

Exiting the State and Debunking the State of Nature

Abandonando el Estado y desenmascarando el estado de naturaleza

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Abstract

Contrary to the belief of most Kantians and Kant scholars, Kant is in fact an anarchist. In this paper, I distinguish sharply between two concepts of enlightenment, *enlightenment lite* and *heavy duty or radical enlightenment*; show how there is an unbridgeable gap between Kant's official political theory in *The Doctrine of Right* and his ethics; show how Kant's real political theory is worked out in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, and is in fact a heavy-duty, radically enlightened version of anarchism; refute and debunk widely-believed Hobbesian assumptions about human nature, which are in fact nothing but cognitive illusions; and propose a de-biasing strategy in political aesthetics for ridding ourselves of these Hobbesian cognitive illusions.

Keywords

Kant, Hobbes, political philosophy, the state, anarchism

And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.¹

Our age is the genuine age of *criticism*, to which everything must submit. *Religion* through its holiness, and *legislation* through its *majesty* commonly seek to exempt themselves from

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¹ Matthew 22:20-22, *King James Bible*.

it. But in this way they excite a just suspicion against themselves, and cannot lay claim that unfeigned respect that reason grants only to that which has been able to withstand its free and public examination. (*CPR* Axi n.)²

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

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

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

1. Introduction: Two Kinds of Enlightenment, and Religion Only Within the Limits of Pure Practical Reason

² For convenience, I cite Kant's works infratextually in parentheses. The citations include both an abbreviation of the English title and the corresponding volume and page numbers in the standard "Akademie" edition of Kant's works: *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich Preussischen (now Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: G. Reimer [now de Gruyter], 1902-). For references to the first *Critique*, I follow the common practice of giving page numbers from the A (1781) and B (1787) German editions only. I generally follow the standard English translations of Kant's works, but have occasionally modified them where appropriate. Here is a list of the abbreviations and English translations.

CPJ *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000.

CPR *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997.

CPPr *Critique of Practical Reason*. Trans. M. Gregor. In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996, pp. 139-272.

IUH "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim." Trans. A. Wood. In G. Zöllner and R. Loudon (eds) *Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History, and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007. Pp. 107-120.

MM *Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. M. Gregor. In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 365-604.

NF *Notes and Fragments*. Trans. C. Bowman, P. Guyer, and F. Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005.

PP "Toward Perpetual Peace." Trans. M. Gregor. In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 317-351.

Pro *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. Trans. G. Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004.

Rel *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Trans. A. Wood and G. di Giovanni. In *Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, pp. 57-215.

SRL "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy." Trans. M. Gregor. In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*. Pp. 611-615.

WiE "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" In *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 17-22.

I think that there is a fundamental difference between:

- (i) what I call *enlightenment lite* (EL) and
- (ii) what I call *heavy-duty enlightenment* (HDE), or “radical enlightenment” in the specifically Kantian sense (Hanna 2016/2017).

EL says: Argue and write as much as you like, provided that you still obey and “render unto Caesar,” i.e., “render unto” coercive political authority, the government, the State, and also obey and “render unto” other State-like institutions. But HDE says: You must exit your self-incurred immaturity, dare to think/know for yourself (*Sapere aude!*), and then dare to act for yourself.

The confusion between EL and HDE has had huge, dire cultural and political implications. EL is deeply misguided, because it presupposes *instrumental rationality*, and leads to *rationality-nihilism* if it is not ultimately grounded on a deeper, non-instrumental, categorically normative conception of rationality. The rationality-nihilist believes not only, along with Hume, that “reason is the slave of the passions,” but also that reason is ultimately *otiose and eliminable* in the face of brute coercive power. Worst of all, then, EL is deeply complicit with coercive authoritarianism, or *Statism*, right up to *totalitarianism*, and equally deeply complicit with technocratic, large-scale capitalism and its valorization—or what we now call *neoliberalism*—as Adorno and Horkheimer carefully spell it out in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002).

Unfortunately, the primary historical source of the dire EL/HDE confusion is Kant’s “What is Enlightenment?,” which is *really* about HDE, but superficially appears to be about EL. And this is mostly Kant’s own fault. In “What is Enlightenment?,” he is philosophically super-cagey, and indeed *duplicitous* about what he really meant, due to (in fact, well-justified) fears about censorship and political repression.

Now according to Harry Frankfurt’s highly insightful analysis, “bullshit” is a philosophical quasi-technical term, meaning *inauthentic verbiage or actions, put forward as if authentic, strongly tending to undermine the pursuit of truth and the highest good alike* (Frankfurt 1988). In other words, in “What is Enlightenment?,” Kant is philosophically bullshitting us. Above all, his deeply conflicted and ultimately incoherent doctrine of “the private use of reason” vs. “the public use of reason” in that essay epitomizes this philosophical super-cageyness, duplicity, and bullshitting (Louden 2016).

To his credit, however, Kant finally said what he *really* meant about enlightenment, ethics, and politics in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* in 1793. *Religion* is in fact a treatise in HDE and a defense of philosophical and political *anarchism*, more precisely *existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism*. In turn, existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism says:

There is no adequate rational justification for coercive political authority, the government, the State, or any other State-like institution, and we should reject and exit the State and other State-like institutions, in order to create and belong to a real-world, worldwide ethical community, i.e., the worldwide web of humanity, in a

world without any States or State-like institutions (Hanna, Chapman, and Ellis 2016).

It is deeply philosophically and politically ironic that virtually no one has ever recognized the radicalism of *Religion*. This, I think, is in part because *Religion* is much too long and because its surface rhetoric is far too Christian/religious for Enlightenment philosophers to stomach, especially 20th and 21st century Kantians.

A second part of the problem is its title, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. When Kant placed “mere” or “*bloßen*” right in front of “reason” or “*Vernunft*,” it made his basic point about religion almost unrecognizable. What is “mere reason”? No one knows. But as he makes clear in the Preface to the second edition of *Religion*, responding to everyone who complained they couldn’t understand the original title, what he’s *actually* trying to say is: *religion is possible only within the limits of pure practical reason*.

But the third and most important part of the problem about recognizing that *Religion* is actually a treatise in HDE and a defense of existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism, is the fact that Kant’s neo-Hobbesian liberal political philosophy in the first part of the 1797 *Metaphysics of Morals*, *The Doctrine of Right* is really nothing but a scandalous philosophico-political *red-herring*. I will demonstrate the truth of this “shocking claim” in the next section.

2. The Unbridgeable Gap Between Right and Virtue

In the *Notes and Fragments*, aka the *Reflexionen*, in the late 1770s, Kant says that “an axiom is an immediate intuitional judgment a priori” (*NF* 16: 673, 3135), and in 1771 that among “all immediately certain propositions,” the *axiomata* are “objective principles of synthesis, space and time” (*NF*: 17: 522, 4370).

One paradigm of axioms is the straight-line law in Euclidean geometry, i.e., “[t]he principle: a straight line is the shortest line between two points,” which Kant in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* explicitly describes as one of the “simplest axioms” of pure mathematics (*Pro* 4: 301). Correspondingly, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant explicitly includes “the Axioms of Intuition” (*CPR* A161/B202) in his Principles of Pure Understanding. In that connection, he says that “axioms [are] synthetic *a priori* propositions” and also that “the axioms that properly concern only magnitudes (quanta) as such” include, e.g., that “between two points only one straight line is possible” and that “two straight lines do not enclose a space” (*CPR* A164/B204-205). Hence there are also axioms in *the transcendental metaphysics of human experience*, the prime examples of which are the Axioms of Intuition (governing first-order synthetic a priori truths about extensive quantity) and the Anticipations of Perception (governing first-order synthetic a priori truths about intensive quantity).

But in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant also speaks of the synthetic a priori “axiom of right” (*MM* 6: 250), and in “On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy,” he says that the axiom of right is “an apodictically certain proposition that issues immediately from

the definition of external right” (*SRL* 8: 429). All axioms of any kind are necessarily true, general, primitive, non-hypothetical, synthetic a priori propositions that we can know with immediate certainty or self-evidence. Since axioms are synthetic, they are consistently deniable and intuition-based, hence grounded in human sensibility. Now just as the scope of axiomatic rationality extends from mathematics to transcendental metaphysics, so too it extends to the metaphysics of morals via *pure practical* axioms. Kant says, e.g., that every immediately certain synthetic a priori proposition about “right” (*Recht*) is a pure practical “axiom of right” (*MM* 6: 250) or “axiom of outer freedom” (*MM* 6: 267-268). Correspondingly, there must also be pure practical *axioms of virtue* (*Tugend*), that is, *axioms of inner freedom or autonomy*, moral principles flowing directly from the Categorical Imperative, which would be *the ultimate axiom of virtue*, although Kant never says this *explicitly*. In the metaphysics of morals, pure practical axioms are sensibly grounded in *egoistic human empirical desires* (for outer freedom) and non-sensibly grounded in *the non-egoistic a priori feeling of respect* (for inner freedom).

The mutual incompatibility, and indeed outright inconsistency, between egoistic axioms of right and non-egoistic axioms of virtue is one of the deepest and hardest problems in Kant’s political theory (*Rel* 6: 95-102). Here is how it unfolds. Kant’s neo-Hobbesian liberal political theory in *The Doctrine of Right*, the doctrine of right (*Recht*) starts from *an assumption* he calls “the axiom of right”:

Now, in order to progress from a metaphysics of right (which abstracts from all conditions of experience) to a principle of politics (which applies these concepts to cases of experience) and, by means of this, to the solution of a problem of politics in keeping with the universal principle of right, a philosopher will give I) an axiom, that is, an apodictically certain proposition that issues immediately from the definition of external right (consistency of the freedom of each with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law); 2) a postulate (of external public law, as the united will of all in accordance with the principle of equality, without which there would be no freedom of everyone); 3) a problem of how it is to be arranged that in a society, however large, harmony in accordance with the principles of freedom and equality is maintained (namely, by means of a representative system); this will then be a principle of politics, the arrangement and organization of which will contain decrees, drawn from experiential cognition of human beings, that have in view only the mechanism for administering right and how this can be managed appropriately. Right must never be accommodated to politics, but politics must always be accommodated to right. (*SRL* 8: 429).

But the axiom of right (the axiom of external freedom, or negative freedom) is directly contradictory with what I have called “the ultimate axiom of virtue” (the ultimate axiom of internal freedom, or autonomy, i.e., the Categorical Imperative). This is because on the one hand, the axiom of right says:

(i) that we ARE essentially self-interested and need to be protected from each other by the coercion of the State, which secures external freedom,

whereas on the other hand the axiom of virtue says:

(ii) that we are NOT essentially self-interested, but on the contrary we are essentially capable of acting in a non-egoistic way, autonomously, for the sake of the Categorical Imperative, and indeed we are morally REQUIRED to do this.

As I mentioned above, the synthetic a priori *axiom of right* is grounded on *the empirical fact of human egoistic self-interested desires*, whereas the *axiom of virtue* is grounded on *the a priori feeling of respect*. Hence the axiom of right is to the axiom of virtue as *natural science*, grounded on *the empirical intuition of matter*, is to *mathematics*, which is grounded on *the pure intuition of space and time*. And just as no truth of natural science can trump a truth of mathematics—e.g., if natural science showed that $2+2=5$, this would be trumped by arithmetic—so too, no obligation in the doctrine of right can trump an obligation in the doctrine of virtue.

But unlike the science-mathematics relationship, right and virtue are not only *asymmetric*, they are actually *contradictory*. In still other words, then, Kant's political philosophy starts from an enabling assumption, the axiom of right, which in effect says that we are all essentially egoistic/self-interested, i.e., decision-theoretic animals, indeed, essentially decision-theoretic “biochemical puppets,” natural machines. As he himself says, “the problem of establishing a state, no matter how hard it may sound, is soluble even for a nation of devils (if only they have understanding)” (*PP* 8: 366), and that the State-establishing problem

goes like this: “Given a multitude of rational beings all of whom need universal laws for their preservation but each of whom is inclined covertly to exempt himself from them, so to order this multitude and establish their constitution that, although in their private dispositions they strive against one another, these yet so check one another that in their public conduct the result is the same as if they had no such evil dispositions.” Such a problem must be soluble. For the problem is not the moral improvement of human beings but only the mechanism of nature, and what the task requires one to know is how this can be put to use in human beings in order so to arrange the conflict of their unpeaceable dispositions within a people that they themselves have to constrain one another to submit to coercive law and so bring about a condition of peace in which laws have force. (*PP* 8: 366)

Since the “the problem is not the moral improvement of human beings but only the mechanism of nature,” the external freedom of the devils and essentially egoistic/self-interested human beings alike is only that of a compatibilistic/soft deterministic “turnspit,” as Kant puts it in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (*CPrR* 5: 97).

Slavoj Žižek aptly observed that “liberalism [is] politics for a race of devils” (Žižek 2010). But even more to the point, *liberalism is politics for a devilish race of biochemical puppets*. Therefore, we need to be protected from arbitrarily coercing/compelling each other (= external freedom), lest we fall back in the Hobbesian war of all against all/state of nature, and w/hack each other to death, Mad-Max style. So State government is nothing but an *executive control mechanism*, plus a centralized power to coerce (e.g., the police, the army, the NSA, etc.), designed for guaranteeing mutual external freedom in the universal pursuit of egoism/self-interest by all the State's citizens, a Hobbesian “leviathan,” a decision-theoretic *mega-machine State*, made out of human beings:



On the contrary, however, Kant's ethics starts from the primitive assumption—the ultimate axiom of virtue, the Categorical Imperative—which directly implies that the highest good is a *good will*, acting for the sake of the Categorical Imperative, and also that *we freely can do so, because we ought to do so*, hence that we are NOT essentially egoistic or self-interested, and that we are practically free or autonomous and NOT machines. So, as we saw earlier, there is a direct contradiction between Kant's axiom of right and Kant's ultimate axiom of virtue. It is as if physics were to “discover” empirically that actually, $2+2=5$ (cf. the axiom of right), as opposed to what the pure mathematics, i.e., the basic arithmetic of the natural numbers (cf. the ultimate axiom of virtue), says about that. Therefore, just as pure mathematics trumps physics, since Kantian ethics trumps Kantian neo-Hobbesian liberal political theory, the enabling assumption of Kant's own political philosophy in the *Doctrine of Right* is *false* by virtue of Kant's own ethics.

In this way, again, just as in “What is Enlightenment?,” Kant is being highly philosophically duplicitous and seriously bullshitting us in *The Doctrine of Right*. Now traditionally, it was held by Kant scholars that the doctrine of right is somehow *entailed* by the doctrine of virtue; and recent Kant scholars have managed to recognize that the doctrine of right and the doctrine of virtue are *logically independent of one another* (Guyer 2002, Pogge 2002, Ripstein 2004, Willaschek 2009, Wood 2002). But the amazing fact is, that 200+ years of Kant scholarship on *The Metaphysics of Morals* and *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* has been completely taken in by Kant's bullshit, and and no one, until now, has ever recognized either

- (i) the outright contradiction between Kant's axiom of virtue and his ultimate axiom of right, or
- (ii) the further fact that Kant's ethics directly falsifies his political philosophy.

Surely, only the hegemony of classical (neo-)Hobbesian and Millian (neo)liberal political theory in mainstream post-WW II European and Anglo-American political philosophy can possibly explain this stunning example of apparently permanent professional academic philosophical blindness. *Since the end of WW II, mainstream Anglo-American professional academic political philosophy has all been about (neo)liberalism*, from Rawls and Nozick to yesterday (Finlayson 2015). Yet if I am correct, then the true philosophical children of Kant's *Religion* are the *Frankfurt School Critical theory neo-Marxists*, including Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Axel Honneth (Honneth 2009), and *social anarchists*, including

Thoreau, Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Chomsky, Robert Paul Wolff, and Murray Bookchin. Nevertheless, the impact of the Frankfurt School and social anarchists on mainstream 20th and 21st century Anglo-American professional academic political philosophy, not to mention their impact on mainstream Anglo-American political life since the McCarthy era, except for the very brief New Left flare-up period during the late 1960s and early 70s, alongside the Vietnam War protests, *has been effectively zero* (Kazin 2012).

3. From Enlightenment to Existential Kantian Cosmopolitan Anarchism, By Means of Religion Only Within the Limits of Pure Practical Reason

Here are the key texts in part 3, division 1, sections I-III of *Religion* (Rel 6: 95-102):

I. CONCERNING THE ETHICAL STATE OF NATURE

A *juridico-civil* (political) *state* is the relation of human beings to each other inasmuch as they stand jointly under *public juridical laws* (which are all coercive laws). An *ethico-civil* state is one in which they are united under laws without being coerced, *Le.* under *laws of virtue* alone.

Now, just as the rightful (but not therefore always righteous) *state of nature*, *i.e.* the *juridical state of nature*, is opposed to the first, so is the *ethical state of nature* distinguished from the second. In these two [states of nature] each individual prescribes the law to himself, and there is no external law to which he, along with the others, acknowledges himself to be subject. In both each individual is his own judge, and there is no effective *public* authority with power to determine legitimately, according to laws, what is in given cases the duty of each individual, and to bring about the universal execution of those laws.

In an already existing political community all the political citizens are, as such, still in the *ethical state of nature*, and have the right to remain in it; for it would be a contradiction (in *adjecto*) for the political community to compel its citizens to enter into an ethical community, since the latter entails freedom from coercion in its very concept. Every political community may indeed wish to have available a dominion over minds as well, according to the laws of virtue; for where its means of coercion do not reach, since a human judge cannot penetrate into the depths of other human beings, there the dispositions to virtue would bring about the required result. But woe to the legislator who would want to bring about through coercion a polity directed to ethical ends! For he would thereby not only achieve the very opposite of ethical ends, but also undermine his political ends and render them insecure. – The citizen of the political community therefore remains, so far as the latter's lawgiving authority is concerned, totally free: he may wish to enter with his fellow citizens into an ethical union over and above the political one, or rather remain in a natural state of this sort. Only insofar as an ethical community must rest on *public* laws and have a constitution based on them, must those who freely commit themselves to enter into this state, not [indeed] allow the political power to command them how to order (or not order) such a constitution internally, but allow limitations, namely the condition that nothing be included in this constitution which contradicts the duty of its members as

citizens of the state – even though, if the ethical bond is of the genuine sort, this condition need not cause anxiety.

II. THE HUMAN BEING OUGHT TO LEAVE THE ETHICAL STATE OF NATURE IN ORDER TO BECOME A MEMBER OF AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY

Just as the juridical state of nature is a state of war of every human being against every other, so too is the ethical state of nature one in which the good principle, which resides in each human being, is incessantly attacked by the evil which is found in him and in every other as well. Human beings (as we remarked above) mutually corrupt one another's moral predisposition and, even with the good will of each individual, because of the lack of a principle which unites them, they deviate through their dissensions from the common goal of goodness, as though they were *instruments of evil*, and expose one another to the danger of falling once again under its dominion.

Further, just as the state of a lawless external (brutish) freedom and independence from coercive laws is a state of injustice and of war, each against each, which a human being ought to leave behind in order to enter into a politico-civil state, so is the ethical state of nature a *public feuding* between the principles of virtue and a state of inner immorality which the natural human being ought to endeavor to leave behind as soon as possible.

Now, here we have a duty *sui generis*, not of human beings toward human beings but of the human race toward itself. For every species of rational beings is objectively – in the idea of reason – destined to a common end, namely the promotion of the highest good as a good common to all. But, since this highest moral good will not be brought about solely through the striving of one individual person for his own moral perfection but requires rather a union of such persons into a whole toward that very end, toward a system of well-disposed human beings in which, and through the unity of which alone, the highest moral good can come to pass, yet the idea of such a whole, as a universal republic based on the laws of virtue, differs entirely from all moral laws (which concern what we know to reside within our power), for it is the idea of working toward a whole of which we cannot know whether as a whole it is also in our power: so the duty in question differs from all others in kind and in principle. – We can already anticipate that this duty will need the presupposition of another idea, namely, of a higher moral being through whose universal organization the forces of single individuals, insufficient on their own, are united for a common effect.

III. THE CONCEPT OF AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY IS THE CONCEPT OF A PEOPLE OF GOD UNDER ETHICAL LAWS

If an ethical community is to come into being, all individuals must be subjected to a public legislation, and all the laws binding them must be capable of being regarded as commands of a common lawgiver. Now if the community to be founded is to be a *juridical* one, the mass of people joining in a union must itself be the lawgiver (of constitutional laws), because legislation proceeds from the principle of *limiting the freedom of each to the conditions under which it can coexist with the freedom of everyone else, in conformity with a universal law*, and the universal will thus establishes an external legal constraint. If, however, the community is to be an *ethical* one, the people, as a people, cannot itself be regarded as legislator. For in such a community all the laws are exclusively designed to promote the *morality* of actions (which is something *internal*, and hence cannot be subject to public human laws) whereas these public laws (and in this they constitute a juridical community) are on the contrary directed to the *legality* of actions, which is visible to the eye, and not to (inner) morality which alone is at issue here. There must therefore be

someone other than the people whom we can declare the public lawgiver of an ethical community.

But neither can ethical laws be thought of as proceeding *originally* merely from the will of this superior (as statutes that would not be binding without his prior sanction), for then they would not be ethical laws, and the duty commensurate to them would not be a free virtue but an externally enforceable legal duty. Therefore only such a one can be thought of as the supreme lawgiver of an ethical community, with respect to whom all *true duties*, hence also the ethical, * must be represented as *at the same time* his commands; consequently, he must also be one who knows the heart, in order to penetrate to the most intimate parts of the dispositions of each and everyone and, as must be in every community, give to each according to the worth of his actions. But this is the concept of God as a moral ruler of the world. Hence an ethical community is conceivable only as a people under divine commands, i.e. as a *people of God*, and indeed *in accordance with the laws of virtue*.

Religion was published in the face of governmental religious censorship, and in 1794 Kant also published a very edgy essay in the philosophy of religion, called “The End of All Things.” As a consequence, Kant was officially reprimanded in 1794:

The [...] action against Kant finally took the form of an official letter from King Frederick William [II], dated October 1 and signed on his behalf by Wollner’s hand. It accused Kant, both in the *Religion* and in the shorter treatises, of “misusing” his philosophy to “distort and disparage many of the cardinal and basic teachings of the Holy Scriptures and Christianity”; and it demanded that the philosopher both “give an account of himself” and be guilty of no similar faults in the future, lest he be the object of “unpleasant measures” for his “continuing obstinacy” (Wood 1996).

In other words, Kant was accused of “unprofessional conduct,” and threatened with fairly serious disciplinary measures. For better or worse, he caved in to the pressure, and stopped publishing and lecturing about religion until Frederick William II died.

I think we must frankly say that Kant, personally, was not very courageous. But how many philosophers have actually been courageous enough to risk losing their jobs and/or being imprisoned for their radical beliefs, like Bertrand Russell did for his pacifism during WW I, or even to die for their radical beliefs, like Socrates?³

In any case, what Kant explicitly says in *Religion*, part 3, division 1, sections I-III, is that the “juridico-civil community” (= the State) is inherently contradictory with the existence of an “ethical community,” and also with our exiting “our self-incurred immaturity” and daring to think/know and act freely, for ourselves, and thereby NOT thinking/knowing and acting like a machine—as Kant explicitly states in the amazing last sentence of “What is Enlightenment?” This is because, since we are citizens of the State, and therefore must play this designated functional role within the Leviathan-machine of the State, it requires us all to be *civil functionaries*, in accordance with “the private use of reason.” That is: as citizens of the State, we are *juridico-civil machines* who can argue and write as much as we like, but must ultimately obey and “render unto Caesar,” i.e., coercive political authority, the government, the State; and in so doing, we must also “render unto God,” i.e., religious authority, the priests, the social institution of the Church, aligned with

³ A few; but not many professional academic philosophers. See (Bradatan 2015).

the State. Hence the State stands to the autonomy-driven ethical community as an “ethical state of nature” stands to authentic ethics and morality, which is why we morally *must* exit the State in order to join a cosmopolitan ethical community, the real-world, worldwide realm of ends, i.e., the true Church, not the actual social institution of the Church, that is in reality always aligned with the State, even despite hollow official phrases about the separation of church and state. In contemporary USA, this shows up in The Pledge of Allegiance, memorized and intoned by all school-children: “one nation, under God, etc.”

So, essentially, Kant’s real view is that *if* you assume, as an axiom, that everyone is always and necessarily motivated by psychological and ethical egoism or self-interest and needs to be protected from everyone else in order to pursue her own self-interest, according to the axiom of right, aka the axiom of external freedom, *then and only then* do you need the (neo-)Hobbesian liberal State. And in this State, as per EL, you can argue and write as much as you like, provided that you obey and “render unto Caesar,” i.e., Frederick William II, i.e., coercive political authority, the government, the State, and other coercive State-like institutions like the social institution of the Church. But *if* you realize that actually we are *not* nothing but decision-theoretic, self-interest machines, but, on the contrary, we are all inherently capable of inner freedom and autonomy, obligated by and for the sake of the Categorical Imperative, and all normatively driven by the teleology of our rational human nature, according to the ultimate axiom of virtue, aka the axiom of internal freedom or autonomy, *then* you morally *must* exit your mental slavery and also you morally *must* exit the (neo-)Hobbesian liberal State, in order to join a cosmopolitan ethical community, the real-world worldwide realm of ends on earth, the true Church. Or as Kant puts it explicitly in the titles of *Religion*, sections II and III:

THE HUMAN BEING OUGHT TO LEAVE THE ETHICAL STATE OF NATURE IN ORDER TO BECOME A MEMBER OF AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY

THE CONCEPT OF AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY IS THE CONCEPT OF A PEOPLE OF GOD UNDER ETHICAL LAWS.

In this real-world, worldwide ethical community, i.e., *humanity*, the rational idea of God is nothing more and nothing less than the rational idea of *the highest good*: the good will, with happiness proportioned to moral virtue, extended over all of humanity, on this Earth, which because of its spherical, finite-but-unbounded shape, we all must share together, in an indefinitely extended future. Therefore, in order to join this ethical community you must exit your self-incurred immaturity, and dare to think or know (*Sapere aude!*), and also to act for yourself (according to HDE), and then you should reject and exit the State and other State-like institutions, in order to create and belong to a real-world, worldwide ethical community, *humanity*, in a world without any States or State-like institutions (according to existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism), for God’s (= the highest good’s) sake.

4. Human Antagonism, Hobbesian Cognitive Walls, Reverence for Humanity, and Political Aesthetics

In a seeming paradox, Kant is at once a highly realistic and even *cynical* philosophico-political *social scientist* of human antagonism and also a highly idealistic and even *romantic* philosophico-political *poet* of reverence for humanity:

By “antagonism” I mean the unsocial sociability of men, i.e., their propensity to enter into society, bound together with a mutual opposition which constantly threatens to break up the society. Man has an inclination to associate with others, because in society he feels himself to be more than man, i.e., as more than the developed form of his natural capacities. But he also has a strong propensity to isolate himself from others, because he finds in himself at the same time the unsocial characteristic of wishing to have everything go according to his own wish. Thus he expects opposition on all sides because, in knowing himself, he knows that he, on his own part, is inclined to oppose others. This opposition it is which awakens all his powers, brings him to conquer his inclination to laziness and, propelled by vainglory, lust for power, and avarice, to achieve a rank among his fellows whom he cannot tolerate but from whom he cannot withdraw. Thus are taken the first true steps from barbarism to culture, which consists in the social worth of man; thence gradually develop all talents, and taste is refined; through continued enlightenment the beginnings are laid for a way of thought which can in time convert the coarse, natural disposition for moral discrimination into definite practical principles, and thereby change a society of men driven together by their natural feelings into a moral whole. Without those in themselves unamiable characteristics of unsociability from whence opposition springs-characteristics each man must find in his own selfish pretensions-all talents would remain hidden, unborn in an Arcadian shepherd’s life, with all its concord, contentment, and mutual affection. Men, good-natured as the sheep they herd, would hardly reach a higher worth than their beasts; they would not fill the empty place in creation by achieving their end, which is rational nature. Thanks be to Nature, then, for the incompatibility, for heartless competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess and to rule! Without them, all the excellent natural capacities of humanity would forever sleep, undeveloped. Man wishes concord; but Nature knows better what is good for the race; she wills discord. He wishes to live comfortably and pleasantly; Nature wills that he should be plunged from sloth and passive contentment into labor and trouble, in order that he may find means of extricating himself from them. The natural urges to this, the sources of unsociableness and mutual opposition from which so many evils arise, drive men to new exertions of their forces and thus to the manifold development of their capacities. They thereby perhaps show the ordering of a wise Creator and not the hand of an evil spirit, who bungled in his great work or spoiled it out of envy. (IUH 8: 20-22, underlining added)

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.* I do not need to search for them and merely conjecture them as though they were veiled in obscurity or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence. The first begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense and extends the connection in which I stand into an unbounded magnitude with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into the unbounded times of their periodic motion, their beginning

and their duration. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and presents me in a world which has true infinity but which can be discovered only by the understanding, and I cognize that my connection with that world (and thereby with all those visible worlds as well) is not merely contingent, as in the first case, but universal and necessary. The first view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an *animal creature*, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital force (one knows not how) must give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came. The second, on the contrary, infinitely raises my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as this may be inferred from the purposive determination of my existence by this law, a determination not restricted to the conditions and boundaries of this life but reaching into the infinite. (CPrR 5: 161-162, underlining added)

The basic assumption of the Hobbesian “state-of-nature” is what Kant calls human *antagonism*: universal, inherent human egoism/self-interest, and “unsocial sociability,” namely an inherent and necessary natural tendency towards the Hobbesian “war of all against all.” This assumption, as we have seen, is an essential condition of the doctrine of right, i.e., political (neo)liberalism, since human antagonism propels us into the juridico-civil condition, i.e., the coercive (neo)liberal State. And this State, as the “Doctrine of Right” in the *Metaphysics of Morals* shows, is essentially a mechanism made out of human beings—a *leviathan*, governed by a sovereign coercive power of some kind—that guarantees mutual external freedom and the pursuit of egoistic or self-interested pleasure and the corresponding total state of “happiness,” construed as the totality of instrumentally good consequences for any and all self-interested human animal-machines, that follow from these.

But human egoism and antagonism are not only essential assumptions of political (neo)liberalism, they are a state-of-mind: an *aesthetico-political attitude*, and a *cognitive myth*, vividly expressed by, e.g., William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, and in post-Apocalyptic fiction and post-Apocalyptic movies like *Mad Max: Fury Road*, more generally. The same aesthetico-political attitude and cognitive myth of human egoism and antagonism was originally and perhaps most brilliantly expressed in Dante’s *Inferno*, which of course draws on biblical representations of the Apocalypse. The primary function of the cognitive myth of human egoism and antagonism is to evoke extreme visceral fear and terror, which mechanically motivates our acceptance of coercive (neo)liberal States, so in this way, classical Hobbesian liberalism and neo-Hobbesian (neo)liberalism alike are *politics for a race of devilish biochemical puppets*.

Nevertheless, although the doctrine of Statism both *needs* and also *draws directly on* and *fully exploits* this pre-theoretical aesthetico-political attitude and myth, it is simply *false* that a pre-State or post-State human condition either *logically entails* or *naturally necessitates* human egoism and antagonism. Indeed, in actual fact, in a pre-State or post-State condition, people are about as likely to be mutually respectful, kind, and prepared to provide mutual aid for each other, altruistically, as they are to be antagonistic. Or even *more* likely. This is brilliantly and clearly shown, e.g., by Rebecca Solnit’s recent study of

“disaster communities” in San Francisco, Halifax, Mexico City, New York City, and New Orleans (Solnit 2009).⁴ *So I am saying that human nature is NOT essentially egoistic or antagonistic, and that the human capacity for altruism and mutual respect is innate.* That sounds deeply shocking, doesn't it?

But even if *were not* actually true that we are as likely to be non-egoistic and non-antagonistic, i.e., altruistic, as we are to be egoistic and antagonistic, and even if people were non-egoistic, non-antagonistic, altruistic, and mutually respectful *only very RARELY*, or even if it happened *only ONCE in all human history*, nevertheless it necessarily follows that it is *really possible* for people in a pre-State or post-State condition to be non-egoistic, non-antagonistic, and mutually respectful. And this self-evidently shows that the thesis of human egoism and antagonism *is false*, and indeed nothing but *a cognitive myth*, since that thesis claims to be a logically or naturally *necessary truth* about human nature. *Indeed, Solnit has shown this empirically, not just for one actual case, but for five actual cases.* Therefore, we need to face up to this self-evidently sound argument:

1. As a matter of modal logic, one actual counterexample undermines a supposed necessary truth.
2. Given Solnit's five actual-world cases, it is simply *false* that human beings are *necessarily* egoistic and antagonistic.
3. As a matter of modal logic, the actual entails the really possible.
4. Therefore there is *no necessity for us*, as rational human animals and real human persons, to enter into the juridico-civil condition, and correspondingly *it is really possible for us all* to reject and exit the State and other State-like institutions, in order to create and belong to a real-world, worldwide ethical community, i.e., the worldwide web of humanity, in a world without any States or State-like institutions.

Again:

We freely created the State and Statelike-institutions; therefore, *we* really can freely reject and exit the State and other State-like institutions, in order to create and belong to a real-world, worldwide ethical community, i.e., the worldwide web of humanity, in a world without any States or State-like institutions.

I know from sad personal experience, and 20+ years of teaching Introductory Ethics, however, that presenting this argument to people who have grown up in neoliberal democratic states, literally boggles their minds. It is as if, in the face of a lifetime of powerful people telling them that $2+2=5$, they are suddenly presented with self-evident proof that $2+2=4$. They see it, are boggled and deeply disoriented, and then, like brainwashed characters out of *The Manchurian Candidate*, they quickly collapse back into rotely asserting some or another version of the myth of human egoism and antagonism. They are, in effect, *The Hobbesian Candidates*.

Actually, as it turns out, the cognitive causes of what I will call *The Hobbesian Candidates Effect* lie in the empirically well-confirmed sociological and psychological phenomena known as *the persistence of false beliefs* and *the backfire effect*. (Nyhan and

⁴ I'm grateful to Mark Pittenger for drawing my attention to this important book.

Reifler 2010, Lewandowsky et al. 2012). The persistence of false beliefs and the backfire effect, in turn, are sub-species of what I call *cognitive walls*.

A cognitive wall is an entrenched or habitual belief, memory, stereotypical mental image, feeling, or emotion that acts as *an effective screen against reality and the truth* as it actually presented by sense perception, reliable testimonial evidence, or rational argument.

A simple, morally benign, and non-institutional example of a cognitive wall is the fact that ordinary, healthy people with normal stereoscopic vision all have their noses right in the middle of their visual fields, yet normally don't see them at all. Hence the familiar admonishing comment, "it's as plain as the nose on your face!" Of course, the nose-blindness phenomenon can be easily corrected by someone else's touching (or punching) your nose, or by self-consciously touching your own nose, crossing your eyes inwards, or looking in a mirror.

Nevertheless other cases of cognitive walls, by sharp contrast, are not only extremely hard to correct, but also morally and politically malignant, precisely because they flow from our belonging to neoliberal democratic states. Indeed, as in Orwell's *1984*, and in real-world 21st century sociopolitical life, a significant and indeed massive amount of time, money, and media-driven effort in neoliberal democratic states is devoted precisely to building up, maintaining, and reinforcing cognitive walls. Tristan Bridges writes that

[f]acts about all manner of things have made headlines recently as the Trump administration continues to make statements, reports, and policies at odds with things we know to be true. Whether it's about the size of his inauguration crowd, patently false and fear-mongering inaccuracies about transgender persons in bathrooms, rates of violent crime in the U.S., or anything else, lately it feels like the facts don't seem to matter. The inaccuracies and misinformation continue despite the earnest attempts of so many to correct each falsehood after it is made. It's exhausting. But why is it happening? [...]

There is more than one reason this is happening. But, one reason I think the alternative facts industry has been so effective has to do with a concept social scientists call the "backfire effect." As a rule, misinformed people do not change their minds once they have been presented with facts that challenge their beliefs. But, beyond simply not changing their minds when they should, research shows that they are likely to become more attached to their mistaken beliefs. The factual information "backfires." When people don't agree with you, research suggests that bringing in facts to support your case might actually make them believe you less. In other words, fighting the ill-informed with facts is like fighting a grease fire with water. It seems like it should work, but it's actually going to make things worse.

To study this, Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler (2010) conducted a series of experiments. They had groups of participants read newspaper articles that included statements from politicians that supported some widespread piece of misinformation. Some of the participants read articles that included corrective information that immediately followed the inaccurate statement from the political figure, while others did not read articles containing corrective information at all.

Afterward, they were asked a series of questions about the article and their personal opinions about the issue. Nyhan and Reifler found that how people responded to the factual

corrections in the articles they read varied systematically by how ideologically committed they already were to the beliefs that such facts supported. Among those who believed the popular misinformation in the first place, more information and actual facts challenging those beliefs did not cause a change of opinion—in fact, it often had the effect of strengthening those ideologically grounded beliefs (Bridges 2017).

In other words, the backfire effect shows that cognitive walls, especially those concerning persistent false beliefs, memories, stereotypical mental images, feelings, or emotions generated by media-driven, sociopolitical mechanisms in contemporary neoliberal states, are *self-reinforcing*. The more you try to confront a person's cognitive walls with contrary correct facts, the higher and thicker he builds his walls, without even knowing what he is doing and fully convinced that he is in the right. So cognitive walls are the basic vehicles of *self-induced, self-deceiving mental slavery*.

The reason for this, clearly, is that a person's cognitive walls are essentially of two kinds:

- (i) walls concerning *his sense of individual identity as a person*, and
- (ii) walls concerning *his sense of group identity as a card-carrying member of some important social community or institution*.

Breaking through or tearing down those cognitive walls in any way, therefore, would mean that the subject would have to undertake a fundamental change of heart or a fundamental shift in group allegiance—in effect, *a cognitive-affective revolution*—and most people are desperately afraid of doing this.

Now Statists generally, including all tyrants and totalitarians, but especially including all classical Hobbesian liberals and neo-Hobbesian (neo)liberals, desperately want and need you to believe in the cognitive myth of human egoism and antagonism, so that they can frighten and terrorize you into the juridico-civil condition, whereby *you* give up your moral integrity and autonomy and *they* immorally control your life. So the aesthetico-political attitude and myth of human egoism and antagonism really *is* a Hobbesian cognitive *myth*, a pernicious, politically expedient Hobbesian cognitive *illusion*: moreover, it is nothing but a deeply ingrained, deeply enslaving *Hobbesian cognitive wall*, virtually impossible to dislodge or undermine by conceptual reasoning alone.

Here it is crucial to remember that what holds cognitive walls together, and constitutes *the psychological bricks and mortar* of cognitive walls, is a set of *affective facts about human minds*: facts about our desires, feelings, and emotions. In turn, all affective facts about human minds belong to what Kant (following Baumgarten) called the philosophical science of *aesthetics* (CPR A21/B35-36). Therefore, the critical study of, e.g., the Hobbesian cognitive wall of human egoism and human antagonism, falls under the existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist philosophical science of *political aesthetics*.

From the standpoint of existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist political aesthetics, the only way to debunk this Hobbesian cognitive myth *decisively*, and, correspondingly, the only way to break through this Hobbesian cognitive wall *effectively*, is to appeal to a fundamentally *different* aesthetico-political attitude. This attitude is what I

call *reverence (Ehrfurcht) for humanity*, that is, awe, amazement, and wonder directed at human nature and the human animal, as a real human *person* possessing dignity, therefore as both the subject and object of respect and kindness for all humanity, and a transcendently free, practically free autonomous agent, guided by and acting for the sake of the Categorical Imperative, “the moral law within me.”

This aesthetico-political attitude of reverence for humanity is fully analogous to what I have called *natural piety*, namely, reverence directed to the non-human natural world, “the starry heavens above me,” which is also an experience of the sublime, a kind of *proto-respect*, applied to all aspects of the non-human natural world, as filled with teleological structure, and the real possibility of organismic life, emergent mind, and emergent agency (Hanna 2016/2017). Moreover, as Kant argues in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, our experience of the sublime in nature is directly, i.e., non-conceptually, connected by us to our dignity and our capacity for autonomy (CPJ 5: 244-278).

Given the aesthetico-political attitude of reverence for humanity, it becomes immediately self-evident that neither the pre-State nor post-State conditions entail or naturally necessitate the Hobbesian state-of-nature and war of all against all. That is, *as soon as you freely adopt this attitude*, it becomes self-evident that it is *really possible* that we will act non-egoistically/non-self-interestedly and non-antagonistically, on the basis of mutual respect and kindness for humanity. Therefore, any fully compelling rational argument for radical enlightenment or existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchism is going to have to appeal, in an essentially non-conceptual way, to reverence for humanity, just as any fully compelling argument for scientific pietism in the philosophy of nature and natural science is going to have to appeal, in an essentially non-conceptual way, to natural piety.

Such an appeal to natural piety would certainly include, e.g., early Romantic nature painting, and early Romantic nature poetry and (in a brilliantly negative way) *Frankenstein*: Caspar Friedrich, J.M. Turner, the Shelleys, Wordsworth, Coleridge, et al. This art and its corresponding fundamental aesthetico-scientific attitude of natural piety directly and essentially non-conceptually undermines *the natural-mechanistic attitude* and its Baconian/Cartesian “mastery of nature.”

Now what would be the aesthetico-political analogue of early Romantic nature painting/poetry/*Frankenstein*, such that it is a direct *cognitive counterpoise* to the Hobbesian aesthetico-political attitude, cognitive myth, and cognitive wall of human egoism and antagonism?

In attempting to answer this question, we face a hard problem. The hard problem is that there are literally *mountains* of books, poetry, art, movies, etc., conveying “stirring affirmations of the human spirit,” yet most or even all of this cultural material is *kitsch* in the sense of this term that implies moral inauthenticity and bullshit. There is some interesting conceptual complexity here, because the term *kitsch* is frequently used by sociocultural/political elitists and snobs, which in turn, ironically, implies *moral*

*inauthenticity and bullshit on the side of those who apply that term to others.*⁵ But having noted that interesting complexity, I will lay it aside for the purposes of this essay. In any case, I strongly suspect that many or even most jaded modern neoliberal readers of the *Critique of Practical Reason* read Kant’s reverential “moral law within me” text as 18th century *kitsch*.

The upshot is that the aesthetico-political counterpoise to the Hobbesian aesthetico-political attitude, cognitive myth, and cognitive wall of human egoism and antagonism, *i.e., the aesthetic and artistic representation of reverence for humanity*, has to be *non-kitsch* and *also* affectively powerful enough to shock jaded modern neoliberals, and awaken them from their fearful, terrorized dogmatic slumbers. Hence, as existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchists, our aesthetico-political task is this:

We must find find the aesthetic and artistic equivalent of early Romantic nature painting/poetry/*Frankenstein*, expressing reverence for humanity, that is NOT *kitsch*, and also powerful enough to jolt jaded modern neoliberals out of their fearful/terrorized dogmatic slumbers, so that they can break through their Hobbesian cognitive wall, and make progress towards heavy-duty enlightenment, HDE.

Solnit’s *A Paradise Built in Hell* is a very good starting-place. But here is my worry about it. Consider this brief “Publishers Weekly” review posted on the Amazon site for her book:

Natural and man-made disasters can be utopias that showcase human solidarity and point the way to a freer society, according this stimulating contrarian study. Solnit (*River of Shadows*) reproves civil defense planners, media alarmists and Hollywood directors who insist that disasters produce terrified mobs prone to looting, murder and cannibalism unless controlled by armed force and government expertise. Surveying disasters from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake to 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, she shows that the typical response to calamity is spontaneous altruism, self-organization and mutual aid, with neighbors and strangers calmly rescuing, feeding and housing each other. Indeed, the main problem in such emergencies, she contends, is the elite panic of officials who clamp down with National Guardsmen and stifling regulations. Solnit falters when she generalizes her populist brief into an anarchist critique of everyday society that lapses into fuzzy what-ifs and uplifting volunteer testimonials. Still, this vividly written, cogently argued book makes a compelling—and timely—case for the ability of ordinary people to collectively surmount the direst of challenges (Amazon Publishers Weekly 2017).

In the underlined sentence, you can literally *see* the cognitive-affective collapse of the reviewer back into the Hobbesian cognitive myth of human egoism and antagonism, and of (neo-)Hobbesian neoliberal Statism. You can literally *see* the reviewer reinforcing his cognitive wall with *more* affective bricks and mortar. Again, that’s the backfire effect.

⁵ Many thanks to Lucas Lazzaretti for pointing this out to me—he had, specifically, Adorno’s elitist, snobbish music criticism in mind.

The problem here, I think, is that Solnit's book, for all its excellence and self-evidence, unfortunately does *not* provide the cognitive equivalent of a bedside alarm going off at 5am.

Therefore, in order to jolt jaded modern neoliberals out of their dogmatic slumbers, I think that we need to appeal to something even *stronger* than empirically well-grounded, beautifully-written, philosophically compelling non-fiction like Solnit's. More specifically, I think we need to appeal to *resistance* aesthetics and *resistance* art. This can be found, e.g., in the music of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, John Lee Hooker, Lightnin Hopkins, Muddy Waters, many other guitar-playing poets of protest and the blues,⁶ and more recently in the work of radical political hip-hoppers, rockers, and rappers, including

The Roots
Rage Against the Machine
Public Enemy
Cyprus Hill, and
Prophets of Rage.

It can also be found in the best dystopian science fiction, that represents people rebelling against future totalitarian societies, including

Zamyatin's *We*
Huxley's *Brave New World*
Orwell's *1984*
Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and
The Matrix.

And it can also be found in classic political films about resistance, including:

Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*
Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*
Salt of the Earth
Lonely Are the Brave
Costa Gravas's *Z*, and
Salles's *The Motorcycle Diaries*.

Correspondingly, the best *anti-Nazi*, *anti-fascist* resistance-art has the same basic character, including

Rossellini's *Rome: Open City*, and
Melville's *Army of Shadows*

And this reminds us of earlier anti-imperialist or anti-monarchist resistance-art or resistance-legends, like Spartacus and Robin Hood. These are all, in effect, just like Solnit's real-world case-studies, representations of *emergent existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchist communities*.

⁶ Many thanks to Mark Pittenger for drawing my attention to the very powerful aesthetico-political impact of radical music, in some ways even more powerful than radical books and radical movies. The same basic point is made by Kazin in *American Dreamers*. Kazin also notes the sad irony that since the collapse and downward spiral of the American Left in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, radical music, books, and movies are virtually *all* that remains of genuinely radical politics in the USA today, at "the nadir of the historical left" (Kazin 2012, p. 276).

Resistance-aesthetics and resistance-art evoke our reverence for humanity, and clearly show us that outside the State, *we really can be* mutually respectful, and kind, and *truly* free and *deeply* happy, by way of autonomy and self-fulfillment. *But Statists have a vested interest in blinding us to this by building cognitive walls inside us.* So that is my first basic point in this section, which I will repeat for emphasis:

Statists generally, including all tyrants and totalitarians, but especially including all classical Hobbesian liberals and neo-Hobbesian (neo)liberals, desperately want and need you to believe in the cognitive myth of human egoism and antagonism, and create a cognitive wall to screen out any countervailing evidence or criticism, so that they can frighten and terrorize you into the juridico-civil condition, whereby *you* give up your moral integrity and autonomy and *they* immorally control your life.

And that leads directly to my second basic point here, which is this:

Even over and above Solnit's brilliant empirical study, *A Paradise Built in Hell*, the best resistance-aesthetics and resistance-art self-evidently *show us* what humanity essentially is and can be, in direct opposition to tyrannical, totalitarian, classical Hobbesian liberal, or neo-Hobbesian neoliberal political control, *outside* the coercive authoritarianism of the State.

And those two points together lead to my third and final basic point in this section, which is that the best resistance-aesthetics and resistance-art make it as self-evident as a bedside alarm-clock going off at 5am that

the Hobbesian aesthetico-political attitude, cognitive myth, and cognitive wall of human egoism and antagonism, especially including the very idea of the Hobbesian state of nature and war of all against all, *is nothing but a pernicious, politically expedient cognitive myth, which we must debunk, and a cognitive wall, which we must break through and cognitively liberate ourselves from,* if we want to be able to pursue HDE.

What we are looking for, in fact, is *rage*: rage *against* coercion and oppression, and rage *for* human autonomy and human dignity.

5. Conclusion: *Rage for Humanity*

Kant explicitly says that the contradiction between (i) the juridico-civil axioms and laws of right, and (ii) the ethical ultimate axiom of virtue, the Categorical Imperative, in all its basic formulations, and including the moral principles that fall under them, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the corresponding contradiction between (i*) the juridico-civil demand to obey, even if you are allowed to argue and write as much as you like, and (ii*) the categorical ethical demand to reject and exit the State for God's sake, "need not cause anxiety." But for the reasons we have seen in sections 1, 2, and 3, sadly, *this is probably the biggest bullshit-line in the history of political philosophy and political theology.*

To his credit, Kant *also* says, however, that we naturally experience reverence for humanity, and that this fundamental aesthetic, ethical, and natural-religious attitude strongly motivates our wholehearted pursuit of heavy-duty enlightenment or HDE. But as we have also seen in section 4, we cannot follow our reverential hearts to HDE unless we debunk the Hobbesian cognitive myth, and break through the Hobbesian wall, of human egoism and human antagonism, and the Hobbesian state of nature along with its war of all against all. And although Solnit's *A Paradise Built in Hell* makes this point as self-evidently as $2+2=4$, nevertheless cognitive myths *die hard*, via the persistence of false beliefs; and cognitive walls are self-reinforcing, via the backfire effect. In turn, these are, at bottom, *affective facts about human minds*. Correspondingly, political aesthetics shows us that anything even remotely resembling *kitsch* simply will not do the job, due to its aesthetic inauthenticity.

Hence, it appears that the only truly effective way to debunk the Hobbesian cognitive myth and break through the Hobbesian cognitive wall, is by means of *resistance-aesthetics* and *resistance-art*. So, as proponents of radical enlightenment and as existential Kantian cosmopolitan anarchists, we must go directly from "What is Enlightenment," via the self-evidence of Solnit's *A Paradise Built in Hell*, to the cognitive 5 am wake-up calls of Woody Guthrie and Muddy Waters, The Roots and Prophets of Rage, *We* and *1984*, *Salt of the Earth* and *Z*, then finally onward, outward, and upward to the shining philosophical, ethical, and political daylight of HDE. In other words, *we must rage for humanity*.

And then rationally hope for the best.⁷

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⁷ I'm grateful to the participants in the *Critique & Contemporary Kantian Philosophy* project's 2016 workshop in Mainz GE, for their very helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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