

Bernard Yack

## TAKING FREEDOM SERIOUSLY KANTIAN ETHICS VERSUS THE ETHICS OF KANT'S

*ABSTRACT: No understanding of morality has more zealous or influential defenders among academic philosophers than Kant's. Yet as Michael Rosen demonstrates in The Shadow of God, there is a sense in which Kant's critics take his conception of freedom more seriously nowadays than his defenders. As a result, contemporary versions of "Kantian ethics" often end up challenging what Rosen calls "the ethics of Kant," not just the claims of rival moral theories. Rosen supports this surprising conclusion with some powerful arguments, showing that you cannot make sense of Kantian moral philosophy or its extraordinary impact on modern philosophy while detaching it from Kant's conception of transcendental freedom in this way. But in doing so, he tends to exaggerate the continuity between Kant and the Idealist philosophers that he inspired. Thinkers like Schiller, Schelling, and Hegel took Kant's concept of transcendental freedom far more seriously than defenders of Kantian ethics do today. But precisely because they did so, they felt compelled to address a whole new set of problems, problems that could only be solved by radically transforming the conception of freedom that they received from Kant.*

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Bernard Yack, yack@brandeis.edu, Department of Politics, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA 02453, is the author, *inter alia*, of *The Longing for Total Revolution* (1986, Berkeley), *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community* (Chicago, 2012), and *The Faces of Moral Pluralism: Five Portraits from European Literature* (forthcoming).

Many intellectuals lead happy lives within the confines of the world that Kant bequeathed them. Proud children of Kant's Enlightenment, they "dare to know," but carefully monitor themselves lest they be tempted to pursue targets of knowledge not suited to human reasoning. Kant is not their master. They deny him the kind of authority that led Scholastic thinkers to describe Aristotle as "the philosopher." They honor him, instead, as the man who set us straight about the kind of questions we should pose, the critical thinker who taught us which moral and scientific gardens to cultivate and how to make them grow.

There are, however, many other intellectuals who find Kant-world a far less comfortable place in which to make one's home. They, too, are inclined to imagine the modern condition in Kantian terms; but they find that condition disordered and off-putting. While these residents of Kantian modernity may be "confidently rational," Iris Murdoch (1970, 79-81) laments, they are "increasingly aware of their alienation from the material universe which their discoveries reveal: and since they are not Hegelians (Kant, not Hegel, has provided Western ethics with its dominating image), their alienation is without cure."

Clearly, these two descriptions of life in a Kantian world reflect conflicting evaluations of the modern condition. Murdoch, like many other critics of liberal modernity, does not like the world that Kant bequeathed us. No wonder she finds it so alienating! But her depiction of that world reflects a distinctive understanding of the content of Kant's legacy, not just its value. What makes this condition so alienating for her and others like her is their discomfort with a part of that legacy that most contemporary Kantians seem inclined to disavow or ignore: his defense of transcendental freedom and the exalted vision of human dignity that it inspires. Kant's celebration of an understanding of humanity that, by definition, can be neither experienced nor

manifested in the material world is bound to introduce a certain degree of division and alienation in our lives. If few self-styled Kantians are troubled by this sense of alienation nowadays, it is largely because they have found ways to discard or bracket something that Kant thought of as one of his greatest achievements.

One of the many virtues of Michael Rosen's new book on Kant and the German idealists is the spotlight that it shines on this rather odd situation. No ethical position can currently claim more zealous or influential defenders among academic philosophers than Kant's. Yet, as Rosen demonstrates, Kant's critics seem to take his conception of freedom more seriously nowadays than his defenders. Few of these guardians of the Kantian legacy in moral philosophy are as outspoken as Allen Wood, who declares that a "positive doctrine about noumenal freedom" should be "quarantined from Kantian ethics as strictly as if it carried the plague" (Wood 2008, 138; quoted in Rosen 2022, 68).<sup>1</sup> But most would agree with John Rawls that any viable account of Kantian ethics must abandon the many "dualisms"—reason/desire, duty/inclination, freedom/natural necessity, noumenon/phenomenon—with which Kant encumbers his moral philosophy (Rawls 1999, 264; quoted in Rosen 2022, 108). "Kantian ethics," Rosen (2022, 105) concludes, guards itself against "the ethics of Kant," not just the claims of rival moral theories.

So what? Why should we care about losing track of Kant's own moral philosophy in the shadows cast by currently popular versions of Kantian ethics? Rosen answers this question in three different ways, offering interpretive, historical, and critical arguments.

Rosen's interpretive argument insists that we lose sight of what is most original and distinctive about Kant's moral philosophy when we abandon his conception of transcendental freedom and the dualisms that it inspires. His point here is not just about fidelity to the words in the texts that Kant wrote. No one contests that Kant explicitly invokes a conception of contra-

causal freedom, postulates about God, and a noumenal “kingdom of ends” in his moral thought. The question is whether, as Rawls (1999, 264) puts it, “what is distinctive to his theory,” its “characteristic structure” and “moral force,” is better focused when “reformulated within the scope of an empirical theory.” Rosen makes a strong case that it is not, that reformulating Kantian moral philosophy in this way turns a powerful theory about autonomy and human dignity into a far from reliable device for resolving moral dilemmas.

Rosen’s historical argument suggests that you cannot make sense of the great outburst of philosophic speculation unleashed by Kant’s critical philosophy if you lose sight of his understanding of transcendental freedom and the special value of humanity. Here Rosen stands on very solid ground indeed. For Kant’s understanding of moral autonomy clearly provides the starting point for the great German Idealists, the foundation of their radical notions about the primacy of practical reason. But, one must immediately add, it is also the starting point for theories that radically reshape Kant’s understanding of the relationship between human freedom and the world. Unlike contemporary Kantians, the German idealists were not content to cultivate the fields of practical and theoretical knowledge that Kant laid out. Precisely because they took transcendental freedom and the dichotomies dismissed by contemporary Kantians so seriously, they found themselves facing the kind of alienation from the world described by Murdoch. They immediately began searching for ways of alleviating this alienation of our humanity from worldly experience.

That search led, most influentially, to Hegel’s ideas about the actualization of freedom in history. But I think Rosen overstates the parallels between Hegel’s theory and Kant’s thinking about history. Rosen, I shall argue, exaggerates the continuity between Kant and his Idealist heirs because he misses the consequences of the difference between starting out from and ending up

with the Kantian dichotomy between human freedom and natural necessity. The dichotomies that helped Kant develop new solutions to old problems confronted his heirs with a whole new set of problems to solve.

But Rosen needs a third, critical argument to support his case for taking Kant's own understanding of moral freedom seriously. For contemporary defenders of Kantian ethics have little reason to heed his interpretive and historical arguments. Most believe that Kant was inspired by moral ideas very similar to their own and expend considerable energy to justify that belief. But, as Rosen notes, it is a philosophical position, a Kantian approach to ethics, that they are committed to defending, not the philosopher who inspired that position. If, in the end, it could be demonstrated that Kant's own moral vision departs from theirs, then their response might well be: so much the worse for Kant! As for Rosen's historical argument, they might well treat it as proof of their wisdom in steering clear of Kant's conception of transcendental freedom. I have no doubt that most of them would be happy to sacrifice a more accurate account of the route philosophy took to get from Kant to Hegel in order to deter us from setting out on that road again. If Rosen's defense of Kant's own moral philosophy is to challenge the proponents of Kantian ethics, it must challenge them on their own ground: the construction of a viable approach to ethics. Rosen does indeed issue such a challenge in arguing that Kantian ethics is problematic as an ethical theory, not just as an interpretation of Kant's deepest insights. For me, the most interesting points in this critical argument are implicit in some of the claims that Rosen defends. But, as I shall try to show, it is well worth the effort to tease them out.

### *Two Conceptions of Freedom*

That currently popular versions of Kantian ethics are based on a very selective reading of Kant's works is relatively easy to demonstrate. As Rosen makes clear, this interpretation of Kant's moral philosophy makes everything hinge on a few passages of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the almost pragmatic account of freedom that they seem to offer. The more expansive conception of freedom developed in Kant's more systematic work, *The Critique of Practical Reason*—as well as in other passages of the *Groundwork*—has to be downplayed, ignored, or reinterpreted in order to come up with this version of Kant's moral philosophy.

But fidelity to the words and rhetoric of Kant's texts is not the key issue here. The question is whether this selective reading clarifies or obscures the new way of thinking about morality that Kant believed he had discovered. The defenders of Kantian ethics see themselves as protecting Kant's moral insights from Kant himself, even when, like Rawls (1979, 97) they recast the categorical imperative as what he calls the "CI procedure." Such reformulations of Kant might be easy to mock, say, by rewriting his lofty conclusion to *The Critique of Practical Reason*: "two things fill the mind with awe; the starry sky above me and [the CI procedure] in my breast." But the point of talking about the categorical imperative as a procedure is to bring Kant's language back down to earth. The frissons of sublimity, the suggestions of a connection to some higher plane of existence, that often accompany Kant's description of the moral law obscure what Rawls and most proponents of Kantian ethics see as his greatest achievement: the justification of a new model of moral reasoning. They believe that cleaning away these soul-stirring encumbrances will help us appreciate and employ that new model of moral reasoning. They therefore see themselves as promoting Kant's moral ideas precisely by deflating them.

But they perform this service to Kant only if their clean-up crews remove from Kant's moral philosophy nothing but "encumbrances": verbal slips, rhetorical flights, reluctance to

abandon familiar, outmoded ways of speaking, and the like. Rosen persuasively argues that this is not the case, that the polishers of Kantian moral philosophy scrub away the outlines of the new way of thinking about morality that inspired Kant's moral philosophy. Their elaborate efforts to uncover a new "decision procedure for ethics" in Kant's works, Rosen (2022, 25) concludes, "enlist him in a project that is ours, not his."

The project of Kantian ethics was to use the categorical imperative as a test for decisions that generates convincing first-order moral judgments while connecting them back to a persuasive general picture of moral action. I offer an alternative interpretation by approaching Kant's texts from the opposite direction: not as a matter of applying a distinctive kind of moral reasoning but of responding to a distinctive kind of moral value. (Ibid., 129-30)

In Rosen's interpretation of Kant's moral philosophy, our freedom is not just the condition that allows us to engage in and demand from others a certain form of moral reasoning; it is the quality that compels us to respect each other as bearers of an absolute value. On this account, "the different ways in which free (but embodied) moral agents must show respect towards free (but embodied) moral agents" represents the core of "Kant's picture of moral duty" (Rosen 2022, 108). That picture is grounded in the idea of "transcendentally free human agency" and its "absolute value" (ibid.).

In a way, Rosen is suggesting that the defenders of Kantian ethics get Kant's moral philosophy backwards. They treat our consciousness of moral freedom as the condition that allows us to engage in the forms of moral reasoning associated with Kant's categorical

imperative. Rosen, in contrast, treats those forms of reasoning as aids in imagining what it is required to express a free, but non-arbitrary will. It is a mistake, from his point of view, to treat the categorical imperative as a procedure that will provide us determinate resolutions of our moral dilemmas. Instead, those forms of moral reasoning help us identify how to treat people respectfully: imagine your maxim as a general rule; treat peoples as ends in themselves and never merely as means; and so on. Like Rousseau, Kant believes that people will do the right thing when they get into the right frame of mind, which allows themselves to imagine themselves as bearers of a free, but non-arbitrary will (Rosen 2022, 126-28).

How does Rosen's interpretation of Kant's moral philosophy stack up against the rival version defended by proponents of Kantian ethics? It certainly engages far more of the letter and spirit of Kant's critical writings, even without considering his deep dive into what Kant has to say about God's role in his moral philosophy. Indeed, it follows along a path that Kant laid out pretty well. That one has to work so hard to clear this path shows just how powerful an influence the proponents of Kantian ethics have had on our image of Kant. Their real problem with an interpretation like Rosen's is the purported untenability of the conception of transcendental freedom on which it is based, not its misrepresentation of Kant. To dislodge their version of Kant's moral philosophy one would have to demonstrate either the tenability of that conception of freedom or the untenability of the conception of moral reasoning which they associate with Kantian ethics. Not surprisingly, Rosen chooses the second of these two options. However, as we shall see, he also implies that the defenders of Kantian ethics may themselves be relying on something like a transcendental conception of freedom without acknowledging it to themselves.

*From Kant to Hegel*

Rosen's historical argument—that you cannot make sense of the most important developments in German idealism unless you take Kant's own conception of transcendental freedom seriously—seems unimpeachable to me. Philosophers like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel did not turn to Kant for help in resolving their moral dilemmas. They turned to him for a non-dogmatic demonstration of human autonomy and the special value that it bestowed on human existence. No one has ever taken Kant's understanding of freedom more seriously than the German Idealists of the turn of the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, these philosophers were decidedly not content to lead their lives within the confines of the world that they inherited from Kant. Ironically, their acceptance of Kant's strictures on the speculative use of theoretical reason set off one of the greatest outbursts of philosophic speculation in Western history. Kant's defense of transcendental freedom provided them with a new starting point for philosophical speculation, the primacy of practical reason, rather than a guide to the boundaries within which human reason effectively operates. Far from cultivating the moral and scientific gardens that Kant laid out, they went searching for virgin forests to clear. Taking Kant's understanding of freedom seriously opened entirely new questions for them, precisely because it so thoroughly settled old ones.

One of the most important of these questions concerns the relationship between Kant's exalted sense of humanity and our worldly existence. Vesting our humanity in our irrefutable, but unprovable capacity for transcendental freedom protected it from increasingly skeptical arguments about its unique character and value. But it did so in a way that made it impossible to manifest or experience our humanity anywhere but in our own minds. Indeed, Kant's dichotomies not only drove a wedge between our humanity and the world, it opened a gap between our humanity and ourselves. For, as Rosen (2022, 214) notes, Kant's "conception of

morality as freedom can overcome the separation of morality from the self at a very high price indeed—by adopting a conception of freedom in which the self is separated from its own empirical nature.”

Kant was willing to pay that price, as he made clear in his rejection of Schiller’s plea to recognize our humanity in graceful actions that follow our natural inclinations as well as the dignified actions that restrain them (Rosen 2022, 212).<sup>2</sup> His followers were not. “Dichotomy,” Hegel declared in his first published book (1801), “is the source of the need for philosophy.” We need “a philosophy which will recompense nature for the mishandling suffered in Kant’s and Fichte’s systems, and set reason in harmony with nature, not by having it renounce itself or become an insipid imitator of nature, but by reason freely casting itself into nature out of its own inner strength” (Hegel 1801 [1977], 83 and 91). Or as Schiller put it in his famous essay, *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, the wholeness that we envy in nature, small children, and less developed peoples represents something that we “once were” and “what we should become again . . . by means of our reason and freedom” (Schiller 1795 [1966], 85). Kant’s heirs wanted to close the gap between our humanity and the world that his defense of transcendental freedom opened up. But they wanted to do so on the foundation of Kant’s new conception of freedom. As a result, they felt compelled to search for ways of reimagining the world in terms of our freedom, rather than, as with most Enlightenment thinkers, the other way round. Hegel’s philosophy of history, with its account of freedom as a self-actualizing as well as a self-governing force, is the most systematic and influential product of that search.<sup>3</sup>

According to this view, Hegel’s philosophy of history is a radical reformulation of the premises that inspired them—but for Rosen it is a further development of Kant’s reflections on moral freedom in the world. As he indicates by his book’s subtitle (*Kant, Hegel, and the Passage*

*from Heaven to History*), he sees the movement from Kant to Hegel as part of a continuing development by which responsibility for our moral development passes from “heaven to history.” I believe that Rosen overstates the parallels between Kant’s and Hegel’s ideas on this subject. Of course, both develop progressive theories of history grounded in an identification of freedom with moral autonomy. But, for Kant, progress is measured by the extent to which happiness or satisfaction coincides with desert. For Hegel, progress is measured by the extent to which our freedom is manifest in our practices and institutions. Happiness or satisfaction with our lot has nothing to do with progress. Indeed, Hegel (1975, 79) goes so far as to say that although history is the story of the actualization of our freedom in the world, that story is a tale “in which the periods of happiness are written on blank pages.” Kant’s understanding of history, as Rosen emphasizes, represents a response to traditional questions about the existence of evil in a rationally and benignly governed world. If we work together dutifully, then we can make the world a better place where it is increasingly unlikely that we will be the cause of each other’s unhappiness. Hegel’s understanding of history, in contrast, represents a response to concerns about the alienation of our humanity from the world. It charts the increasing manifestation of our freedom in the world rather than our increasing satisfaction with our place in it.

In short, Rosen seems to overlook the way in which taking Kant’s understanding of freedom seriously led Hegel, and most of the famous German idealists, to try to move beyond the dichotomies between freedom and natural necessity that grounded it. Kant envisioned a future in which two separate conditions, our moral freedom and our happiness in the world, may increasingly coincide. He never imagined a condition, as Hegel did, in which our moral freedom would become manifest to us in that world.

I can think of a number of reasons for Rosen's overstatement of the continuity between Kant's and Hegel's thinking on freedom and history. First of all, I suspect that like many of us who struggle to get other scholars to take Hegel as seriously we do, Rosen might have been tempted to try to make Hegel more palatable by associating his ideas more closely with generally admired figures like Kant. We used to be able to rely on Marx to fill that role. But with the decline of interest in Marx's ideas, we have lost our most potent means of engaging the sympathetic interest of skeptical readers.

Second, and more seriously, the rather Catholicizing or demonic view of alienation that Rosen borrows from Iris Murdoch makes it hard to see the role that it played in driving German idealists to push beyond the dichotomies that defined Kant's philosophy of freedom. Murdoch declares, in the long passage that Rosen quotes to introduce the concept of alienation, that we are "living in the age of the Kantian man, or Kantian man-God." "The chief characteristic of this phase of philosophy can be briefly stated: Kant abolished God and made man God in His stead." "In fact," Murdoch concludes, "Kant's man already received a glorious incarnation more than a century earlier: his proper name is Lucifer" (Murdoch 1970, 89-91; quoted in Rosen 2022, 191-92). Her point seems to be that the Kantian's alienation from the world is the inevitable product of a heroic but doomed struggle to usurp God's power to create meaning and value. But, as Rosen (2022, 191-92) shows, there is little trace of this kind of rebelliousness in Kant's thinking. His God, after all, rules, rationally and accountably, like a "constitutional monarch" rather than as a cruel tyrant or a loving father.<sup>4</sup> (This is a wonderfully apt metaphor; what fun Heinrich Heine would have had with it!) Kant seems quite content with a power-sharing arrangement with God, so Rosen finds it hard to associate his philosophy of freedom with a kind of alienation that grows out of competition with divine authority over the world.

But even if it is a mistake to assume that Kant and Kantians are vainly striving to usurp God's power over existence, there is one quality traditionally associated with God that they do claim for humankind: transcendence. It is the capacity for transcendental freedom, the ability to step out of the chain of cause and effect that determines nature, that gives human beings their special value for Kant. But understanding humanity's special value in this way sets our humanity apart from material existence, regardless of how far we believe that our power extends. We do not need to invoke Murdoch's demonic struggle with God in order to see how Kant's philosophy of freedom could promote a powerful sense of alienation from the world.

If so, then why was that sense of alienation so much more of a problem for Kant's followers than for Kant himself? There are many factors that might explain this divergence: the difference in age between Kant and his much more youthful followers; the difference in temperament between the famously even-tempered sage and his more excitable disciples; the difference socio-political contexts within which they came of age, the age of reason versus the age of revolution, to name just a few. But the most important factor, I believe, is the difference between starting one's philosophic career with the Kantian philosophy of freedom and ending it with that philosophy. For Kant, transcendental freedom and the dichotomies that supported it solved a set of problems that he, and other philosophers, had been struggling with for ages. For his Idealist followers, it provided them with a new starting point, one that allowed them to set aside all those problems Kant had struggled to solve and look at the world from a wholly new perspective. Viewed from that perspective, new, yet to be solved problems loomed far larger than the ones that they believed had been solved.

Alienation from the world emerges as a problem for post-Kantian philosophers much the same way that the problem of theodicy emerges for anyone who takes up a monotheistic

perspective on the world. Theodicy is not much of a problem for polytheists, since the disorder created by competing gods provides ample explanation for the fact that bad things are continually happening to good people. The problem only arises when you assume that there is a single benign and omnipotent will ordering existence. Those who turn to monotheism to escape the many contradictions of a polytheistic view of existence quickly find themselves confronting this new problem, precisely because of the new beliefs that they have adopted. Something similar, I suggest, happened with Kant's most influential heirs. Kant was not blind to the new problems posed by his philosophy of freedom and the dichotomies that supported it. But these new problems were much less important to him than the old set of problems his philosophy solved. His followers, in contrast, were, like new converts to Christianity, more interested in the new problems created by the position that they had adopted than the old problems that this position seemed to solve.

### *What Makes One a Kantian?*

Rosen's interpretive argument demonstrates you cannot make sense of Kant's new conception of morality without giving serious consideration to his defense of transcendental freedom. And his historical argument makes clear that you need to take that conception seriously if you want to understand how a philosophy that placed severe limits on theoretical speculation could inspire such an extraordinary outburst of philosophic speculation. But Rosen is well aware that contemporary defenders of Kantian ethics are less interested "in exegesis than argument," that their claims are "answerable . . . to the right standards of ethical thinking" (O'Neil 1975, vii and Wood 2008, 1; quoted in Rosen 105) rather than the standards by which we judge interpretive and historical arguments. He therefore sets out a critical argument for taking Kant's conception

of freedom seriously alongside his interpretive and historical arguments. There is nothing wrong, he suggests, with reconstructing a famous philosopher's argument or even appropriating that philosopher's name for your new and improved versions of their arguments—as long as the reconstructed argument “works in practice.” But the Kantian ethics version of Kant's moral philosophy, Rosen (2022, 25) argues, fails that test, for it fails to provide us with the tool for resolving moral dilemmas that it attributes to Kant.

With this argument Rosen takes up a more daunting challenge than he did with his first two arguments. The defenders of Kantian ethics have had decades to erect stout walls and an elaborate system of trenches around their position, defensive works that often wear down critics who lack the patience to slog their way through a seemingly endless series of hypotheticals about the universalization of different moral maxims. Not Rosen. His assault engages and undermines the second- and third-line defenses prepared by proponents of the Kantian ethics, not just their primary arguments. I, for one, find his critique persuasive. But I am far from an impartial judge in the matter. For me, the very act that the categorical imperative comes in very different versions make it highly unlikely that it could be used to resolve moral dilemmas. So I leave it to others to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments that support Rosen's critique. Besides, even if we accept Rosen's conclusion about the failure of Kantian ethics to produce its promised moral decision procedure, that would give its proponents a reason to abandon Kant's moral philosophy, not a reason to devote more serious attention to his understanding of freedom.

If, on the other hand, currently popular Kantian approaches to ethics are indebted in some unacknowledged some way to Kant's transcendental understanding of moral freedom, that would indeed oblige their proponents to take that understanding of freedom seriously. Rosen does not explicitly offer such an internal critique of the Kantian ethics approach to moral philosophy, but I

came away from his book with the strong impression that such a critique might be in order. You do not need Kant's philosophy of freedom to sustain a model of moral reasoning and moral agency that *includes* self-government by means of universalizable maxims. But you probably need something like it to justify treating it as an *exclusive* model of moral reasoning and moral agency, which is what Kantian ethics seems to demand. Its proponents do not merely tell utilitarians that moral reasoning involves categorical imperatives *as well as* calculations of how best to promote the greater good. They tell utilitarians that they have got moral reasoning wrong, that moral reasoning *is* the process by which we determine the universalizable rules by which we govern ourselves, and nothing else. They derive this exclusive understanding of the moral reasoning, it seems to me, from the association of moral agency with the free, but non-arbitrary moral will that, Rosen shows, lies at the center of Kant's moral philosophy. Without that conception of moral freedom and the special value it gives to self-governing acts, they would have a good case for moral pluralism, a strong argument showing that moral reason involves more than just the calculation of the greatest good for the greatest number. But that is not at all what the proponents of Kantian ethics—or any other Kantian, for that matter—are after. Kant taught them to insist on privileging one particular form of moral reasoning, even if they are uncomfortable with the reasons that led him to do so.

At the risk of doing to Rosen what the defenders of Kantian ethics have done to Kant, I suggest that something like this critique of their philosophic position is implicit in *The Shadow of God*. Of course, it is entirely possible that, like them, I have enlisted the subject of my interpretation in my “project . . . not his” (Rosen 2022, 25).<sup>5</sup> But, unlike Kant, Rosen will get the chance to set the record straight and correct his reconstructor.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Far from being filled with awe at the exalted condition that Kant attributes to freed beings like ourselves, "the only moral emotion" that this image inspires in Wood's breast "is outrage—that anyone could think supernaturalist superstition a necessary condition for moral decency" (Wood 2008, 138; quoted in Rosen 106).

<sup>2</sup> As Rosen (2022, 232) aptly comments, Kant could never accept an argument like Schiller's because, for Kant, "morality . . . actually works against nature."

<sup>3</sup> I develop this account of the German reaction to Kant in my book *The Longing for Total Revolution* (1986 [1992], Berkeley). See, in particular, ch. 3, "The Social Discontent of the Kantian Left," as well the brief outline of my arguments in Yack 2021 ("Revisiting *The Longing for Total Revolution*").

<sup>4</sup> At one point, however, Rosen (2022, 67) alters the metaphor, describing Kant's God an "enlightened despot," rather than a constitutional monarch, which, I believe, weakens his point.

<sup>5</sup> I should probably note that I am currently completing a very un-Kantian defense of moral pluralism in a book, tentatively titled: *The Faces of Moral Pluralism: Five Portraits from European Literature*.