism. The cognitive psychologist Aron T. Beck makes use of collective conceptions of narcissism and

\begin{footnotesize}
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    \item \textsuperscript{960} Williams 2001.
    \item \textsuperscript{961} Girard 2001, 167, 168.
    \item \textsuperscript{962} Girard 2001, 158.
    \item \textsuperscript{963} I have earlier elaborated on Levinas in this respect more carefully. On Honneth’s opposition to Habermas’s and Foucault’s functionalist presumptions, see for example Honneth 1991, xiii–xxxii, 176–202, 278–303. On Loegstrup’s dissociation of the rules of justice in liberalism, see for example Fink and MacIntyre 1997, xxx.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
altruism in outlining cures for religious fundamentalists who transform themselves into terrorist groups.\textsuperscript{964} Strikingly, many of the features that Beck ascribes to religious fundamentalists in general – deriving from black-and-white views of reality parallel to a superior view of one’s own collective self – are in fact also identifiable in Western liberalism. This is mainly because in both views, the self is easily seen in a narcissistic way, that is, as a self-sufficient subject. Thus, it is true that the self – be it collective or individual – should be seen rather in the dialogical way of Levinas or, say, Mikhail Bakhtin, that is, as heteronomously dependent on multifaceted contingencies instead of as closed systems.\textsuperscript{965} This inclusive understanding of identities notwithstanding, my proposal is that there is simultaneously a need for exclusive understanding of identities, and now this claim may be related to a second, little noticed mode of narcissism: the one which, instead of religious fundamentalism, is related to the whole of liberalist culture, namely, \textit{intolerance for conflicts as such}. The inflated self-view of narcissism is related to the fact that narcissistic people find it very difficult to avoid aggression when their own views are challenged.\textsuperscript{966} Now, it is easy to imagine that a narcissistic person or collective either overreacts to a conflict situation with aggression – as shown by Beck’s analysis of fundamentalists – or the person/group seeks to \textit{dismantle conflicts antecedently} or downplay them after they have emerged. In the latter case the narcissistic self attempts to construct a view that would embrace all the apparently conflicting particular viewpoints in order that the subject itself would not have to face conflict. This latter method, of course, is the method of liberalist culture. Because the narcissistic tendencies of aggressive groups, such as religious fundamentalists, are easier to observe, it is no wonder that the other extreme of narcissistic behavior has gone unnoticed. It is nevertheless my suggestion that the undifferentiated hostile view of (ideological) conflicts and exclusion \textit{as such} in the liberal West needs to be questioned by the postliberal culture. We need to bring more tolerance to mutually exclusive ideological conflicts in order to open up new perspectives for coping peacefully with this unavoidable phenomenon, not only in radically, but also in exclusively pluralistic modern cultures.

All things considered, there might be a relatively new kind of challenge for a “dialogue of exclusivists” in the political sphere. This new kind of agenda requires a new, more nuanced, even paradoxical, understanding of self/other relations; it requires reckoning with and

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\textsuperscript{964} Beck 2002, 216: “The humanistic code, the notion of the universality of humankind, needs to be established as an alternative to the rigid perspectives characteristic of tribalism, nationalism, and militant religiosity. In theory, this caring orientation can moderate destructive conflict. The moral code emanating from this orientation involves sensitivity to others’ needs, responsibility for their welfare, and sacrifice of one’s own need for the needs of others. Individual and group altruism are the antidote to individual and group narcissism. Unfortunately, group narcissism may become so entrenched and ideologies so highly valued that efforts at cognitive disentanglement are doomed to run into cultural, social, and political roadblocks.”

\textsuperscript{965} Neumann 1996, 146.

\textsuperscript{966} Baumeister and Butz 2005, 93, 94; Berkowitz 2005, 177, 178.
\end{flushright}
recognition for exclusive difference. This would indicate a need for a dialogue in which the parties search for a new middle-way between exclusivism and pluralism or, to follow the formulation of Hans Küng, between *Wahrheitsfanatismus* and *Wahrheitsvergessenheit*.⁹⁶⁷

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⁹⁶⁷ PW, 105.
IV Concluding Remarks

To summarize my argument for a postliberal global ethics, I would like to use the term “balanced inclusivism.” First of all, what I mean by “balanced” is that the ultimately exclusive nature of all religions and ideologies is not only acknowledged, but also accepted, if not as “reasonable,” then at least as an inevitable fact that cannot be politically or philosophically dismantled or transcended, even in the public societal discourse. Religious and other ideological doctrines are to be taken as thoroughly holistic political contributors that compete for power in the public as well as the private sphere – not for egotistical reasons, but for ethical reasons that rise out of every ideological tradition respectively. It is precisely this emphasis on exclusivism that calls for the term “balanced” in my definition. But, of course, this is not the whole story.

Second, what I mean by “inclusivism” is that despite the ongoing contest and conflict, there is simultaneously a need for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. My hope is that this demand is not only politically ethical, but also genuinely ethical. Here I can refer only to the particular exclusive religious and other ideological traditions instead of some neutral argument. It is only through these ‘comprehensive doctrines’ that the ethical flavor of the necessity for peaceful coexistence may perhaps be gained. Comprehensive ideological traditions, mostly non-secular, are in a position to foster serious and sustainable societal answers on a global scale because they are able to provide tools for the ethical legitimation of laws. But the minimal condition for peace in our radically pluralistic world is that these traditions endorse inclusive attitudes that do not fully “demonize” the proponents of other ideologies or the ideologies themselves. There has to be a substantial readiness for ‘overlapping consensus’ on behalf of the different traditions whereby there are only restricted sets of ways to “convert” people. The principal acceptance of the permanent pluralism of doctrines is required of the doctrines themselves in such a way that this condition will not hinder peaceful and constructive coexistence.

The nature of this coexistence should at the same time be both deeply ethical and genuinely political. The first aspect here excludes those models in which societal coexistence is based merely on political contract. It is precisely the ethically binding nature of religions and other comprehensive ideologies that renders merely neutral or tactical negotiation impossible. On the other hand, the need for politics reflects that the more precise meaning and scope of any common societal ethics is to be derived on the basis of how far and in what direction the proponents of different religions and ideologies, by their own standards, are prepared to embrace common rules. The question is about a modus vivendi that can perhaps be called “norms of the second best” (Alan Gibbard) or a “political compromise” (Richard Bellamy) from the
view of particular ideologies. In balanced inclusivism the commonness of humanity is acknowledged on the basis of love; at the same time there is an acknowledgment of mutual exclusivity – not only difference or extraordinariness, but also exclusivity – in the more accurate definitions of this commonness. It is necessary that in a consistent peace dialogue both aspects – exclusivity and inclusivity – are simultaneously present.

In line with PWE I would say that global ethics is always a dialogical enterprise. My third point is that this process is not to be genuinely or realistically fostered without taking as a primordial vantage point the principle of encountering (and the recognition of) exclusive difference – and not just radical difference, as in poststructuralism. Thus, my first emphasis on exclusivism does not lead to neglecting the dialogue, but rather to endorsing it in a way that the constructive and non-violent encountering of exclusivism is the necessary minimal condition for such a dialogue. Here we come to the question of what would be the most plausible way to articulate the idea behind PWE: the global ethos should first and foremost refer to these minimal conditions of a peace dialogue. The ethics of encountering exclusive difference amounts, among other things, to focusing on the anthropological, spiritual, and (socio-) psychological nature of love more than doctrinal ecumenism. Instead of mitigating the exclusive truth-claims of religions, for instance, ethics of exclusive difference connotes altruistic and “kenotic” renouncement of revenge and violence, the principle of loving one’s (ideological) enemies.

I have mainly focused on Western articulations of global ethics. Nevertheless, my premises require that it is possible to extend the postliberal type of argument far beyond Western traditions and, for that matter, the Judeo-Christian tradition. But I do not consider it up to me to engage further in that extension authentically as a Western Christian. I have nevertheless seen it necessary to argue philosophically, in the Western sense, against liberalism and for postliberalism in general just because the former presents the challenge, as it were, of transcending theology by philosophy. Having said this, I have taken as my ultimate purpose to transcend philosophy. The postliberal global ethics as an encounter with exclusive difference may open up possibilities for resources of non-secular ideologies, which until now have not adequately tapped. This is because what I have called a postliberal paradigm indicates the inevitable, permanent, and, at bottom, anthropological, challenge of global ethics: the peaceful coexistence of more or less exclusive metaphysical world views.

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968 See Gibbard 1992, 241, 242 and Bellamy 1999, 91–140. I will not dwell here on Gibbard’s and Bellamy’s alternatives, but will only say that while they are much the same as my balanced inclusivism – at least in the concepts mentioned – there are also important differences.
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