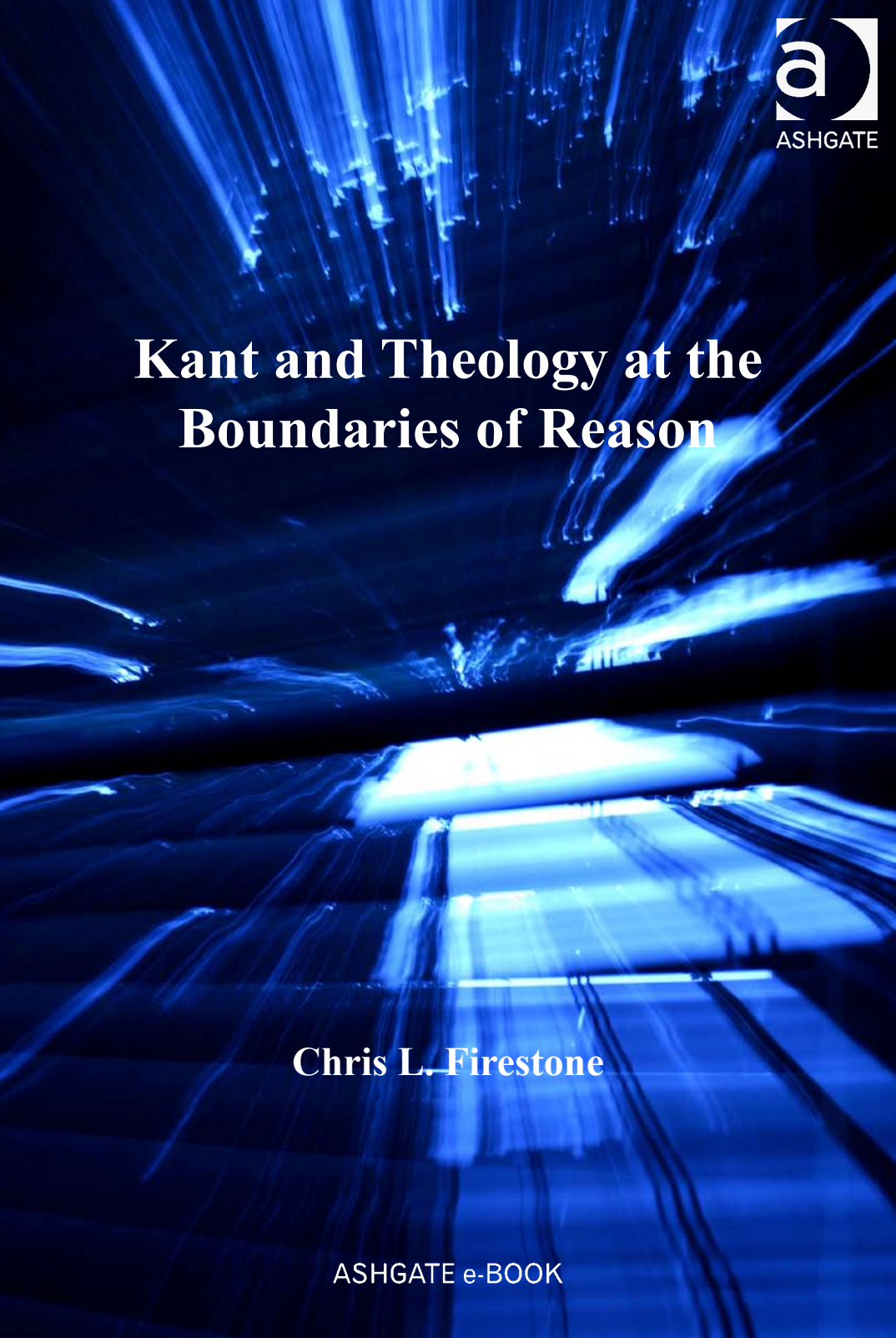
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KANT AND THEOLOGY AT THE BOUNDARIES OF REASON

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Kant and Theology at the Boundaries of Reason

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This project began nearly ten years ago as an attempt to understand Immanuel Kant's philosophy of religion through the lenses of its religiously- and theologically-affirmative interpreters, but has transformed over the years into something quite different. Those familiar with my early research on Kant will know that I began working on Kant's philosophy of religion by comparing interpretations of Kant with their corresponding theological appropriations. Using a strategy of abductive inference centred on Kant's understanding of the necessary conflict between the disciplines of philosophy and theology, I argued that Kant's philosophy of religion could be best understood by showing how philosophy and theology relate to one another when adopting a particular interpretation of Kant. If, once a particular interpretation of Kant is adopted, philosophy essentially subsumes theology so that no real conflict exists between the two disciplines, then the interpretation in question, however informative, must be considered inadequate. For, as I understand Kant's vision for the Academy, philosophy and theology are to be principal faculties within the university, and together maintain an unceasing conflict over life's most important and difficult questions, always chastening and challenging one another from their respective disciplinary perspectives.

Although I have since adopted an explicitly exegetical method of interpreting Kant, the fruit of my labours early on remains, and is clustered in chapters four, five and six of this volume. Portions of two early essays – namely, 'Kant and Religion: Conflict or Compromise?', *Religious Studies*, 35:2 (1999) and 'Kant's Two Perspectives on the Theological Task' *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 2:1 (2000) – are reproduced in chapters four and five with the permission of Cambridge University Press and Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd., respectively. There was a time when I considered publishing much of the content of these chapters as a book unto themselves, a book on interpreting Kant from a theological perspective. However, during the early days of my research into Kant, Peter Byrne challenged me to deal with the difficulties that surround what Kant himself contends in the writings about religion and theology rather than what interpreters, theologically-minded or otherwise, take Kant to mean about religion and theology. In other words, Byrne insisted that I tackle head-on the challenge of finding the supposed room for faith Kant creates in his philosophy by examining Kant's arguments directly and on their own terms.

I gradually came to see that Byrne was right – interpreting Kant's philosophy of religion well means working directly with Kant's writings, while dealing with the many thorny issues these writings generate in and around them. In hindsight, it seems like a virtual truism: to understand Kant's philosophy of religion as possible grounds for theology means to understand the grounds and warrant for theology

in Kant's critical corpus. Only then, as Paul Tillich comments, are we ready to go beyond or 'transcend' Kant in order to do theology. For these reasons, it became clear to me that the initial project had to be transformed and divided into two projects requiring two books – one handling the difficult task of understanding Kant's philosophy of religion by offering an interpretation and defence of the relevant texts in Kant, especially the much-maligned *Religion*, and another dealing with Kant's philosophy and its relationship to theology.

The project of interpreting and defending Kant's *Religion* is tackled in Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). Jacobs joined me in this work back when one project was turning into two. Little did I know at the time that six more years, rather than months, would be needed to complete this 'preliminary' project. I am happy to report that that work is now complete. Its purpose is to offer an interpretation of Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (or *Religion*) that is both consonant with Kant's critical philosophy and internally coherent – something that to my mind has not yet appeared in English-speaking Kant-studies. What distinguishes our book from others in the field is its sustained optimism over Kant's coherence amid a strict attentiveness to the details of Kant's arguments in *Religion* and the many attacks waged against the text by Kant's critics. Modelled on a trial format, the book begins with an examination of the case against the coherence of Kant's *Religion* levelled by key Kant interpreters over the past several decades. We, then, present a defence of Kant's *Religion* that demonstrates the coherence of Kant's arguments by providing a detailed interpretation of all four Books of *Religion* and explaining how this interpretation, point-for-point, overcomes the objections levelled against the text. Naturally, occasional overlapping material, though consciously kept to a minimum, can be found in *In Defense of Kant's* Religion and this present volume. Permission for this overlap, wherever it occurs, has been granted both by Ashgate Publishing Ltd and by Indiana University Press.

Kant and Theology at the Boundaries of Reason, though begun first, has been published second as something of a follow-up or theological companion to *In Defense of Kant's* Religion. Unlike its forerunner, this book is not strictly speaking for Kant exegetes, although exegesis is necessary throughout. It is, instead, the attempt of a Christian scholar of Kant to show where theology gains a foothold in Kant's philosophy and how theologians have capitalized on these footholds to construct meaningful and robust theological systems. This is the book that I set out to write many years ago, but had to delay in order to handle the very difficult task of 'going through' Kant's philosophy of religion. I trust that my labours have not been in vain and that the road map this book represents is far clearer and more helpful now, following *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, than it otherwise would have been.

The opening chapters of the present volume are devoted to understanding the difficult task of grounding theology in Kant's theoretical philosophy; the middle chapters show how the grounds for theology develop as Kant's critical philosophy unfolds and what theology looks like when it is founded on these grounds, and

the later chapters explore the task of theology relative to Kant's philosophy as things stand today. The book as a whole is written for anyone who wants an up-to-date analysis of the grounds for theology in Kant's philosophy and help with determining where theology must go in the future if we are to do theology in dialogue with Kant. In the Appendices, I have included English translations of two articles by Paul Tillich. The articles are 'The Category of the "Holy" in Rudolf Otto' and 'Rudolf Otto – Philosopher of Religion' (published in German newspapers in 1923 and 1925, respectively). These articles provide valuable insight into Tillich's thinking as it relates to the work of Otto. In chapter six, I argue that Tillich's mature theology is very much indebted to an early encounter with the philosophy of Kant through Otto's classic book *The Idea of the Holy*. The review articles in the Appendices help establish the Otto–Tillich connection and, to my knowledge, are published in English in their entirety for the first time.

Many persons have been involved in this project over the years since its inception. The list is too long to mention everyone by name, but a number of people deserve special mention insofar as this book as it presently stands is inconceivable to my mind without also thinking of their support. Stephen R. Palmquist and Kevin J. Vanhoozer were there at the beginning to introduce me to Kant and make me believe that Kant's philosophy could be understood fruitfully and profoundly as advocating a life of faith in harmony with the life of the mind. Palmquist and Vanhoozer started me down the Kantian road by presenting me with living examples of the very conflict between philosophy and theology that I have come to see as a major contributor to Kant's thinking on the nature of the university in general and the field of philosophy of religion in particular.

Since starting down this road, a host of others have joined me on the journey and become invaluable interlocutors in unpacking the details of Kant's arguments. Jacobs, as already mentioned, partnered with me in trying to understand Kant's philosophy of religion at a formative time in the development of my thinking on the topic, and the fruit of this partnership is *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, among other projects. More than any other person, he has made me an advocate of joint interdisciplinary research by evidencing a unique blend of intellectual creativity, tenacity and integrity while bringing theological resources to bear on difficult philosophical topics. In so doing, Jacobs helped me see how some of the most tortured and difficult problems in Kant's work on religion might be resolved. In the years it took to develop our reading of *Religion*, Jacobs has made the difficult passage of going from university graduate to colleague – a truly impressive achievement. In the Appendices, Jacobs joins me in translating the two Tillich articles. Claudia Heilmann and Mirjam Schnabel graciously read drafts of that material and helped ensure that the English translations faithfully represented the German originals. Kenneth Nylund and Mike Yoder also read and commented on the articles prior to publication. Jacobs and I, however, assume sole responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies that remain. We warmly thank Dr. Mutie Tillich Farris, Executor of the Tillich Estate, for permission to publish the two articles.

Many others could be mentioned by way of appreciation and each for different reasons. Steve Pointer saw to it that I had enough time to work and was a source of immense encouragement throughout the project. Martin Warner gave many helpful comments on the manuscript and patiently walked me through the process of finalizing it. Christopher McCammon helped me see the value of combining piercing philosophical insight with vivacious metaphor to better capture the true spirit of the philosophic quest. Scott Erdenberg and Brandon Love provided helpful assistance in the creation of the index. In addition, I think of Jeremy Allen, Philip Antin, Nathan and Melissa Castillo, Ann Eberhardt, David Fields, Matthew 'T. F.' Gifford, Nathan Gilbert, David Goetz, Brian Hagedorn, Mike Nowak, Jon Parsons, Mark Pedersen, Andrew Pederson, Ryan Steger, John Van Maaren and the rest of my students who, through the years, have made an impact on my life and thought. I also thank the hidden inspiration of my work, Hannah, Matthew, Emma, Rebekah and Andrew. If this contingent of young minds and hearts is at all representative of the next generation, things look very promising indeed. Finally, my heart-felt appreciation goes out to Larry Stilwell who, though no longer with us, will not be forgotten. Larry not only coached some of the finest high school chess teams in Illinois state history, but also introduced me to the mysteries and profundities of the Christian faith. Larry, I will be forever grateful.

Note on Kant Citations

I have made every effort to adopt the new Cambridge University Press translation of Immanuel Kant's works. The one exception is the *Critique of Judgement*. Instead of the Cambridge edition, so in this case I have adopted the Meredith translation. In the rare case that an alternative translation is used for any of Kant's other writings, the full publishing information is cited in the footnote. Adjustments to the Cambridge translations or alternative renderings by the author are based on *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian/German Academy of Sciences. For the sake of consistency and ease of reference, I have standardized all citations, so that they refer to the German *Akademie* (Ak) pagination, which can be found in the margins of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. These citations are embedded within the body of the text throughout and are also found in the occasional footnote. Other editions of Kant's work are listed after the Cambridge listings below.

The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (General Editors: Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood)

Correspondence. Arnulf Zweig (trans. and ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Critique of Pure Reason. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (trans. and eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Cited as 'first *Critique*'.

Lectures on Ethics. Peter Heath (trans.) and Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind (eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Lectures on Metaphysics. Karl Americks and Steve Naragon (trans. and eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Opus Postumum. Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen, (trans.) and Eckart Förster (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Practical Philosophy. Mary J. Gregor (trans. and ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. This text includes, among other works, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (cited as *Groundwork*), *Critique of Practical Reason* (cited as 'second *Critique*'), and *The Metaphysics of Morals*.

Religion and Rational Theology. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (trans. and eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. This text includes, among other works, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (cited as *Religion*), *The Conflict of the Faculties* (cited as *Conflict*), and *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion* (cited as *Lectures on Religion*).

Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770. David Walford (trans. and ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. This text includes, among other works, 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics' (cited as 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer').

Other Editions of Kant's Works

Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View. Mary J. Gregor (trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.

Critique of Pure Reason. J. M. D. Mierklejohn (trans.). London: George Bell and Sons, 1887.

Critique of Judgement. James Creed Meredith (trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. Cited as 'third *Critique*'.

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Norman Kemp Smith (trans.). London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1929.

Kant's Latin Writings: Translation, Commentaries, and Notes. Lewis White Beck (trans. and ed.). New York: Peter Lang, 1986.

Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (trans.). New York: Harper and Row, 1934.

To 'Left-Lane' Larry Stilwell

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Chapter One
Can Theology Go Through Kant?

According to the traditional interpretation and reception of Immanuel Kant's work, the impact of his philosophy on the discipline of theology has been primarily negative.[1] The *Critique of Pure Reason* cuts off all access to knowledge of God, and, in so doing, demolishes not only the foundations for dogmatic metaphysics, but also the foundations for any kind of positive theology whatsoever. Because traditional interpreters understand these theoretical strictures on knowledge of God to be inescapable, Kant's subsequent philosophical work, when it touches on matters of significance to theology, is thought merely to aim at reducing their stifling effects. Traditional interpreters judge that Kant's effort to establish a foundation for theology in his moral philosophy is a failure, or at least a failure in ways that might matter to the adherents of most religions. God is nothing more than an idea, a moral postulate. Although traditional interpreters sometimes recognize that Kant tries again later in his career to establish moral grounds for theology in his writings on religion, his efforts there are thought to be inadequate – either hopelessly convoluted or reducible to his moral philosophy in a way that eliminates their positive contribution to Kant's thought.

Theological programs indebted to the traditional interpretation of Kant have run their course in several different directions. Somewhat predictably, few of them end up being congenial to the discipline of theology. In some cases, Kant's philosophy has been used to support a kind of *anti-theology*. This response to Kant has its roots in a particular way of understanding Kant's groundbreaking theoretical philosophy in the first *Critique*. If one understands Kant's phenomenal-noumenal distinction to have strict epistemic *and* ontological implications, then human beings are decisively and ultimately cut off from both the knowledge of God and any possible experience of God. Henry Allison calls this rendering of

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[1] For a definition and discussion of the term 'traditional interpretation' (or 'traditional interpreters'), see the 'Editors' Introduction' to *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, (eds.) (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1–5. I cite several manifestations of the traditional interpretation below. Two highly influential examples are Gordon E. Michalson, *Fallen Freedom: Kant on Radical Evil and Moral Regeneration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, 'Conundrums in Kant's Rational Religion', in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, Philip J. Rossi and Michael Wreen, (eds.) (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1991).

Kant's philosophy the 'two-world' interpretation.[2] There exists an impassable boundary between the experience of human beings and the 'reality' of noumenal beings, a boundary so deep and wide that not even the highest possible being – God – could traverse it. If God did traverse it and in some way attempt to become manifest to us, we could never know or even reasonably believe that it was God. When evidence for evil and imperfection in the world are then introduced and no counterbalance in the form of arguments for God's existence and interaction with the world is allowed, we are left with atheism as the only rational faith for the transcendental thinker. In the absence of good epistemic or ontological reasons for believing God exists and cares about the world, the only rational option regarding religious faith is disbelief in the existence of God.

Another approach to theology indebted to Kant as traditionally understood is primarily agnostic about God's existence and essence. Although Kant posits a strict denial of knowledge of God in the first *Critique*, God still arises in Kant's transcendental analysis of reason as a problematic idea with moral significance. 'The negative part of this thesis is important', suggests P. F. Strawson, '… leaving room for certain morally based convictions, not amounting to knowledge'.[3] For Kant, reason has an inherent moral need for belief in God, but since the content of this belief must remain empirically empty, only agnosticism in reference to God is warranted. What Kant leaves us with then is a strong epistemic separation from all things noumenal and ignorance (and indecision) about what can properly be thought of as obtaining in the ontologically real world of the supersensible. Matthew Alun Ray's conclusions are typical of traditional readers who follow this trajectory: 'Kant's epistemological agnosticism seemed relatively self-consistent but his associated and quasi-existential moral proof of God turned out not to be successful'.[4] The logical entailments of Kant's philosophy are not moral theism, but, in Ray's estimation, 'Konigsbergian Nihilism'.[5] For interpreters like Ray and Strawson, theology under the aegis of Kant amounts to nothing more than human speculation about what we take to be traces of the divine in human life. Culture and history reveal faint longings for the religious ultimate, and the world's imperfections militate against these longings. There are no more substantial reasons on which to gauge our beliefs and nothing beyond these considerations on which to ground the enterprise of theology. Rational religious faith is thus properly termed *theological agnosticism*.

Taken at face value, Kant's doctrine of divine unknowability appears to favour theological agnosticism over atheism. One of the goals of Kant's first *Critique*

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[2] Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 3–4.

[3] P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Methuen, 1966), 240–1.

[4] Matthew Alun Ray, *Subjectivity and Irreligion: Atheism and Agnosticism in Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 110.

[5] Ray, *Subjectivity and Irreligion*, 26.

was, after all, to silence the metaphysical sceptic rather than fuel the sceptic's arguments (Bxxx). We don't know if God exists beyond the boundaries of human reason that define immediate experience. Therefore, rather than being theologically negative, we should remain philosophically neutral on the matter of belief in God. On closer inspection however, theological agnosticism seems to slip into logical incoherence under Kant's strictures. How can we take Kant seriously regarding the *radical unknowability* of all things noumenal and still hold out hope for some kind of room for faith in God? If God exists, then God must, in some sense, be knowable. However, the doctrine of unknowability is *radical*. God is unknowable, full-stop. The idea of God as a noumenal being who, in principle, both *can and cannot* be known appears unintelligible. In this way, Kantian agnosticism shades off into atheism. As Ray puts it, 'Kant's critical philosophy … shifted God out of ontological consideration on wholly epistemological terms which ultimately left the Kantian metaphysic not only agnostic but – despite Kant's arguments to the contrary – also arguably liable to be read in atheistic terms'.[6]

One way of construing these atheistic implications of Kant's philosophy is to understand them as a precursor to twentieth century logical positivism. Only propositions that can be confirmed by the senses are taken by traditional interpreters of Kant to be meaningful for understanding human experience. Strawson posits this position as the positive flipside of Kant's negative doctrine of 'noumenal unknowability'. He calls this positive flipside of the doctrine 'the principle of significance'.[7] These positive and negative doctrines, thinks Strawson, are Kant's only philosophically responsible contributions to discussions on transcendent metaphysics. According to Strawson, all true propositions amounting to support for rational conviction must either admit to empirical verification or be cast off as examples of dogmatic metaphysics. I will be examining Strawson's interpretation more closely in the next chapter.

It is not hard to see how his line of reasoning ends up having negative, if not devastating, consequences for religion and theology when founded on Kant's philosophy. Peter Byrne interprets Kant's philosophy along the lines of Strawson, and applies this interpretation to Kant's account of religious language in general and Kant's writings on religion in particular. According to Byrne, 'Kant's account of religious language departs from realism as that is understood by many contemporary philosophers' by not being referentially and causally based.[8] The significance of Kant's religious writings, in this light, is not their theological affirmation (although Byrne does allow for some minimal amount of affirmation), but their meta-ethical implications. The moral law is transformed in these writings, thinks Byrne, into a set of ethical demands that humans strive to achieve in corporate unison. Referring specifically to Book Three of *Religion*, Byrne writes, 'Kant's underlying thought

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6 Ray, *Subjectivity and Irreligion*, 110.

7 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 33.

8 Peter Byrne, *The Moral Interpretation of Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1998), 60.

here – surely a plausible one – is that only in and through cooperative human effort can the full human power to combat evil and pursue good be realized and enhanced'.[9] In other words, Byrne finds Kant's solution to the challenge of evil and vice in the collective moral agency of human beings. The true theological importance of Kant's work is not rational religious faith (where faith in God's person and work is understood to be rational), but faith in collective human moral striving for justice (or the Highest Good) through present and future socio-political structures.[10] For this reason, Byrne believes Kant's philosophy of religion affirms the church as the appropriate, even if only incidental, means of achieving what Kant calls an 'Ethical Commonwealth'.

Yirmiahu Yovel interprets Kant's philosophy of religion under the aegis of these Strawsonian doctrines as well, but arrives at even more theologically divisive conclusions than Byrne. Employing these doctrines like a Kantian version of Ockham's razor, he characterizes Kant's philosophy of religion as 'an uncompromising attack upon existing religions and an attempt to eliminate them from the historical scene'.[11] Kant, on this view, is not only unfriendly to organized religion in general and Christian theology in particular, but antagonistic in an eliminative sense – Kant is taken to be intent on removing religion and theology from the academy altogether. What remains is a so-called 'civil' society divorced from religious affiliations and institutions or basically a secularised version of Judeo-Christian religious ideals.

Gordon Michalson, a Kant interpreter concerned with the welfare of Christian theology, applies the Strawsonian Kant to the flow of ideas about God in the Western philosophical tradition. He understands the kind of religiously subversive subjectivity found in the interpretations of Byrne and Yovel to be the real legacy of Kant. Michalson's thesis is 'that [Kant's] own efforts to ameliorate the theologically destructive effects of the *Critique of Pure Reason* implicitly make things worse for traditional theism, not better'.[12] Kant, in Michalson's view, moves from theoretical agnosticism to a vicious form of autonomous or subjective theism, where Christianity emerges from Kant's philosophy as the means to a thoroughly secular end, rather than as an end in itself. He traces the influence of Kant through a philosophical stream of thought stretching from Descartes to Feuerbach, characterizing Kant's philosophy as 'a way station between Luther and Marx'.[13] Michalson's conclusion, echoing Yovel's sentiments, is that 'Kant has cut

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[9] Byrne, *The Moral Interpretation of Religion*, 152.

[10] For a thoroughgoing critique of Byrne's interpretation of Kant's philosophy of religion, see Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), Chapter 7.

[11] Yirmiahu Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980), 202.

[12] Gordon E. Michalson, *Kant and the Problem of God* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 5.

[13] Michalson, *Kant and the Problem of God*, 27.

off the head of the traditional religious body, yet the corpse continues for a time to twitch and move, as though life is still in it when it is not'.[14]

While the atheistic and agnostic theological movements after Kant are undeniable, they are not the only legacy of Kant traditionally understood. Some approaches to theology emerging out of this tradition are just as restrictive in their allowance of rational access to knowledge and experience of God as Byrne's, Yovel's and Michalson's, but nevertheless understand the idea of God to have more significant practical implications than either theological atheism or agnosticism admits. Theologians of this sort take the idea of God to be a uniquely important reference point for human thinking about the world and the place of human beings within it. Theology matters not because God is real *per se*, but because the idea of God gives meaning to the moral quest where otherwise there would be none. Because we do not know what actually obtains in reality but desire for it all to make sense anyway, we are warranted in constructing our own ideas about God and embracing these ideas in faith. These ideas become for us realms of meaning focused on divine things with no actual or possible corresponding reference in experience. Transcendent metaphysics matters to philosophical inquiry only insofar as our ideas about it are thought to enhance human well-being and flourishing. On this view, human thinking about God is tantamount to *theological non-realism*. The idea of God is a pragmatic one, but attempting to take theology beyond non-realism is nothing more than wishful thinking.

Good examples of the non-realist approach to Kant can be found in the interpretations of Keith Ward and Don Cupitt.[15] Citing Kant's *Lectures on Ethics*, Ward points out how Kant explicitly affirms certain theological premises: 'though ethics cannot depend upon metaphysical or theological belief, it necessarily gives rise to theological belief and cannot exist without it'.[16] Yet, in Ward's estimation, while clearly positive in theological intent, little of Kant's pre-critical metaphysics actually survives the Copernican revolution in Kant's thought. In the development of Kant's ethics, Ward understands Kant to start from a position of theoretical agnosticism and, rather than gravitate toward atheism, move gradually toward moral non-realism according to the attractive force of human autonomy inherent in Kant's philosophy. Kant's rational foundations for theology are severely limited by a distinct lack of support (if not outright antagonism) found in the theoretical philosophy; whatever positive support is maintained corresponds directly to Kant's moral theory. Ward finds a fundamental tension between Kant's moral formalism and the religious realism implied in much of Kant's language that simply cannot be

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[14] Michalson, *Kant and the Problem of God*, 26.

[15] Don Cupitt, 'Kant and the Negative Theology', in *The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology: Essays Presented to D. M. MacKinnon*, Brian Hebblethwaite and Stewart Sutherland, (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 55–67; and Keith Ward, *The Development of Kant's View of Ethics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972).

[16] Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 59.

resolved.[17] For this reason, the rational grounds for theology in Kant must remain merely a formal aspect of his moral philosophy; they support belief in the idea of God, but not in the existence of God.

Cupitt interprets Kant along lines that closely parallel Ward, but argues directly that Kant so construed amounts to little more than theological non-realism. In his essay 'Kant and the Negative Theology' for example, Cupitt compares Kant's philosophy on the topic of God and religious belief with past theists from various religious traditions, including Platonists, Christians, Jews and Muslims, but with specific reference to the Greek Orthodox tradition. He concludes that, while structural similarities exist between Kant and the tradition of negative theology in general, their conceptions of God's existence and nature and our cognitive access to these aspects of the divine differ widely. Negative theology has consistently asserted that 'it is certain that God exists, but the nature or essence of God is unknowable'.[18] Kant, on the other hand, holds that 'God's existence is problematic, but God's nature *as the Ideal of Reason* is explicable'.[19] Cupitt then concludes that 'what Kant is saying is strikingly different from older negative theology … [whose] language is designed to *attract*, … Kant's language is designed to *repel*'.[20] The upshot of this line of reasoning, for Cupitt, is decidedly anti-realist: 'Kant wants us to renounce impossible and futile aspirations and be content with doing our duty. Do not aspire after the real God, he says, for that will only end in anthropomorphism and fantasy. Be content with the available God postulated by practical reason – fully recognizing his non-descriptive character – for that is sufficient'.[21]

A fourth approach to Kant is perhaps more common in the field of Kant-studies than in discussions about the discipline of theology, but every bit as indebted as the other three to traditional interpretations of Kant. Some interpreters grant that Kant's writings support theological realism. Kant often speaks of God, appears to believe in God and uses the idea of God positively in support of many of his arguments. No mitigating factor exists in Kant's corpus that decisively counteracts these points. Instead of understanding Kant's thinking on these matters to be agnostic and thus risk gravitating toward atheism (which so clearly rubs against the grain of Kant's convictions) or non-realism (a position far afield from the rationalist tradition of the Prussian Enlightenment), interpreters under this rubric argue that Kant's position moves in yet another direction – it amounts to *theological deism*.

As Allen Wood puts it in *Kant's Moral Religion*, 'But though divine revelation itself is not impossible, it is impossible for any man to know through experience

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17 Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 154.

18 Cupitt, 'Kant and the Negative Theology', 57.

19 Cupitt, 'Kant and the Negative Theology', 59.

20 Cupitt, 'Kant and the Negative Theology', 63.

21 Cupitt, 'Kant and the Negative Theology', 63.

that God has in any instance actually revealed himself'.[22] God can interact with the world, but, for all intents and purposes, we could never *know* that God is interacting with the world. The world is always perceived as a cause and effect nexus regardless of what God may or may not be doing to manipulate or sustain it. What this principle implies is not a logical contradiction favouring atheism, but a minimal collection of divine predicates that entails deism. Since God cannot be known (or, by implication, experienced) but must exist for morality to make sense and for the world to have meaning, Kant's philosophy requires deism. Theology, on this view, can reasonably claim to know *of* God's existence and even attribute a few basic predicates to God. However, without actual or possible access to God's person or activity, maintaining more robust rational grounds for faith *in* God is impossible. Wood's distinguished career, characterized by a gradual movement from interpreting Kant's philosophy as supportive of faith in a 'living God' (*Kant's Moral Religion*; 1970) to defending an explicitly deistic interpretation ('Kant's Deism'; 1991),[23] is a testimony to the attractiveness of this interpretation of Kant.

A problem exists with each of these theological positions indebted to the traditional interpretation of Kant – each appears to 'pick and choose' from among Kant's philosophical resources without taking full account of Kant's transcendental grounds for theology. Kantian atheists focus on the empirical aspects of knowledge (or knowledge of the phenomenal realm) without accounting for the nature and range of the transcendental conditions that must be taken into account for knowledge to be possible. Kantian agnostics focus on the possibility of noumenal realities in the light of noumenal unknowability, yet are equally inattentive to the transcendental givens that make the entire discussion of the phenomenal-noumenal distinction intelligible. Kantian non-realists recognize the transcendental necessity of belief in the ideas of God, freedom and immortality, yet get trapped by the insightfulness of the subjective component of transcendental thinking. Although non-realists recognize the significance of Kant's account of subjectivity for science, they rarely pay attention to the reasons Kant provides for moving from subjectivity to objectivity in ways that matter to rational faith. Thus, they are unable to account for the existential elements of Kant's thinking, and tend to ignore them. Kantian deists accept the objective validity and existential import of Kant's philosophy as it relates to God, but disavow any robust cognitive access to God's nature and activity. We can reasonably believe that God exists, but are limited to attributing only generalities to God. God calibrates the machinery of nature and even lies behind the moral imperatives of human experience as 'the great paymaster', but little more can be said. In other words, Kantian atheists, agnostics, non-realists and deists recognize Kant's strictures on knowledge and support for subjectivity, but

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[22] Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 204.

[23] Allen W. Wood, 'Kant's Deism', in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, Philip J. Rossi and Michael Wreen, (eds.) (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

go no further with Kant, positing instead that no viable grounds for theology exist within the critical philosophy.

The reasoning behind this theological pessimism varies, but its assumptions and implications are manifest – not enough research has been done to spell out the transcendental dimensions of Kant's philosophy and the significance of these dimensions as possible grounds for theology. Much recent work has been devoted to remedying this lacuna in traditional interpretations of Kant. *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion* (2006), co-edited by Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, comprises something of a watershed in this regard. In addition to fine contributions by Gregory Johnson (challenging the traditional view on Kant and enthusiasm), John Hare (challenging the traditional view on Kant and atheism) and Christopher McCammon (challenging the traditional view on Kant and deism) et al., Palmquist and I, in the 'Editors' Introduction', make the case that the traditional interpretation of Kant is merely the 'largest unified minority report' on how to understand Kant's philosophy and its implications for religion and theology.[24] Although unified according to a selective sampling of first *Critique* principles, traditional interpretations of Kant often undervalue (or overlook) the positive grounds for the establishment of religion and theology in Kant's work. It is not that the traditional interpretation is wrong regarding the particulars, but that traditional interpreters tend to give 'thin descriptions' of the grounds for theology present throughout Kant's philosophy. We point to the early work of Allen Wood and Michel Despland as providing the first interpretations of Kant in English displaying a conscious awareness of this problem.[25]

In *Kant's Moral Religion*, Wood writes, 'Much careful and fruitful labour has been devoted to the analysis of the subtle argumentation of Kant's epistemology and moral philosophy; but his philosophical outlook as a whole, his view of the world and man's place in it, is often grotesquely caricatured'.[26] He goes on to challenge the Kant establishment in the following way: 'there is an area of Kant's philosophical thought – itself badly neglected by responsible scholarship – which though no less demanding on the reader than most of his writing, does give us a more or less direct access to Kant's outlook as a whole. … This area of thought is Kant's investigation of rational religious faith'.[27] Wood's point is that most interpretations of Kant on rational religious faith are too reductive or simplistic, and more needs to be done to understand the vast resources grounding religious faith in Kant's philosophy. Ironically, as noted earlier, Wood's subsequent work on Kant never brings to fruition his early endeavours in this regard.

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[24] Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, 'Editors' Introduction', in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, 3.

[25] Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*; and Michel Despland, *Kant on History and Religion* (Toronto: McGill-Queens University Press, 1973).

[26] Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 1.

[27] Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 1–2.

In *Kant on History and Religion*, Despland's interpretation of *Religion* gives teeth to Wood's call for more responsible scholarship on rational religious faith. In Despland's words, 'The whole thrust of my interpretation leads to one conclusion: the superiority of moral theism is to be found not in the purely moral but in religious considerations as well.… Its merit lies in the fact that it gives meaning to faith which makes of faith an act which is both rational and religious'.[28] He goes on to argue that theologically rich concepts like grace and revelation permeate Kant's philosophy of religion and lend support to the conclusion that Kant's philosophy is far more amenable to religious and theological concerns than is traditionally supposed. According to Despland, grace and revelation are necessary supplements to human striving after goodness and a perfect moral kingdom. This realization brings to the fore the idea that rational religious faith, for Kant, is far more positive toward history and theology than is commonly thought.

The work of Wood and Despland in the early 1970s has given way to a vast new movement in Kant-studies affirming the positive nature of Kant's philosophy for religion and theology. Not long after these two books drew attention to the problems inherent in traditional approaches to Kant, a spate of books and articles appeared in direct challenge to traditional claims about the negative impact of Kant's philosophy on religion and theology. Adina Davidovich, Elizabeth Galbraith, Ronald Green, John Hare, Ann Loades, Stephen Palmquist and others have pointed out in convincing fashion that traditional interpretive approaches to Kant on religion and theology are wholly inadequate and in need of renovation, if not outright demolition.[29] In a special symposium edition of the journal *Philosophia Christi* (2007), several scholars within this movement, including myself, address the question 'What Can Christian Theologians Learn from Kant?'[30] Although each contributor speaks to a different aspect of Kant's philosophy of religion, the collective argument, in a nutshell, is that traditional interpretations have tended to reduce Kant's philosophy of religion to other dimensions of his critical program in ways that eliminate its vitality and draw into question Kant's religious sincerity.

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[28] Despland, *Kant on History and Religion*, 145.

[29] Adina Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Elizabeth Cameron Galbraith, *Kant and Theology: Was Kant a Closet Theologian?* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1996); Ronald M. Green, *Religious Reason: The Rational and Moral Basis of Religious Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), and *Religion and Moral Reason: A New Method for Comparative Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Ann L. Loades, *Kant and Job's Comforters* (Newcastle Upon Tyne, England: Avero Publications, 1985); and Stephen R. Palmquist, *Kant's System of Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1993) and *Kant's Critical Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2000).

[30] Book Symposium on *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, Chris L. Firestone, Guest Editor, *Philosophia Christi*, 9:1 (2007), 7–97.

Kant's philosophy of religion, contrary to what traditionalists usually indicate, is a genuine contributor to his critical philosophy and, though itself highly critical of empirical religion, essentially positive in its posture toward the many claims and concerns of Christian theology.

Despite this 'new wave' of theologically affirmative Kant interpretation, prominent thinkers, such as William Alston, Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff and Keith Yandell have done excellent work in showing the shortcomings of Kant and Kantian thinkers from a Christian vantage point.[31] Alston makes the case that the Kantian theologies of John Hick, Gordon Kaufman and Paul Tillich, when pressed for precision, appear to default into theological non-realism; Plantinga challenges the theological coherence and contemporary relevance of Kant, Hick and Kaufman; Wolterstorff shows that traditional understandings of Kant yield a theological anxiety antithetical to the history of Christian thought and the common practice of Christian adherents; and Yandell points out that even the most positive interpretations of Kant deny rational and religious significance to key Christian doctrines. These challenges indicate that the new wave of Kant interpretation must be more clear about exactly how Kant's philosophy provides positive resources for theology and how these resources can be brought together to form new means and methods for doing theology.

Today more than ever before, we find ourselves, it seems, at a crossroads between Kantian philosophy and Christian theology. Wolterstorff, in his essay 'Is it Possible and Desirable for Theologians to Recover from Kant?', makes this very point: either we have to accept Kant's strictures and embrace the theological anxiety that goes along with them or reject Kant and embrace a philosophical starting point prior to or in contradistinction to Kant. Wolterstorff commends, for instance, the philosophy of Thomas Reid as an alternative to Kant. While I understand 'Wolterstorff's fork', and think it the appropriate analogy for many, I also believe that, for others, a more appropriate analogy is the one Philip Rossi presents. He places the crossroads of Kant and theology on a mountain pass: 'Kant's work and its aftermath [is like] a mountain range that stands athwart one's intellectual path. One might do one's best to ignore it, but in the end it is far more likely that one will have to find a way over, through or around it'.[32] On this analogy, responsible contemporary scholarship must respond explicitly or

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[31] William P. Alston, 'Realism and the Christian Faith', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 38 (1995), 37–60; Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Chapters One and Two; Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, 'Is it Possible and Desirable for Theologians to Recover from Kant?', *Modern Theology* 14:1 (1998), 1–18; Keith Yandell, 'Who is the True Kant?' *Philosophia Christi*, 9:1 (2007), 81–97.

[32] Philip Rossi, 'Reading Kant with Theological Spectacles', in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*. Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, (eds.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 108.

implicitly to Kant's philosophy and what remains to be determined is whether that response means going 'over, through or around it'.

In what follows, I will attempt the road less travelled by going through Kant to seek out and make plain the promising grounds for theology in his philosophy. This work is not, therefore, written for Kant exegetes eager to see a text systematizing Kant's writings on philosophy of religion. Instead, this work is written for those interested in understanding the grounds for Christian theology in Kant's philosophy and estimating their promise for theology today. It is written for those persons who believe Kant's influence is not going away, and, as a result, recognize the importance of assessing the grounds for theology in Kant's philosophy.

Even though this book is not devoted to Kant exegetes, we cannot avoid 'getting our hands dirty' by ignoring Kant's texts or key Kant interpreters. Knowledge of Kant's corpus and longstanding disputes in the field of Kant-studies serve as invaluable guides or signposts for understanding how Kant's philosophy can be supportive of theology. For example, one important dispute, though certainly not the only one, centres around Kant's philosophy of religion as exemplified in the classic text *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. While contemporary interpreters agree on the basic contours of Kant's *Religion*, below the surface all is not well. Over the past 30 years, detailed analysis has exposed numerous interpretive difficulties with this classic text, and these findings have snowballed into full-fledged assaults on its philosophical viability. The difficulties surrounding this text provide a significant reason for the continued persistence of traditional interpretations of Kant despite mounting pressure in the field against them and in favour of theological affirmation.

In Defense of Kant's Religion offers a detailed synopsis of this troubled interpretative history. Capitalizing on new resources, Nathan Jacobs and I offer a fresh interpretation of Kant's *Religion* that is both consonant with the critical philosophy and internally coherent. A number of the key insights from that book are echoed and expanded on here. These include Kant's notion of pure cognition (chapter two), rational faith (chapter three) and depravity and redemption (chapter seven). Where that book uses these insights to interpret Kant's philosophy of religion, this book applies them to theology proper. In this sense, these works, as mentioned in the Preface, are complementary volumes – one written for exegetes of Kant focusing specifically on *Religion* and the other for theologians wanting to go through Kant's philosophy rather than over or around it. What makes this book distinctive is that, while going through Kant's philosophy as a whole, I examine it with particular reference to the theological significance of its transcendental boundaries and their positive utility for Christian theology.

This examination takes place in three stages. The first stage, in chapters two and three, examines the theoretical philosophy with an exegetical eye in order to establish what Kant means by 'pure cognition' of God and 'rational faith' in God. The second stage comes in chapters four, five and six. This second stage is not primarily an exercise of Kantian exegesis or exposition, although I consistently draw on Kant in order to orient the reader and assess the strength and weaknesses

of the philosophical grounds and theological superstructure of the positions under review. Rather, throughout these chapters, I examine the various resources in Kant that influential 'Kantian' theologians utilize to establish grounds for theology in Kant's philosophy. By no means do I intend to commend these disparate 'Kantian' theologies as definitive or even desirable, but by using these theologically inclined readers of Kant as guides for discovering the most theologically positive and useful aspects of Kant's corpus, we will mine those resources buried in the critical philosophy and discover precisely how these Kantian resources can be positively utilized in a theological context. The third stage is found in chapters seven and eight, where I summarize my findings with specific reference to the positive utility of Kant for contemporary theology, and make concluding comments. The details of the presentation are as follows:

Chapter two sets up the problem of knowledge as a backdrop for Kant's understanding of God. Looking at two leading interpretations of the first *Critique*, namely, Strawson's in *The Bounds of Sense* and Allison's in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, I argue that Kant's theoretical philosophy does not provide a complete, self-sustaining paradigm for philosophy. This deficiency bids further inquiry into the transcendental nature of reason and, by extension, the promise of what Kant calls 'transcendental theology'. I lay out some of the positive features of Kant's turn to transcendental theology in the first *Critique*. Among the most important of these developments, I argue, is the distinction between knowledge and cognition. This distinction is especially significant for understanding faith as a basic element in Kant's philosophical foundation for theology. Importantly, Kant makes this distinction clear and its application evident in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*. The chapter concludes by showing how this insight proves to be the key to resolving an open debate between Peter Byrne and Don Wiebe over the proper relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical faith in Kant's philosophy.

Chapter three addresses Kant's understanding of faith as it is related to pure cognition in the previous chapter and expressed in 'The Canon of Pure Reason' in the first *Critique*. Drawing on the early work of Allen Wood and C. Stephen Evans, I argue that Kant's understanding of faith in God was not revolutionary, but an adaptation of the basic rationalistic conception of God inherited from Christian Wolff and Gottfried Leibniz. Pure theoretical cognition of God provides theologians with this rationalistic conception of God as the starting point for faith, while the transcendental questions of duty and hope drive Kant's thinking to develop the grounds for faith that move us beyond a mere propaedeutic to theology. At stake in the second half of chapter three is the proper critical vantage point from which to understand the development of this rationalist seed of faith in Kant's philosophy. Surveying the history of Kant interpretation over the last century, we find at least three distinct sets of grounds for rational religious faith supported in Kant's critical corpus. What becomes clear as we examine these grounds is that Kant, in his philosophy after the first *Critique*, contends that we can, and indeed must, believe in God in certain ways, guided by critical inquiries into the very nature of reason itself, if the world and our place in it are to be meaningfully understood.

The fourth chapter capitalizes on this starting point by following Kant's transition from a transcendental analysis of theoretical reason to a transcendental analysis of practical reason. I look specifically at the work of Ronald Green as a Kant interpreter who argues persuasively that theology must be developed, if progress is to be made at all, according to the resources of practical reason. For Green, a critical evaluation of reason reveals that moral reason and prudential reason are subcategories (more exactly, sub-employments) of practical reason, and yet are in conflict with one another. The only way to resolve this conflict is to embrace a form of practical reasoning Green calls 'religious reason'. The religious faith emerging out of this conflict, argues Green, constitutes critically sufficient grounds for theology. A comparison is made between Green's interpretation of Kant and its theological analogue in the work of John Hick. Although not a Kant exegete, Hick accepts Kant's moral philosophy as true, and makes an amendment to Kant's theoretical philosophy in order to get religion and theology off the ground. I show that Hick's methods are built on an internal logic nearly identical to that of Green's interpretation of Kant. The comparison shows the nature of theology when grounded in the transcendental boundaries of Kant's moral philosophy.

In chapter five, I examine Kant's transition to a third perspective in the *Critique of Judgement*. I find, per the work of Adina Davidovich, that God is not only a rational postulate of or requisite for the moral life, but also a belief necessary for any adequate answer to the question of hope. The *Summum Bonum* or Highest Good provides Kant with a way of dealing with the question of hope in the third *Critique*. Without a poetic vision of the Highest Good, human reason becomes unstable, and prone to retrograde moral pathways. We need God in order to construct forms of meaning (or 'religious realms') adequate for human hope. In this light, Davidovich argues that teleological judgement (or 'contemplation') became, for Kant, reason's most important faculty. I present her interpretation of Kant with a view to understanding the judicial grounds on which Kant believes theology can be established. I then compare Davidovich's reading of Kant with the theology of Gordon Kaufman, and make plain the form and content of theology at the transcendental boundaries of Kant's judicial philosophy.

Chapter six explores the possibility of a third transition in Kant's philosophy to a purely religious or mystical perspective. Turning to the interpretation of Stephen Palmquist, we study Kant's posthumous writings and writings before and after 1781 for indications that an overarching ontological perspective is at work in Kant's thinking. This 'Transcendental Perspective', as Palmquist calls it, grounds theology in human experience of the divine, and makes way for the type of theology we find in the work of Rudolf Otto and Paul Tillich. We can only understand God on Kant's terms when we recognize that religious experience is a universal phenomenon with rational and non-rational components. These components are traceable to the Transcendental Perspective of reason as it comes into contact with or 'encounters' reality. God cannot be said to exist like other objects of human experience, but must be thought of as existence itself or that which stands behind all that exists in human experience. God is 'the ground of

being', and this truth is the cornerstone of all genuine theology. The comparison of Palmquist's interpretation and Tillich's appropriation of Kant in this chapter shows the nature of theology built on Kant's ontological grounds.

In the seventh and eighth chapters, I review the resources brought to light in the previous chapters, and draw conclusions regarding the relationship of Kant's philosophy and Christian theology. Acknowledging that Kant's immediate resources, while more plentiful according to these interpretations, are still less than the Christian theologian desires, I turn to the most recent and theologically affirming work on Kant in the literature. Nathan Jacobs' and my book, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, figures prominently. Drawing on this work (as well as essays in the literature spun off this work), I highlight the ways in which Kant presses practical reason for the sake of moral soteriology beyond merely a generic belief in God, freedom and immortality to fully worked-out doctrines of moral depravity and transcendental type of 'Christology'. I draw out several motifs that must frame any critically satisfying account of rational religious faith, and focus in on one, namely, the motif of conflict between philosophy and theology. Drawn from Kant's *The Conflict of the Faculties*, this motif suggests that Kant's philosophy remains decidedly open to the continued development of rational religious faith under the chastening influence of theology. I look at one specific theological truth claim of concern to Christian theologians that Kant does not think has rational warrant, namely, the Trinity. I show how recent work in theology focused on the doctrine of the Trinity is beginning to challenge this view. This challenge is not dogmatic, however; rather the challenge is being made in accord with Kant's conflict motif by advancing new proposals meant to satisfy Kant's philosophical strictures. My argument is that these motifs in conjunction with a better understanding of the pervasive and substantive grounds for theology found throughout Kant's philosophy provide promising opportunities for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason.

Chapter Two
Knowledge and Cognition in Kant's Theoretical Philosophy

In this chapter, we explore Kant's strictures on knowledge of God by comparing the interpretations of P. F. Strawson and Henry E. Allison on Kant's theoretical philosophy. Strawson's and Allison's work represent two sides in the ongoing debate over the transcendental character of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Putting these two interpretations in dialogue with each other, I will argue that the epistemological claims of the first *Critique* do not provide a complete, self-sustaining paradigm for understanding Kant's work as a philosophical whole, and its incompleteness bids further inquiry into the nature of the transcendental boundaries of Kant's philosophy and the development of Kant's understanding of God based on it. Kant, in the first *Critique*, is decidedly open to the development of theology in a new transcendental form. Just how Kant manages this development in light of his strictures on knowledge, I argue, depends on recognizing a fundamental distinction in meaning between two words that Kant sometimes uses interchangeably – knowledge (*Wissen*) and cognition (*Erkenntnis*). Examining a debate spawned by Peter Byrne over whether or not Kant's strictures on knowledge allow for any legitimate form of faith in God, I contend that cognition (as opposed to knowledge and per Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics*) provides Kant with the rational resources necessary for the development of his transcendental theology. Kant's distinction between two types of cognition – empirical cognition, which is identical to empirical knowledge, and pure cognition, which enables Kant's particular conception of transcendental theology to get off the ground – prepares the way for the analysis of the relationship between faith and cognition in the next chapter.

Strawson does not deny that metaphysical optimism is found in Kant. In fact, he shows that there are many places in the first *Critique* and elsewhere where Kant implies as much. What he does deny is that Kant's metaphysical optimism rests on convincing philosophical argumentation. For Strawson, the main accomplishment of Kant's first *Critique* was to set philosophy (as opposed to metaphysics proper) 'on the sure path of a science' so that it could compare favourably with mathematics and the natural sciences. Kant's key tool is what Strawson calls 'the principle of significance'. He defines it as 'the principle that there can be no legitimate, or even meaningful, employment of ideas or concepts which does not relate them to

empirical or experiential conditions of their application'.[1] If a concept, theological or otherwise, is used in such a way that its 'experience-situation' cannot be specified, then we are not using the concept in a legitimate way. Kant appears to support this doctrine in the Second Chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgement: 'All concepts, and with them all principles, even such as are possible *a priori*, relate to empirical intuitions, that is, to the data for a possible experience. Apart from this relation they have no objective validity' (B195). According to Strawson, this is evidence that Kant's chief contention is against the very possibility of 'transcendent metaphysics'.

Outside of the principle of significance, philosophers and theologians might seem to have access to information about the nature of reality as it is in itself. However, the feeling that our ideas can correspond to reality outside of our ability to specify an experience-situation, Kant tells us in the first *Critique*, is the delusion of dogmatic metaphysics. It was the singular task of Kant's critical philosophy to establish the boundary between what can be known and what must remain unknown. 'The transcendental concept of appearances in space [(viz., the known)] … is a critical reminder that absolutely nothing that is intuited in space is a thing in itself, … but rather that objects in themselves are not known to us at all' (A30/B45). Kant's philosophy, carrying on the insights of David Hume, acts primarily as a kind of categorial sieve, separating the non-empirical ideas about the nature of reality from ones which might conceivably obtain in some possible experience-situation. Nevertheless, says Strawson, some ideas that are bereft of empirical significance do arise in the course of scientific inquiry, and have two discernible purposes. First, they stimulate the indefinite extension of empirical knowledge by inspiring our quest to understand nature in all its manifestations, and second, they make possible other forms of life, such as the moral life, which are important for maintaining our sense of humanness. In short, a genuinely scientific metaphysics exists only in 'the investigation of that limiting framework of ideas and principles the use and application of which are essential to empirical knowledge, and which are implicit in any coherent conception of experience we can form'.[2]

Strawson highlights an important duality in Kant's epistemology. 'This is the duality of general concepts, on the one hand, and particular instances of general concepts, encountered in experience, on the other'.[3] We must have general concepts in order to classify anything that enters our conscious experience, and, if something does enter our conscious experience, it must possess general characteristics. Particular instances of general concepts are called 'intuitions'. The combining of particular instances of general concepts (or intuitions) with the general concepts themselves is the process that Kant calls 'judgement'.[4] Of course,

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[1] P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (London: Methuen, 1966), 16.

[2] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 18.

[3] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 20.

[4] Cf. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 30.

Kant is intimately familiar with the dualism here expressed, and establishes it in Western philosophical heritage with his famous dictum: 'thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind' (A51/B75). Involved with this dualism are two faculties: the receptive faculty of sensibility and the active faculty of understanding. The former is the source of intuitions, while the latter is the source of concepts. This 'prepares the way', says Strawson, 'for ascribing to these faculties, as their source, those limiting features which he finds in the notion of experience in general'.[5] Kant's strictures on what counts as knowledge are limited to this intuition-concept formula. 'Thus it seems that there is no conceivable way in which concepts could be instantiated in our experience except by being aware of them in space and time'.[6] Space and time are forms of intuition that reside 'in us', and make up the theatre of nature in which experience is possible. 'The applicability of these notions is, then, a further necessary condition of the possibility of anything which deserves the name of experience or empirical knowledge'.[7]

Now, the interesting thing about this fairly standard formulation of Kant's theoretical philosophy thus far is that, though Strawson clearly understands it as an advance beyond the transcendent claims of the dogmatic metaphysicians as well as the preoccupation with the contents of our consciousness of the strict empiricists, he believes it also contains 'the seeds' of what would become a 'disastrous model'.[8] For Strawson, Kant's focus on the limiting features of distinctly human experience ultimately cuts us off from reality itself. 'Of things as they are in themselves as opposed to these appearances of them, we have, and can have, no knowledge whatever; for knowledge is possible only of what can be experienced, and nothing can be experienced except as subjected to the forms imposed by our sensibility and our understanding'.[9] Strawson thinks it doubtful that Kant can maintain much of a separation between his transcendental idealism and the empirical idealism of someone like Bishop Berkeley, despite his vigorous defence to the contrary.

The reason for this close identification between Kant and Berkeley in Strawson's interpretation has to do with the incompatibility of the principle of significance with the doctrine of the thing-in-itself and the related concept of 'affecting'. Transcendental idealism, according to Strawson, is not merely the doctrine 'that we can have no knowledge of a supersensible reality … [but] that reality is supersensible and that we can have no knowledge of it'.[10] Kant puts it thus: 'since appearances are nothing but representations, the understanding thus relates them to a **something**, as the object of sensible intuition: … a something = X, of which we know nothing at all' (A250/B307). This doctrine, what Henry Allison and others would later call the 'two-world' interpretation, 'swiftly plunges

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5 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 20.

6 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 20.

7 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 20.

8 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 20.

9 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 21.

10 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 38.

into unintelligibility', and presses Kant's philosophy toward a decidedly anti-metaphysical position. Strawson points out several problems with maintaining such a philosophical position, but for our purposes we will focus on one in particular. If we maintain the existence of two worlds in our epistemic outlook, one which is the world-as-it-appears given the constituents of human experience and the other which is the world-as-it-is-in-itself unconditioned by these constituents, and simultaneously assert that these worlds are in fact related because the latter gives rise to the former by 'affecting' it, then we are forced into a contradiction regarding the unknowability of the world-as-it-is-in-itself:

> The doctrine that we are aware of things only as they appear and not as they are in themselves because their appearances to us are the result of our constitution being affected by the objects, is a doctrine that we can understand just so long as the 'affecting' is thought of as something that occurs in space and time; but when it is added that we are to understand by space and time themselves nothing but a capacity or liability of ours to be affected in a certain way by objects not themselves in space and time, then we can no longer understand the doctrine, for we no longer know what 'affecting' means, or what we are to understand by 'ourselves'.[11]

Although Kant points out that we are unable to comprehend how the awareness of this affecting is possible, the fact remains, argues Strawson, that this lack of comprehension threatens the viability of Kant's entire position that things in space and time are mere appearances. Of course, to the extent that this is true, Kant's transcendental idealism is closer to being identified with empirical idealism than it is to being aligned with empirical realism.

Strawson takes the most acceptable of Kant's notions to be the principle of significance and the possibility that Kant's programme affords a scientific metaphysics of experience.[12] The possibility of any kind of transcendent metaphysic is difficult to establish and highly improbable on this scheme. Strawson identifies 'two attempts, substantially independent of each other, to show how there arises that idea of reason which, with the assistance of the transformed dynamical ideas, give impetus to the attempt at extra-empirical knowledge of God'.[13] The first is 'the idea of a supremely real being is an idea we are inevitably led to entertain by the commonplace thought of every particular object of experience as having a thoroughly determinate character'.[14] Strawson believes that there is 'no plausibility at all in Kant's suggestion that the entire enterprise of science is necessarily conducted under the aegis of the idea of an intelligent creator, and that we are thus inevitably led to this idea by Reason's characteristic search for general

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11 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 41

12 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 42.

13 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 221.

14 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 221.

explanations'.[15] The second is 'the idea of a supremely wise Author of Nature is a presupposition of natural science'.[16] Strawson contends that the idea of God, as an 'absolutely necessary existence, absolute perfection, [and] ultimate ground of everything', is a plausible contention, but only insofar as it rests on notions (e.g., the cosmological argument) in the Antinomies.[17] But this does not make much sense, of course, as rational grounds for theology since such an idea runs contrary to the very purpose of the Antinomies, which is to show that reason oversteps its boundaries whenever it attempts to move from considerations of phenomena to instantiations of noumena.

For Strawson, the only good conclusion to draw from Kant's inability to establish the cogency of any claim to extra-empirical knowledge of God is to declare Kant's entire approach to philosophical theology to be illusory. Kant understands reason as being ineluctably driven to escape the chain of causal dependence of one empirical existence on another by assuming the existence of a necessary being that is not contingent on anything else, and also does not belong to the sensible world. Kant also thinks that this conclusion can be inferred logically from previously stated doctrines and premises. However, according to Strawson, there is no way to move logically under transcendental principles from universal causal dependence of every particular existence to the existence of something (necessary or contingent) outside of the sensible world. Kant's belief that we simply cannot conceive of how this occurs but that it must occur is simply an illusion of reason. 'Lacking any such conception, we are as far as ever both from the final satisfaction of theoretical reason, which demands a complete explanation of everything, and from the achievement of the philosophical theologian's aim of proving the existence of God'.[18]

The only avenue left unexplored for the possibility of knowing God given Kant's theoretical philosophy is 'the enterprise of theoretical theology' itself. 'That is the attempt to prove the existence of God from the character of our actual experience of things in the world'.[19] This more comprehensive approach would combine whatever strength the cosmological argument is deemed to have with other *a posteriori* arguments. Strawson notes, for example, Kant's affection for the teleological argument (or physico-theological proof) for God's existence. These sorts of arguments all have the same limitations, however. Any theoretically propounded argument for theology falls into a dilemma: either appeal to non-empirical or transcendental modes of argument and be exposed to the same problem as the cosmological argument, or depend on strictly empirical principles to form analogies and fall short of the theological aim. For this reason 'Neither by *a priori* nor by empirical arguments can the existence of a divine being be

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15 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 37.

16 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 221.

17 Cf. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 36–37 and 207–215.

18 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 224.

19 Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 225.

established'.[20] It is possible to think things that may in fact be true about God, but we are not able to know that these things are true of God, and this is tantamount in Kant's way of thinking to not really having any knowledge, or even the possibility of knowledge, at all. Things predicated of God simply will not stick as forms of knowledge. Implicit in this assertion is a 'twofold negative utility to theology itself'.[21] 'If we are inhibited from asserting', avers Strawson, 'we are also inhibited from denying, on theoretical grounds, what we may have other, perhaps moral, grounds for accepting'.[22]

In contrast to Strawson's analysis of the ontological deficiencies of Kant's philosophy, Henry Allison's interpretation focuses on the epistemological sufficiencies of Kant's philosophy, emphasizing empirical realism and transcendental idealism as complementary features of Kant's theoretical philosophy. Allison begins the defence of his interpretation of Kant's theoretical philosophy by placing it against the backdrop of the traditional interpretation of Kant's first *Critique*. He distils the traditional interpretation down to two basic insights: (1) the real is unknowable; and (2) knowledge is relegated to the subjective realm of appearances.[23] This interpretation of Kant combines a psychological (or phenomenalistic) account of what we actually experience in the mind, and thus 'know', with the postulation of another set of entities that are in fact unknowable. Kant deems it necessary, according to proponents of this interpretation, to explain how the mind acquires its representations in the face of the difficulties inherent in maintaining this bifurcated position. We are appeared to, and these appearances have to come from somewhere. Critical reasoning asserts that the philosopher cannot revert back to empirical idealism by just assuming that appearances are real. The basic assumption of the traditional interpretation, as exemplified by Strawson, is that the mind can only be appeared to by acquiring data for representation from the real (but unknown) world. The mind has to be 'affected' by things in themselves. Saying even this about things in themselves, however, contradicts

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[20] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 226.

[21] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 226.

[22] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 226. Historically, Strawson's interpretation builds on the well-known interpretation and critique of Kant in the work of H. A. Prichard. Prichard believes that Kant's subjective starting point forces him to maintain one of two alternatives: (1) things of experience only seem to be extended in space and time, and this 'seeming' implies that our mental experience of extension and duration is only an illusion (Berkeleian Idealism); or (2) our representations of things really are spatial, and this doctrine is incoherent because mental ideas cannot be extended and located in space (Cartesian Absurdity). Given the fact that Kant clearly does not want to go down the road of point one, Prichard focuses his attack on the fact that Kant's appearance talk is in fact incoherent as it stands (Prichard, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, 116.). Unless Kant wants his philosophy to be logically driven towards a sophisticated form of Berkeleian philosophy, it requires the kind of rejuvenation that Strawson's work represents.

[23] Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 3–4.

their characteristic unknowability. If we can know that they affect representations in the mind of a human being, then we can know something about them. This, though, is ruled out by the definition of their very nature.

Allison summarizes Strawson's position on the incoherence of Kant's doctrine of appearance as follows:

> As Strawson sees it, transcendental idealism is the direct consequence of Kant's 'perversion' of the 'scientifically minded philosopher's' contrast between a realm of physical objects composed of primary qualities and a mental realm consisting of the sensible appearances of these objects (including their secondary qualities). This mental realm, like its Kantian counterpart, is thought to be produced by means of an affection of the mind, in this case by physical objects. Kant allegedly perverts this model by assigning the whole spatiotemporal framework (which according to the original model pertains to the 'real', that is to say, to physical objects) to the subjective constitution of the human mind. The resulting doctrine is judged to be incoherent because, among other reasons, it is with reference only to a spatiotemporal framework that one can talk intelligibly about 'affection'.[24]

This is what Allison means by the 'two-world' interpretation of Kant's epistemology. There is the world 'out there' and the world of space and time constituted by the subject's inner state of consciousness and its sensations. It is only the latter world, the world of appearances or representations, that we can know. It has as its source the world out there – and that world out there is the real world – but we can only know of it insofar as it affects our sensibilities, and synthesizes our concepts. We can never know the real world as it truly is.

Allison's critique of and rejoinder to this standard portrayal of Kant is rooted in its failure 'to distinguish sharply between the empirical and the transcendental versions of two generally acknowledged and closely related distinctions'.[25] The distinctions Allison has in mind are between what he calls 'ideality' and 'reality', and 'appearances' and 'things in themselves'. Ideality signifies for Kant what is mind-dependent or in the mind. Reality, on the other hand, signifies what is mind-independent or external to the mind. In the Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Dialectic, Kant makes the explicit distinction between the empirical and transcendental senses of 'ideality' based on the well-known and sometimes disputed distinction between his critical philosophy and Berkeleian philosophy. Allison argues that there is an implicit distinction in these passages between the empirical and transcendental senses of 'reality' as well. This additional distinction is the real key to making clear the complex nuances in Kant's theoretical philosophy. These two pairs of distinctions, taken together, create four separate conceptions of philosophy, two of which can be combined to yield the proper

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[24] Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 4.

[25] Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 6.

conception of Kant's theoretical philosophy, namely, transcendental idealism and empirical realism.

Transcendental ideality refers to the universal, necessary and *a priori* conditions for the possibility of experience and knowledge. Transcendental idealism is not concerned with imagining some affecting realm and positing reality within that realm, but instead with understanding the way in which an object as an assumed part of the real is able to be conceived. It refers to the boundaries and constituents of knowledge rather than to a realm of knowledge posited over and against a realm of unknowable things. It removes the strong ontological features of transcendental realism and does so, according to Allison, on critical and Copernican grounds that are distinct from the empirical idealism of Berkeleianism. For Allison, 'to speak of appearance in the transcendental sense is simply to speak of spatiotemporal entities (phenomena), that is, of things insofar as they are viewed as subject to the conditions of human sensibility. Correlatively, to speak of things in themselves transcendentally is to speak of things insofar as they are independent of these conditions'.[26]

Empirical reality, on the other hand, refers to an intersubjective realm of objects that makes up what Kant calls 'the island of truth'. It is here that rational discourse is able to probe the depths of nature with a view to saying something true about reality as we experience it. The 'real' in empirical realism refers to that which is common to all those perceivers with similar noetic structures and sensory apparatuses. This definition of empirical realism appeals to those passages in Kant where he discusses the 'common sense' of humankind and the language of experience that, though imperfect and prone to err, can lead humanity progressively towards a deeper understanding of our world. To be empirically real is to be a member of that class of entities that we can talk meaningfully about, make knowledge claims about, and develop discernible arguments as to the actual nature of the thing under consideration. This process is open to every subject on theoretically neutral ground. Provided that our rational inquiries are motivated by a design plan aimed at truth, a clear picture of the knowable emerges along with the nature of our empirical access to it. It is linked to the strictly empirical distinction of seeing the world of appearance in a certain way (subject to specifiable conditions in which the experience as such occurs) and imagining the experience of some object in some ideal circumstance (independent of the conditions in which the experience in question occurs). It involves the ongoing process of seeking truth through rational and inter-subjective dialogue. Transcendental idealism takes account of the epistemic distinction between how objects may be considered: in the first case, objects can be considered 'in relation to the subjective conditions of human sensibility' or as they 'appear'. In the second case, objects can be considered 'independently of these conditions' or as they are 'in themselves'.

One of the key distinctions between Strawson's and Allison's respective interpretations of Kant is that the former engenders what Nicholas Wolterstorff

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[26] Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 7.

calls 'Kantian anxiety'.[27] This anxiety is based on the fact that 'we can have no *knowledge* of supersensible objects through the categories' and yet 'we may nevertheless legitimately *think* of such objects in terms of the categories'.[28] It appears difficult to reconcile the notion of two worlds in language that can in principle be understood. Although both worlds require spatiotemporal definitions in order to understand them in even the simplest terms, only the phenomenal can be defined without some kind of implicit contradiction. If we accept merely Kant's principle of significance as defined by Strawson, then we are left in a serious quandary with regard to how any kind of supersensible or metaphysical discourse is possible.[29] In Strawson's words, it 'discredit[s], once and for all, the pretensions of transcendent metaphysics'.[30] In so doing, 'It has a different kind of importance as leaving room for certain morally based convictions, not amounting to knowledge'.[31]

Allison's interpretation appears not to create the same metaphysical anxiety as Strawson's interpretation, because it maintains a clear distinction between the combination of transcendental idealism and empirical realism and its counterpart transcendental realism and empirical idealism. Allison understands the former combination as the starting point for critical philosophy and the initial step in a thoroughgoing analysis of human experience. When we seek the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience, we must begin with the objects of appearance. These are the things, when we first open our senses, about which we can say something immediately coherent and meaningful. The transcendental conditions, however, yield knowledge of the synthetic *a priori* variety, and require a thoroughgoing determination to identify as transcendental constituents of meaningful human experience.

The key point of Allison's interpretation is that these transcendental conditions 'do not determine how objects "seem" to us or "appear" in the empirical sense; rather, they express the universal and necessary conditions in terms of which alone the human mind is capable of recognizing something as an object at all'.[32] Kant's transcendental idealism is not a psychological thesis about how entities impact

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[27] See Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Is it Possible or Desirable for Theologians to Recover From Kant?" Modern Theology 14/1 (January 1998), 1–18.

[28] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 264–265.

[29] Strawson's understanding of human knowledge under Kant's theoretical philosophy is reducible to two fundamental points: first, 'we can have some non-empirical knowledge (knowledge which does not rest on the actual course of experience) of objects of possible experience in space and time', and second, 'we can have no other non-empirical knowledge, and hence no knowledge at all of anything else'. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 240. These implications of the principle of significance obviously create problems for the establishment of the possibility of metaphysical discourse.

[30] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 240.

[31] Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 240–41.

[32] Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 9.

the mind to form appearances of the real in human consciousness; instead, it is a philosophical treatment of the conditions that govern human knowledge: we can know things as they appear because of the 'epistemic conditions' governing the way in which this knowledge is received.[33] Examples of epistemic conditions include space and time, or what Kant calls 'concepts of an object in general', and the category of causality, which is a specific 'objectifying condition'. These are examples of what Kant, in the first *Critique*, calls 'necessary conditions' for the possibility of experience. However, Allison submits that a 'broader notion of an epistemic condition better captures the essential thrust of Kant's thought'.[34] Kant is not primarily concerned with the knowledge that comes from experience, but with the epistemic conditions which give rise to that knowledge. This means it is possible and perhaps even probable that mathematics and metaphysics are more important to Kant's real concerns than is empirical knowledge as such. Nevertheless, as Allison puts it, 'Epistemic conditions must … figure in the Kantian account of nonempirical knowledge'.[35] The task of the critical philosopher is to find out the nature and extent of these epistemic conditions and to seek explanations for all forms of human experience. As Kant puts it, 'The **possibility of experience** is therefore that which gives all our cognitions *a priori* objective reality' (A156/B195). This is at once a more suggestive and metaphysically useful understanding of Kant's theoretical philosophy than that of Strawson in *The Bounds of Sense*, and is crucial to understanding the development of Kant's philosophical programme in terms of its theological implications and promise.[36]

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[33] Allison defines 'epistemic condition' as follows: a condition 'that is necessary for the representation of an object or an objective state of affairs'. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 10. Things like the brain, central nervous system, and the senses might be thought of as epistemic conditions, although what Allison has in mind is not these intermediating conditions but the constitutive ones, which are universal and necessary. One might think of logical conditions, like the law of non-contradiction, as being a part of what Allison means by epistemic conditions; for Allison, however, these conditions serve merely 'as a rule for thinking, but not for the representation of objects'. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 10.

[34] Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 10.

[35] Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 11. One example of this principle is found in Kant's account of analytic judgements. According to Allison, 'the pure concepts in their "logical use" can even be regarded as epistemic conditions of analytic judgements'. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, 11.

[36] Although Allison's interpretation of Kant's theoretical philosophy has become arguably the new standard, there are still those who question whether or not it represents Kant's intentions for his philosophy. Alvin Plantinga, for instance, suggests that 'it seems a bit difficult to reconcile [the "double-aspect" interpretation] with Kant's own view that his thought constituted a revolution'. Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13. Much of it, he goes on to say, 'would be accepted even by such staunch prerevolutionaries as Aristotle and Aquinas'. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 13.

In Allison's interpretation of Kant there is no doctrine of two mutually exclusive worlds, because Kant's project is deemed to be predominantly epistemic; it shows what is possible for humans to know of reality as it is represented to us by the requisite receptive capabilities of the human mind. What appears to be the most revolutionary of Kant's concepts, on this interpretation, is not a metaphysic complete with a detailed ontology, but a transcendental methodology for establishing philosophy on a firm footing – a philosophical basis from which to do critical science and to explore critically any and all metaphysical claims from cognitive vantage points other than the theoretical (i.e., the moral and aesthetic vantage points of the second and third Critiques). It is a firm Kantian commonplace that there is a boundary line between the world-as-it-appears or the 'known' and the world as-it-is-in-itself or the 'unknown', and that this boundary line dismisses what Kant calls dogmatic metaphysics, which attempts to establish 'the three primary objects of scholastic philosophy, namely freedom, immortality, and God' as possible objects of knowledge.[37] What is less commonly realized is that a distinctly transcendental form of human cognition constitutes the boundary line of reason, giving it a kind of 'thickness', an unexplored extension or range that comprises a crucial part of the epistemic conditions making experience possible.[38]

In Strawson's more recent work on Kant, he addresses interpretations like Allison's, and summarizes two distinct interpretive theses for understanding Kant's theoretical philosophy that appear consistent with the first *Critique*.[39] Strawson notes that, like his own interpretation in *The Bounds of Sense*, Allison-like interpretations deny the logical viability of the two-worlds doctrine.[40] According to Strawson, such interpretations offer neither two-worlds nor two-realisms; instead, empirical realism is maintained, and 'we are merely offered the

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[37] F. E. England, *Kant's Conception of God* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929), 205. Metaphysical objects cannot be known in this way, argues Kant, precisely because they are by definition beyond the physical and have no possible intuition corresponding to their conception.

[38] I should note that one cannot easily overestimate the significance of this insight for post-Kantian theology. The insight makes sense not only of Kant's denial of knowledge by making room for faith within the transcendental boundaries of reason itself, but also of Kant's analysis of religion within the boundaries of reason (as we will examine in more detail below). On this view, rational religious faith is to be grounded not in considerations of phenomena or noumena (i.e., knowledge or speculation), but in transcendental considerations or, put another way, in the very conditions that make up the boundaries of reason and yield human experience in its various dimensions.

[39] P. F. Strawson, *Entity and Identity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). By inverting the implications of Kant's transcendental idealism, Strawson thinks a third interpretive thesis might be added to the mix of interpretations supported in the first *Critique*. Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 249.

[40] Though he does not mention Allison by name, it is clear that Strawson's rejoinders are aimed at the kinds of argument developed by Allison (cf. Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 248).

cautious and surely legitimate reminder that human knowledge cannot exceed the bounds of human cognitive capacities'.[41] We are thus forced into entertaining one of two possibilities for capturing the essence of Kant's critical philosophy: either empirical idealism or epistemic idealism. The first path results from a closer analysis of what the thing in itself must mean on this scheme:

> If, in accordance with a purely negative concept of the noumenon, the thought of things in themselves is to be understood simply and solely as the thought of the very things of which human knowledge is possible, but the thought of them in total abstraction from what have been shown (or argued) to be the conditions of the very possibility of any such knowledge, then it must surely be concluded that the thought is empty; for the doctrine that we can have no knowledge of things as they are in themselves then reduces to a tautology: the tautology that knowledge of things of which we can have knowledge is impossible except under the conditions under which it is possible; or we can know of things only what we can know of them.[42]

Going down this road of interpretation insulates Kant's idealism from the charge of saying more than can be said about the supersensible or unconditioned objects. It also, suggests Strawson, makes the 'idealism' in Kant's 'transcendental idealism' appear vacuous – 'little more than a token name'.[43] It is, in a sense, more Berkeleian than Platonic, or more empirical than metaphysical. The second path is to understand the thing in itself as the by-product of 'the brilliant and largely persuasive demonstration of the necessary structural features of human knowledge and experience which makes the first *Critique* a work of unique philosophical importance'.[44] Here we simply defer the ontological question, and understand the thing in itself as reality unconditioned and the product of the intellectual virtue of humility.

Strawson essentially leaves us with a choice to either accept his earlier analysis of the theoretical philosophy and thereby limit the effective range of Kant's philosophy to the empirical dimension of the first *Critique*, or accept something like Allison's interpretation, complete with its inherent theological vagueness, and seek clarity from the developments in Kant's philosophy subsequent to its purely theoretical derivations. Important to notice about the second option is that much of the metaphysical pessimism of the two-world interpretation is lost. Without the philosophical dominance of the principle of significance, the theological sceptic must remain silent on metaphysical matters. Reason, for instance, cannot determine whether or not a divine being exists. By the same token, thought and talk about God can no longer proceed with business as usual in the dogmatic sense of traditional

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41 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 249.

42 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 241.

43 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 241.

44 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 249.

metaphysics. Emerging in its place is a hard to discern and demarcate quest to understand the possible grounds for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason. As Strawson remarks, 'the thought of a separate, transcendent realm of reality has withered'.[45] Equally, the thought of empirical proof for the existence and nature of God has lost its ability to convince and provide a secure foundation for theology. Ironically however, Kant's philosophy itself is also found to be incomplete. As we try to hold Kant's first *Critique* together in the light of his competing objectives, we are left with a somewhat fuzzy middle ground position – between not totally abolishing the implication of two realisms in his transcendental turn to the subject and understanding that 'there may be more to the real things we can have some knowledge of, than we can, or ever could, know about them'.[46]

What we learn then from Strawson's careful analysis is that there is vagueness in the theoretical philosophy, which suggests simultaneously that theoretical knowledge is the philosopher's 'island of truth' (i.e., a rationally defensible philosophical epistemology of the empirical world) and that the 'vast and stormy ocean' of metaphysics must be charted in a way other than that of dogmatic metaphysics, but in a way consonant with the transcendental nature of reason. Evident to Strawson is that in all interpretations of Kant's theoretical philosophy

> the curtain of sense cuts us empirical beings irrevocably off from *knowledge* of things as they are in themselves, yet the curtain is not, according to Kant, in every respect impenetrable. From behind it reality, as it were, speaks: giving us, not information, but commands – the moral imperative; and, with that, something else: a (kind of) hope and even faith.[47]

Strawson's work leaves us with the realization that the first *Critique*, when isolated from the remainder of Kant's corpus, does not constitute a complete system. The first *Critique* alone, per Kant's admission of unavoidable problems surrounding God, freedom and immortality and the lack of any definitive indication of what the development of his transcendental idealism will look like, is left wanting. It is not that the first *Critique* is incoherent, but it appears on close inspection to be incomplete both in terms of exposition and extension.

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45 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 249.

46 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 249.

47 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 251. In his early work on Kant, Strawson recognizes and seeks to legitimate Kant's insistence on the importance of an ethical sphere in his critical philosophy. However, he believes this sphere is on the same tenuous footing as the appearance doctrine of his theoretical philosophy. Kant's belief in a supersensible reality, despite its apparent support in the first *Critique* distinction between the appearance and the thing in itself, really only finds its rational justification in Kant's moral philosophy. However, Strawson believes this support is equally weak and difficult to sustain. See Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense*, 241.

While Kant's first *Critique* may not present a single definitive account of the theoretical philosophy, particularly in reference to the possible grounds for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason, it does offer a clear case for the position that God, unlike apple pie and hippopotami, cannot be an object of knowledge. Virtually all interpreters agree that this claim serves as a backdrop for the intricate arguments of the Transcendental Analytic and Dialectic parts of the first *Critique*, especially those well-known passages in the Transcendental Dialectic critiquing the traditional proofs for God's existence. The claim also extends throughout Kant's writings after the first *Critique* and serves to limit the way in which the rational foundations for religious belief can be constructed. Despite the obvious theological challenges this position presents, Kant's explanation of the transcendental feature of his philosophy in the first *Critique* is at once decidedly open to and suggestive of the potential development of grounds for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason. This openness and suggestiveness can be seen throughout the first *Critique*, but most notably in the Introduction and the Doctrine of Method (i.e., framing his theoretical philosophy at the beginning and end of the text) and more centrally in Kant's discussion of the antinomies of reason (A405–A567/B432–B595) and in The Second Book of the Transcendental Dialectic Chapter Three, subtitled 'The ideal of pure reason' (A567–A642/B595–B670). It will be worth our time to examine these sections in order to get a sense of direction for where Kant's transcendental theology is headed and bring into focus some of the theological vagueness fostered by his theoretical strictures on knowledge.

In the Introduction, Kant speaks of the natural predisposition of reason as it 'pushes on, driven by its own need to such questions that cannot be answered by any experiential use of reason and of principles borrowed from such a use; and thus a certain sort of metaphysics has actually been present in all human beings as soon as reason has extended itself to speculation in them' (B21). Kant's consistent position in the first *Critique*, consonant with the findings of the Strawson/Allison debate, is that the transcendental philosophy itself is not complete, and what remains to be done is 'an exhaustive analysis of all of human cognition *a priori*' (A13/B27). Toward the end of the first *Critique*, Kant confirms his plan to develop the implications of his programme into a coherent system of transcendental inquiry: 'Under the government of reason our cognitions cannot at all constitute a rhapsody but must constitute a system, in which alone they can support and advance its essential ends. I understand by a system, however, the unity of the manifold of cognitions' (A832/B860). Precisely what Kant means by such a unity is open to debate. He might, for instance, be equating this manifold of cognitions with something like the Wittgensteinian notion of 'the totality of facts', a purely empirical compilation of ideas that leaves us in total silence about any and all metaphysical truth claims. However, Kant hints repeatedly in the first *Critique* (sometimes even making explicit statements to this effect) that what he wants to argue for is far more than metaphysical mystery or mysticism. For Kant, this

manifold of cognition can, and indeed should, provide *room* for a more robust form of *faith*.

Added to the various hints regarding Kant's desire to develop some kind of transcendental approach to theology rooted in the manifold of cognitions, we encounter specific passages at the very heart of the first *Critique* devoted to working out the details of what the critical philosophy will allow theologically. A well-known passage is Kant's discussion of the antinomies of reason (A405–A567/B432–B595). In this passage, we find not only Kant probing the limits of reason where theology is concerned, but also a confidence that reason has the resources to deal with the idea of God rationally. Kant writes, for example, 'Now I assert that among all speculative cognition, transcendental philosophy has the special property that there is no question at all dealing with an object given by pure reason that is insoluble by this very same human reason' (A477/B505). More specifically, Kant contends that 'If the object is transcendental and thus in itself unknown, …then we should seek an object for our idea, which we can concede to be unknown to us, but not on that account impossible' (A478/B506). Another way of putting Kant's point is that cognitions of fact (e.g., the length of the Golden Gate Bridge or the speed of sound under certain conditions) are objective 'knowns' or 'givens', while other cognitions are transcendental (e.g., the existence of God and immortality) but remain objective possibilities despite their empirical unknowability. Cognitions emanating from the transcendental recesses of pure reason might contradict concrete facts about the world, but they do not always contradict in this way. Kant tells us some are not mere figments or creations, but meaningful ideas that arise naturally in the course of reason's self-determination and determination of things in the world.

Kant's openness to theology is more explicit in The Second Book of the Transcendental Dialectic Chapter Three, subtitled 'The ideal of pure reason' (A567–A642/B595–B670). Very often commentators focus on Section Three to Section Six of Chapter Three (A583–A630/B658–B661) wherein Kant sets out to show that all types of speculative reason in support of God's existence are inconclusive. However, the context of Kant's arguments against such proofs is an attempt to display the contours of his transcendental theology relative to their theoretical limitations. He begins with an apparent affirmation of Strawson's principle of significance. In summing up what has been previously argued, Kant writes: 'We have seen above that no objects at all can be represented through concepts of the understanding without any conditions of sensibility, because the conditions for the objective reality of these concepts are lacking, and nothing is encountered in them except the pure form of thinking' (A567/B595). The pure form of thinking refers to objects of thought which can be either valid or invalid depending on their inherent logic. Rather than a strict Ayer-like logical positivism, what Kant appears to have in mind is a spectrum of objectivity stretching from objective reality to objective validity, from objects of knowledge to mere figments of the imagination. There are concepts 'represented *in concreto*', the categories,

ideas of various sorts and ideals, and Kant is striving throughout the first *Critique* to place them properly within the noetic superstructure of reason.

Kant chooses in this section to focus in on the notion of an ideal, which he defines as an idea with '**practical** power (as regulative principles) grounding the possibility of the perfection of certain **actions**' (A569/B597). The epistemic status of an ideal, from the theoretical perspective, is somewhere between 'an idea represented *in concreto*' and mere 'figment'. According to Kant, the ideal 'serves as the **original image** for a thoroughgoing determination of the copy; and we have in us no other standard for our actions than the conduct of this divine human being, with which we can compare ourselves, judging ourselves and thereby improving ourselves, even though we can never reach the standard' (A569/B597). Anticipating movements in his thinking that will not reach their maturity until the philosophy of religion, Kant seems to be suggesting that a natural affinity exists between human beings and the ideal human being (or the divine-human). The image of the ideal is transcendentally (practically but not empirically) stamped upon each human subject and for this reason we can think of the divine-human as the personification of the moral law. Referring to ideals more generally conceived, Kant writes, 'These ideals, even though one may never concede them objective reality (existence), are nevertheless not to be regarded as mere figments of the brain; rather they provide an indispensable standard for reason, which needs the concept of that which is entirely complete in its kind, in order to assess and measure the degree and the defects of what is incomplete' (A569–570/B597–598). Kant's concern is not to present these transcendental aspects of reason as either empirical realities or mere figments. Instead, he is exploring warrant for belief in these ideals in terms both of their limits and of their allowances in reason. Built into the very concept of the moral law, argues Kant, is the practical personification of what human beings can become.

It is important to make clear, however, that for Kant 'try[ing] to realize the ideal in an example, i.e., in appearance, such as that of the sage in a novel, is not feasible' (A570/B598). The reason this is not feasible is not because the ideal could not manifest its perfection in this world, but that humans have 'natural limits which constantly impair the completeness in the idea [and] render impossible every illusion in such an attempt, and thereby render even what is good in the idea suspect by making it similar to a mere fiction' (A570/B598). The ideal of human perfection to which all humans have access through freedom and the moral law serves as a guide and judge but is not a concrete form of knowledge. It is impossible for the ideal to appear to us the way tables and chairs do; nevertheless, the ideal is something other than simply the product of the human imagination. Such byproducts, which Kant calls 'figments', 'fictions', 'monograms', or 'sketches', are more closely aligned with the work of artists than with a rational understanding of the human being: 'The aim of reason with its ideal is, on the contrary, a thoroughgoing determination in accordance with *a priori* rules; hence it thinks for itself an object that is to be thoroughly determinable in accordance with principles, even though the sufficient conditions are absent from experience,

and thus the concept itself is transcendent' (A571/B579). When human reason thinks for itself an object conforming to the ideal of human perfection, the individual has access naturally to the guide and judge (which respectively implore and convict according to freedom and the moral law). Yet this ideal is neither an object of possible experience nor does it strictly speaking exist; it is 'determinable in accordance with principles', and forms the ideal toward which we naturally measure our humanity.

The tightrope Kant is walking in his version of transcendental idealism as it pertains to theology depends on the concept of the transcendental ideal and its relationship to humanity and the world. Kant calls it the '**original being**', the '**highest being**' and the '**being of all beings**' (A578–579/B606–607). And yet 'reason does not presuppose the existence of a being conforming to the ideal, but only the idea of such a being, in order to derive from an unconditioned totality of thoroughgoing determination the conditioned totality' (A577–578/B605–606). Kant's point is not that the ideal is a possible object of empirical knowledge, nor is it an object assumed to exist in the noumenal realm (whatever that might mean); instead, the transcendental ideal resides in the boundaries of human reason at the interface between reason and the world. Additionally, in the very receptive capacities that gave rise to the possibility of knowledge according to the first *Critique*, the divine-human ideal (or what Kant calls the '*Prototypon transcendentale'*) emerges as the measure of humanity, and is constitutively linked to the moral law as its extension, personification and completion. Later on in his philosophy of religion, Kant will speak of this divine-human ideal as eternally proceeding from God. To say that this ideal exists is, thus, not to state a falsehood, but only to make a type of category error. It is wrong, says Kant, to think of the ideal as 'the objective relation of an actual object to other things'; it is the idea that grounds our concepts, and 'the existence of a being of such preeminent excellence…leaves us in complete ignorance' (A579/B607). The hypostatizing of this transcendental ideal gives rise to the notion of a critical metaphysic or transcendental theology. Hypostatization yields the attributes of singularity, simplicity, all-sufficiency, eternality and more (A580/B608). 'The concept of such a being is that of **God** thought of in a transcendental sense, and thus the ideal of pure reason is the object of a transcendental **theology**' (A580/B608).

Admittedly, Kant's arguments on these matters are sometimes hard to follow, but it is equally hard to miss their suggestiveness and promise for theology. These examples of openness to theological inquiry are telling insofar as they indicate that Kant's pessimism over our ability to gain theoretical knowledge of God from things like the traditional proofs for God's existence or direct experiences of God do not constitute pessimism regarding theology in general. Kant shows over and again in the first *Critique* that the critical philosopher should be both careful and optimistic regarding the development of transcendental theology amidst theoretical strictures on knowledge. Moreover, the vagueness of the theoretical philosophy per the Strawson/Allison debate, when put into the context of Kant's pronounced calls in the first *Critique* for the development of theology along transcendental

pathways (which are not yet fully developed, and will depend on his transition to practical reason), make it likely that Kant believes his philosophy has rational warrant for launching transcendental theology without reference to knowledge, even at the earliest stages in its development.

More could be said on the above points, but we are always going to be left with a nagging question about Kant's excursus into the realm of theology – where precisely in the denial of knowledge does Kant provide rational room for a pathway to faith? Put another way, where are we to locate Kant's rational resources for the development of theology that allow us to move coherently from the first *Critique*, where we find the many examples of God- talk and God-thought mentioned above, to subsequent developments in the practical philosophy and beyond? A good way of approaching this question is to examine a debate that began with Peter Byrne's essay, 'Kant's Moral Proof of the Existence of God'.[48] Byrne's essay presents a direct challenge to the very possibility of a Kantian theology and as such serves as the perfect backdrop for addressing this question. The debate which ensued from Byrne's essay exposes a lacuna in our thinking on Kant, which, once resolved, clarifies the theoretical basis for Kant's development of the rational grounds for theology. Where Strawson and Allison mainly do exegetical analysis of Kant's first *Critique* in order to show what Kant took to be (or should have taken to be) the implications of his theoretical philosophy for epistemology and ontology, Byrne's assessment of Kant's philosophy is primarily analytic, focusing on first *Critique* doctrines and the difficulties they pose for grounding faith in Kant's philosophy generally and in practical reason specifically. In his essay, he makes the case for the necessary presence of a fundamental flaw in any attempt to advance beyond Kant's strictures on knowledge of God to a rationally defensible posture of faith in God. By pressing the implications of this flaw, Byrne unwittingly unearths an underdeveloped aspect of the critical philosophy – an ambiguity in Kant's understanding of human cognition.

Byrne's main point is to challenge the logic of moving from Kant's 'denial of knowledge' of God to the claim to have established 'room for faith'. He observes that since for Kant 'Knowledge that God exists is in principle impossible … it follows that we could never have any good reason for claiming to know that God exists'.[49] Now, any cognitive or volitional activities that depend on knowledge of 'God exists' are likewise to be denied. If Kant's transcendental theology is meant

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[48] Peter Byrne, 'Kant's Moral Proof for the Existence of God', *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1982) 32:333–343. Henceforth called 'Kant's Moral Proof'. This way into the presentation of the significance of cognition and faith follows an argument first made in Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), Chapter Four. So crucial is the insight for understanding Kant's rational foundations for theology, as well as for providing a defence of Kant's *Religion*, which was the intention of its original formulation, that I here paraphrase its essential features, rearranged and expanded to accommodate the argument of this book.

[49] Byrne, 'Kant's Moral Proof', 333.

to cohere with his position on knowledge, any kind of justifiable faith in God is problematic. In other words, Byrne thinks there is a fundamental incoherence in Kant's procedure: 'If one rules out knowledge of God as impossible in principle then one also rules out the possibility of faith, where this entails believing or thinking that God exists'.[50] For Byrne, Kant's clear intention is to make room for faith in practical reason in spite of the fact that he has rigidly denied knowledge of God in theoretical reason. But, according to Byrne, Kant's plan simply does not work. Denying knowledge of God makes faith in God a non-starter – there is simply no room for it, no rational reasons to support it. Kant's attempt to circumvent this deduction focuses on practical reason. For Byrne, however, 'practical considerations [that] fully justify his faith that God exists' are not possible.[51] Kant's earlier denial of knowledge means that faith has no substantial content, which in turn entails the denial of any justifiable faith whatsoever.

Contrary to Byrne, Don Wiebe argues that Kant's theology is rooted in '*cognitive* faith … [and] can quite legitimately, even if only in a weak sense, be referred to as religious knowledge'.[52] Wiebe counters Byrne's concerns regarding the coherence of combining Kant's knowledge and faith doctrines with a novel attempt to unify the two. His argument attempts to show how the two positions are actually best understood to be on the same cognitive (and thus logical) plane. Wiebe calls practical reason 'a practical function of the same reason [as theoretical reason]'.[53] Kant's denial of knowledge in the first *Critique* creates a 'cognitive vacuum' or 'need' in reason, and practical reason is what fills this vacuum or satisfies this need. Wiebe writes,

> Kant obstinately denies knowledge of the unconditioned. The cognitive vacuum at the apex of our system of knowledge must remain theoretically or speculatively empty; *but not thereupon completely cognitively empty*. If reason in its theoretical use cannot fill the vacuum, perhaps reason in its practical use can. The ideas of reason, that is, if not capable of theoretical justification may be capable of a practical justification.[54]

The idea is that the inherent logic of theoretical reason leaves an empty void in the area of knowledge. Being at the apex of our knowledge, this void has a quite discernible shape that only the practical dimension of reason is readily able to fill.

If reason is ultimately going to be logically consistent, it must perform its practical function, by filling in the emptiness at the apex of our knowledge.

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50 Byrne, 'Kant's Moral Proof', 335.

51 Byrne, 'Kant's Moral Proof', 335.

52 Don Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution: Kant on the Nature of Faith', *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1983) 33:516.

53 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 518–519.

54 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 519.

According to Wiebe, 'if we are to avoid moral absurdity … this cognitive vacuum in our system of knowledge must be filled with something more than mere logical possibilities. Certain assumptions must be made'.[55] According to Wiebe, these assumptions are not possible objects of knowledge, but necessary postulates for the moral life. In other words, 'they are "mere things of faith"', objects for concepts whose objective reality cannot be proved.[56] Wiebe's main point is that the 'things of faith' are able to fill in the theoretical void in knowledge even though the 'things of fact' cannot. According to Wiebe, things of faith are 'rational' but they do not constitute theoretical knowledge. 'Acceptance of them', avers Wiebe, 'is not justified on theoretical grounds but rather on practical grounds'.[57] Morality, when it fulfils its function, affords human beings a different kind of knowledge – a lesser knowledge called practical or moral faith. Wiebe avers, '[The] pronouncements [of practical reason] are not to be considered as the intuitive knowledge of theoretical reason, but rather as assumptions. However, when pure practical reason provides reality to these assumptions, transforming them into "postulates", some entry into the theoretical sphere is gained'.[58]

The main problem with Wiebe's thesis has to do with where it leads: namely, moral faith entails knowledge of metaphysics. Wiebe writes, 'a very important characterization of the nature of moral faith … [is] that through it we gain, in some small way, an *extension* of our theoretical knowledge'.[59] In a response article, J. C. Luik directly contradicts Wiebe's central contention that faith involves an extension of knowledge. He points out that the principal problem with Wiebe's interpretation is that in it 'the postulates are … not suppositions, subjective injunctions or maxims to act "as-if" freedom, immortality and God were real, but rather, in effect, covert extensions of theoretical knowledge'.[60] On Wiebe's interpretation, Kant's theoretical boundary line between noumena and phenomena is either not fixed or not impregnable. For the practical philosophy appears to be giving knowledge of things of which, in theory, reason can know nothing. Luik points to Kant's short essay 'What is Orientation in Thinking?' to clarify matters.

> Kant places the entire discussion of the "concept of a First Being" within the context of a discussion of the "need of reason … to presuppose and assume something which it may not pretend to know on objective grounds". The "need

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55 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 520.

56 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 520.

57 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 520.

58 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 522.

59 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 525. Wiebe drives home this point later on: 'But, whereas theoretical reason could think the idea without contradiction, it could not assume any objective reality to it. Practical reason does give it that objective reality and hence extends theoretical reason'. Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 529.

60 J. C. Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1986) 36:341.

> of reason", Kant argues, provides us with nothing more than a "subjective ground" for believing in the existence of God.[61]

Luik points out that 'Kant goes on to speak of rational belief in God's existence as "a subjectively sufficient assent associated with the consciousness that it is an objectively insufficient assent; therefore it is *contrasted with knowledge*" … [and] this claim contradicts Wiebe's key contention'.[62] Luik's response to Wiebe picks up where Byrne's argument leaves off, characterizing Wiebe's interpretation in terms of 'a recast[ing] of Kant's denial of knowledge to make room for faith to denying *theoretical* knowledge to make room for practical knowledge'.[63] It aligns with Byrne's contention that moral faith is equivalent for Kant with acting 'as-if'; at best, Kant's philosophical foundation for faith entails theological non-realism with no theoretical content. Luik crystallizes this position by arguing that there is in fact 'quite literally no Kantian theology'.[64]

Both Wiebe and Luik make valid points regarding Kant's transcendental theology, but there is an instructive and quite fundamental disconnect between their two positions that leads them to discuss at cross purposes. This disconnect in their debate, once identified, provides both a conceptual bridge between the theoretical and practical aspects of Kant's philosophy and a rudimentary starting point for understanding affirmative interpretations of Kant's rational foundations for theology. This disconnect involves the false identification of the words 'knowledge' and 'cognition'. Rolf George makes this important clarification regarding Kant's use of the term *Erkenntnis* (cognition) relative to the term *Wissen* (knowledge) in his essay entitled '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant'.[65] He points out that Johann Christoph Adelung's dictionary of 1793 lists ten senses for the root *Erkennen*, and highlights two senses of particular interest to the study of Kant. In one sense, 'the word may be translated as "to come to know," or "to know."'[66] This sense of the term *erkennen* 'has become very much more common during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.[67] For this reason, the common tendency when interpreting Kant is to assume that cognition means knowledge without significant variances.[68] Interestingly, as George points out, 'Adelung does not allow, or even mention, the nominalization of *Erkenntnis* in connection with [the definition "to

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61 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 342.

62 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 342.

63 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 339.

64 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 345.

65 Rolf George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', in *Interpreting Kant*, Moltke S. Gram, (ed.) (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1982), 31–39.

66 George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 34.

67 George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 34.

68 George does point out that, even though '*Erkenntnis*, dass … is now common, … *Erkenntnis des/der* (followed by a noun in the genitive) still works only for certain lofty subjects, as in *Erkenntnis der Wahrheit, Erkenntnis Gottes*, etc., but not for trees or ships'.

know"].'[69] This indicates that *Erkenntnis* had in Kant's time latitude of meaning that resists generalizations.

The other sense of *Erkenntnis* that George thinks is significant to the study of Kant 'requires the direct object construction; in this sense the word means "to represent it to ourselves clearly or obscurely, distinctly or indistinctly …"'.[70] Unlike the way in which most today use *Erkenntnis* to mean knowledge of empirical objects, 'To have *Erkenntnis* of a thing [in the time of Kant] was to have in one's mind a presentation, an idea, an image, a token referring to that thing'.[71] Thus, we should expect that cognition in Kant's writings is a bigger and more flexible concept than merely knowledge in the sense of *Wissen*. George makes the case that Kant's use of the term *Erkenntnis* is in many cases more closely associated with earlier uses of the word as a kind of mental representation rather than a synonym for knowledge. One can have such a mental representation or idea without the need for a corresponding intuition. He highlights Leibniz and Wolff as key examples:

> Leibniz had thought that the German word *Kenntnis* would be a good equivalent of the Latin *terminus simplex*. The suggestion of Leibniz places the word *Kenntnis* in opposition to judgment: it is a *term* of judgment, not itself judgmental. Similarly, Wolff had used the expression as pertaining to concepts and terms rather than to judgments. "When we represent a thing to ourselves, we recognize it (*erkennen*). When our concepts are distinct, then our cognition (*Erkenntnis*) is distinct too."[72]

George's point in returning to Leibniz and Wolff is not to show that cognition is in all instances distinct in definition from knowledge. This would contradict conventional wisdom and make many of Kant's arguments in the first *Critique* virtually impossible to understand. Instead, 'Translation of *Erkenntnis* as "knowledge" is appropriate much of the time, but not because Kant used the word in the contemporary sense, but because, quite generally, knowledge was then thought to be a felicitous kind of representation, a sort of successful reference'.[73]

George dubs the theory of reference at work in Kant's mind (and in the academic culture at large) 'the Adamic Language Theory of knowledge'.[74] He describes it as follows:

Nevertheless, there is still the tendency to nominalize *Erkenntnis* as knowledge. George, 'Vorstellung and Erkenntnis in Kant', 34–35.

[69] George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 34.

[70] George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 34.

[71] George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 35.

[72] George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 35. The quotation is taken from Wolff's *Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen* ('German Metaphysics'), 5th ed. (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1731), 466.

[73] George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 35.

[74] George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 35.

> If one represented an object in one's mind by a kind of token that was really fitting, in the way in which the names that Adam gave to things were the real names of things, then one was thought to be as close to knowing the thing as was humanly possible. This makes understandable the close connection in eighteenth-century philosophy between good reference and knowledge: To know is to have a good picture, the right concept, the correct name, of a thing. Hence the appropriateness of translating *Erkenntnis* as "knowledge" on many occasions. Nevertheless, reading it always as "knowledge" not only leads to absurdities, but effectively bars one's understanding of central concerns of the *Critique*.[75]

According to George, 'Kant wanted to use the term *Erkenntnis* much in the way in which Leibniz had suggested: We note that the two subdivisions under the term are intuitions and concepts, i.e., singular and general terms'.[76] Thus, cognition can be thought of as a judgement taking the form of knowledge, but it can also be thought of as a *terminus simplex* in the sense of Leibniz; for, as Kant is reported to have asserted in his lectures known as the 'Vienna Logic', only a connection of cognitions constitutes a judgement.

George's work demonstrates that the distinction between knowledge and cognition is very important to keep in mind as one moves through the finer details of the first *Critique* – for example, he makes specific application of the uniqueness of *Erkenntnis* to the derivation of the table of the categories. While George does not examine the development of Kant's transcendental theology, it is this application of George's insight that is fruitful for our discussion here. The occasional distinction between cognition and knowledge opens the possibility that Kant also distinguishes the combination of faith and knowledge from faith and cognition. While all examples of knowledge in Kant's way of thinking are 'claims to knowledge', all examples of cognition are not necessarily claims to knowledge. They may well be mere opinions or, as we will see in the next chapter, elements of rational faith which are supported by the subjective/transcendental nature of reason itself.

One of the clearest examples of this dual meaning of cognition is found in Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics*. There, Kant clarifies the distinction between cognitions as objects of knowledge and various other ways cognition can be rationally utilized. In 'Metaphysik Mrongovius' (1782–1783), Kant makes the important preliminary distinction between pure cognition and empirical cognition: 'This is quite useful in a science, to separate the cognition of reason from empirical cognition, in order to comprehend the errors all the more distinctly' (29:940). Empirical cognition indicates a process of judgement whereby intuitions and concepts are synthesized into knowledge. These cognitions are immediately convicting of the truth and as such should be distinguished up front so as not to

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75 George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 35.

76 George, '*Vorstellung* and *Erkenntnis* in Kant', 35.

lose sight of them in the process of rational deliberation on metaphysical matters. Pure cognition (or 'the cognition of reason') involves the basic capacity of reason to get something in mind and the way these ideas arise in and are utilized by reason. Pure cognition can consist of both speculation and opinion, and yet it can also, thinks Kant, refer to a more epistemologically robust class of ideas under the rubric of faith. The anatomy of pure cognition and its relationship to faith is worked out in more detail 12 years later in 'Metaphysik Vigilantius' (1794–1795). According to Kant, 'Metaphysical cognitions must therefore be cognitions simply of reason, thus arise *a priori* through pure concepts of reason' (29:945). These pure cognitions, avers Kant, provide objects for belief that are grounded in their transcendental necessity rather than anything empirical. We will have more to say about pure cognition as a resource for faith in the next chapter. Suffice it to say for now that pure cognition is Kant's first *Critique* vehicle for the development of rational faith. It not only allows for God-talk and God-thought, but also makes possible a smooth transition from theory to practice and the further development of transcendental theology.

As we saw earlier, Byrne, Wiebe and Luik debate the relationship of faith and knowledge without taking into account the distinction between knowledge and cognition (or empirical cognition and pure cognition). For Luik, 'God simply cannot be made an object of cognition as natural phenomena can',[77] while for Wiebe 'since faith refers to objects that are not capable of cognition it is based on other than evidential grounds – although to repeat, not other than rational grounds'.[78] The language of both Wiebe's and Luik's essays indicate that their arguments assume cognition and knowledge to be identical. Wiebe's claim that objects of faith such as God cannot be cognised gives clear indication that he is identifying cognition with knowledge. This forces him to conclude, against Kant's theoretical strictures, that faith expands the reach of knowledge. In other words, the conclusion that faith expands knowledge is the only way for him to make sense of the crucial texts on faith. Faith has nowhere else to go in Wiebe's interpretation, except to the '*extension* of our theoretical knowledge'.

In contrast, Luik repeats in a variety of ways the supposedly-fundamental Kantian mantra: faith and knowledge do not and cannot overlap in Kant's theoretical philosophy. Interestingly, however, Luik's argument against Wiebe betrays a very similar identification of knowledge and cognition. He does not recognize Kant's classification of God and immortality as objectively valid ideas rooted in pure cognition as opposed to objectively real objects rooted in empirical cognition. We have already noted Luik's contention that 'God simply cannot be made an object of cognition as natural phenomena can'.[79] This is true when cognition is taken to be identical to knowledge, but not true when cognition is understood as the mental act of getting God in mind. Luik writes, 'The idea of God can never be an

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77 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 339.

78 Wiebe, 'The Ambiguous Revolution', 522.

79 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 339.

"object of rational inquiry" as Wiebe claims because it can never be an object in the way that natural phenomena can. As outside space and time, and thus outside of possible experience, God is fundamentally resistant to human understanding'.[80] Luik is right in the theoretical sense of 'understanding' as it relates to knowledge; practical faith cannot extend theoretical knowledge. Luik is not right, however, to link knowledge with cognition in all cases.[81] With the assumption that knowledge and cognition are really the same things, the logic of Luik's argument drives him to the conclusion that faith has no room in Kant's philosophical programme.

Byrne, on the other hand, writes about being able to think God (or get God in mind) and the moral inference of acting as if God exists.[82] These features of Byrne's argument seem to indicate an implicit understanding of cognition or something like it at work in his interpretation of Kant. We can, on Byrne's reading of Kant, 'entertain the thought that God exists'.[83] However, this is declared insignificant because Byrne feels that Kant must link faith with *Wissen*. He avers that these two conclusions hardly amount to knowledge, and, insofar as they provide no evidence for the proposition 'God exists', this 'does not amount to faith'.[84] Certainly, Byrne's conclusion is instructive if we understand faith to be rational in the sense that it is built on *Wissen* (and this is the thrust of Byrne's argument). But, as we follow the development of Kant's philosophy from the theoretical into the practical and understand this development to be based on the cognition of God rather than knowledge of God, we begin more and more to see Kant's robust examples of God-talk and God-thought, which reach their apex in Kant's writings on religion, as rooted in the transcendental boundaries of reason rather than as curious and questionable philosophical abstractions of empirical religion or pure morality.

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80 Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 340.

81 Luik admits that 'Kant does acknowledge that the postulate of reason is in no respect inferior to knowledge, but this, of course, does not confer upon it the status of knowledge'. Luik, 'The Ambiguity of Kantian Faith', 342.

82 Kant introduces the as-if doctrine in the first *Critique*. See A672–3/B700–701.

83 Byrne, 'Kant's Moral Proof', 337.

84 Byrne, 'Kant's Moral Proof', 337–338.

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Chapter Three
Faith and Cognition in Kant's Philosophy of Religion

In the previous chapter, we scrutinized Immanuel Kant's strictures on knowledge of God by comparing the interpretations of P. F. Strawson and Henry E. Allison on Kant's theoretical philosophy. We saw that the epistemological claims of the *Critique of Pure Reason* do not provide a complete, self-sustaining paradigm for understanding Kant's philosophy, and this incompleteness and lack of self-sustenance bid further inquiry into the nature of the transcendental boundaries of Kant's philosophy and the development of Kant's understanding of God based on them. Understanding Kant's movement toward transcendental theology to be more than an idle curiosity on Kant's part (or a non-critical remnant of his rationalist training or Pietistic Lutheran upbringing) depends on recognizing a fundamental distinction between knowledge (*Wissen*) and cognition (*Erkenntnis*), when these two aspects of Kant's philosophy are applied to the rational exercise of faith. A careful consideration of the Byrne/Wiebe/Luik debate demonstrates that cognition provides Kant with the rational pathway needed to develop his transcendental theology beyond the atheism or agnosticism inherent in Strawson's principle of significance and its negative application to faith in the work of Byrne and Luik. Because the principle of pure cognition gives theology a logical or linguistic foothold in theoretical reason, Kant can move smoothly to faith based on practical rather than empirical considerations.

With pure cognition in place as the properly critical pathway for grounding transcendental theology, this chapter turns specifically to Kant's understanding of the link between faith and cognition as pivotal to its development. My argument will be that the linking of faith and cognition moves Kant's philosophy not only beyond atheism and agnosticism, but beyond theological non-realism and deism as well. Faith in this sense, I will contend, has moral, poetic and ontological dimensions that go well beyond, yet in accord with, Kant's strictures on knowledge in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant's most mature and developed conception of faith in God is not faith in a passive or inert object of cognition nor even one merely to be thought of as having set the Newtonian machine of nature in motion. God, as the proper object of rational faith, must be conceived of as an ideal reality arising naturally in the theoretical employment of reason and embraced as a being intimately concerned with human affairs, providing moral governance and assistance in the practical employment of reason and moral hope in the judicial employment of reason. In other words, in view of 'the needs reason admits it has' (both in terms of reason's transcendental incompleteness and as humans deal with

the many challenges on life's way), Kant holds that God is every bit worthy of our trust, provided God is thought of in a way consonant with human rationality. It is up to a critical analysis of faith to flesh out in more detail and it is the task of this chapter to make plain what Kant means by 'faith' (*Glaube*).

I begin with an examination of Kant's understanding of faith in 'The Canon of Pure Reason' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant distinguishes between knowledge, faith and opinion, arguing that faith has more rational warrant than opinion, but is a type of understanding (conviction about the truth) at some remove from knowledge. A question emerges, however, over whether faith for Kant is realist or non-realist in orientation. Keith Ward makes the case that Kant is never able to escape the strictures on knowledge in the first *Critique* and, at best, arrives at only a kind of 'moral formalism'. Kant's God, thinks Ward, cannot be thought of as objectively 'real' because Kant infinitely removes God from the realm inhabited by objects of nature. Things-in-themselves, God and the soul are among those things that must remain radically unknown. Allen Wood counters this position by arguing that Kant's conception of God is rooted in the rationalist tradition as the *ens realissimum*. This conception of God is at the centre of the epistemic and ontological crossroads in Kant's philosophy; it is, in metaphysical terms, the all-reality or '**being of all beings**' (A579/B607). In adopting such a metaphysically robust conception of God, Kant consciously borrows from the Prussian rationalist tradition that traces itself all the way back to the Greeks. Combining this conception of God with a transcendental transition to the moral philosophy, Wood contends that Kant's rational faith in God is not only a theoretical faith in an abstract metaphysical reality, but also a moral faith in a 'living God'; this robust understanding of faith, thinks Wood, is the only rational way of averting an *absurdum practicum* deduction in the moral philosophy. Looking at Wood's early work on Kant in *Kant's Rational Theology*, I argue that Wood's interpretation, though extremely significant for understanding Kant's philosophical grounds for theology, does not in the end provide a complete or stable foundation.[1] It is, however, suggestive and sets up a transition to other interpreters of Kant in search of further resources. The chapter concludes by outlining three ways in which the grounds for theology have been firmly established in Kant's philosophy. When theology is grounded on the principle of pure cognition, where cognition of God is understood to begin with the *ens realissimum* conception and then unpacked and

[1] Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978); from this point forward, Wood's scholarship moved progressively closer to deism. Compare Wood's position in *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970) with his later position in 'Kant's Deism', *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, P.J. Rossi and M. Wreen, (eds.) (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991). His movement toward pessimism regarding the presence of rational grounds for religious faith in Kant's philosophy is acknowledged in personal correspondence (1998).

developed as rational faith along moral, poetic and ontological lines, transcendental theology gains a firm foothold in the critical philosophy.

Kant lays out the various distinctions between knowledge, opinion and faith in the 'Canon of Pure Reason' in the first *Critique*. The purpose of the Canon is to carve out space for what Kant means by faith in the face both of the strictures he has previously articulated regarding knowledge and of those speculative positions that have only private validity and thus no rational foundation in the critical philosophy (which Kant classifies under 'persuasion'). He defines knowledge, faith (or belief) and opinion as three forms of truth assertion. Opinions are the lowest level form of truth assertion, since the one asserting some truth as an opinion is conscious, or at least should be conscious, of the assertion's objective and subjective insufficiency. Belief is somewhat like opinion in terms of its objective insufficiency, but has a subjective sufficiency that opinion lacks. While faith in God is made possible in the first *Critique*, it is grounded in reason transcendentally in its practical employment. This is significant for Kant not only because subjectivity is the foundation of all transcendental inquiry, but also because practical reason is primary for Kant and the place where the rationality of religious faith must be established. Kant calls a truth assertion that is both objectively and subjectively sufficient 'knowledge'. Knowledge is a special form of human cognition that immediately commends itself as truth about reality as such, even though transcendental analysis shows the epistemic limitations of this conviction in the concept of the thing-in-itself. Truth assertions that are subjectively sufficient (i.e., belief and knowledge) are, for Kant, examples of possible 'conviction'; truth assertions that are objectively sufficient (i.e., knowledge alone) are types of 'certainty'. He thus lumps belief and knowledge together as properly rational enterprises emanating from 'the two hemispheres of the *globus intellectualis*' while leaving opinion to the realm of persuasion or as the product of idle speculation.[2]

According to Kant, 'In judging from pure reason, **to have an opinion** is not allowed at all' (A822/B850). Faith, however, finds its rational warrant in the practical philosophy. With faith, 'it is absolutely necessary that something must happen, namely, that I fulfill the moral law at all points. The end here is inescapably fixed, and according to all my insight there is possible only a single condition under which this end is consistent with all the ends together and thereby has practical validity, namely, that there be a God and a future world' (A828/B856). For Kant, faith in God and immortality is inextricably linked with the systematic nature of human cognition and the need of reason to find stability in the midst of theoretical and practical dissonance. So sure of this point is Kant, even at this earliest stage of the critical philosophy, that he confidently writes, 'I also know with complete certainty that no one else knows of any other conditions that lead to this same unity of ends under the moral law' (A828/B856). In arguably one of Kant's most famous statements of all on this topic, Kant goes on to press the point home: 'I

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[2] Friedrich Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 110.

will inexorably believe in the existence of God and a future life, and I am sure that nothing can make these beliefs unstable, since my moral principles themselves, which I cannot renounce without becoming contemptible in my own eyes, would thereby be subverted' (A828/B856). Kant makes clear in the Canon that God and immortality are not just possible objects of faith but morally mandated principles of any critical understanding of reason. Precisely what constitutes the critical content of faith beyond these fundamental principles (or objects of belief) is a matter that requires Kant to move beyond the first *Critique*. We have already seen hints of this content in Kant's analysis of ideas and ideals, but the rational superstructure that fully warrants their inclusion in Kant's philosophy has not yet been given. What we know thus far from the Canon and Kant's other sporadic discussions of the matter are merely the bare grounds for faith – we have Kant's appeal to pure cognition of God as the transcendental ideal and Kant's emphasis on the moral law and the moral disposition as transcendental constituents of faith. Further inquiries into the faculties of reason are required for a thoroughgoing account of the nature of this faith.

Leslie Stevenson probes Kant's definition of faith in an essay entitled 'Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge'. He claims faith (*Glaube*), along with the gerund 'believing' (*glauben*), has a discernible meaning, and is a concept with critical warrant when understood in terms of the transcendental development of Kant's philosophical theology. Faith, Stevenson concludes, 'is holding something to be true, and being practically but not theoretically justified in doing so'.[3] The faith which Kant understands to be involved here is of a special kind: 'The conviction is not **logical** but **moral** certainty, and, since it depends on subjective grounds (of moral disposition) I must not even say "It **is** morally certain that there is a God," etc., but rather "I am morally certain" etc.' (A829/B857). Referring to this passage from the first *Critique*, Stevenson writes, 'Here Kant strikes an existentialist note, giving us a sneak preview of his practical philosophy. It seems that the distinction between moral beliefs and theoretical beliefs about the supersensible is not between different propositions, but different styles of believing the same propositions: firmly believe in a moral way, unstably believe in the doctrinal way'.[4] What Stevenson's discussion highlights that many interpreters of Kant miss

[3] Leslie Stevenson, 'Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge', *Kantian Review* (2003) 7:88.

[4] Stevenson, 'Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge', 95. On page 92, Stevenson cites a lengthy footnote from the discussion of belief in the Jäsche Logic: 'Believing is … a kind of incomplete holding-to-be-true with consciousness … it is distinguished from opining … by the relation that it has to action. Thus the businessman, for instance, to strike a deal, needs not to just opine that there will be something to be gained thereby, but to believe it, i.e., to have his opinion be sufficient for undertaking into the uncertain' (9:67–68n). Stevenson notes a link in Kant's thinking between pragmatic belief that is willing to bet on some course of action with varying degrees of self-assurance and historical belief. True gain or loss, however, in order to be rationally grounded, must be judged relative to questions of

is that faith is a legitimate category of conviction in which certain metaphysical propositions are believed for rationally-warranted practical reasons that do not contradict Kant's strictures on knowledge.

In summary, it seems that Kant provides two criteria governing subjectively sufficient reasons for belief in an object of cognition: (1) criteria of cognition itself, which ground faith in the universal validity of concepts required of all human reasoning, and (2) criteria of practical reason, which provide reasons for postulating and believing in the existence of God and human immortality according to the inherent logic and interests of moral reasoning. While criteria of practical reason apply only to faith, criteria of cognition apply to reasoning about knowledge and faith alike. Stevenson writes,

> As Wood has pointed out, Kant holds that both *wissen* and *glauben* are based on grounds that are *universally* valid – that is, reasons that appeal to the judgement of any rational person. They both involve conviction rather than mere opinion or persuasion, but the degrees of conviction are different – *wissen* must be based either on logical proof (deduction) or such strong empirical evidence (induction) as to amount to knowledge beyond all reasonable doubt, whereas *glauben* is based on inner faith or moral commitment. (*Glauben* can be even stronger than *wissen* in another way, for as Kant remarked in his lectures, people have sometimes been ready to die for their moral or religious beliefs but not for mathematical theorems.)[5]

Transcendental theology works itself outward from the theoretical philosophy according to Kant's understanding of human cognition, while the internal logic of practical faith takes the idea of God provided by cognition and infuses it with meaning according to the universality and potency of the transcendental inquiries into the constitutive status of freedom and the moral law. Only in this manner is the moral development of Kant's transcendental theology consistent with the tenets of theoretical reasoning.

As noted in chapter two, Kant makes the important distinction between pure cognition and empirical cognition in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, specifically the 'Metaphysik Mrongovius' (1782–1783): 'This is quite useful in a science, to separate the cognition of reason from empirical cognition, in order to comprehend the errors all the more distinctly' (29:940). Empirical cognitions are immediately convicting of the truth and as such should be distinguished immediately from all other cognitions so as not to lose sight of them in the process of rational deliberation on metaphysical matters. Pure cognition (or 'the cognition of reason') involves the basic capacity of reason to get something in mind and the way these ideas emerge

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dignity and morality, otherwise they are merely pragmatic. Stevenson, 'Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge', 93.

[5] Stevenson, 'Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge', 85.

out of rational reflection. Pure cognition can consist of either speculation or opinion, but it can also, thinks Kant, refer to the proper objects of rational faith.

The anatomy of pure cognition and its relationship to faith is worked out in detail in 'Metaphysik Vigilantius' (1794–1795). According to Kant, 'Metaphysical cognitions must therefore be cognitions simply of reason, thus arise *a priori* through pure concepts of reason' (29:945). These pure metaphysical cognitions, avers Kant, provide objects for belief that are grounded in their transcendental necessity rather than anything empirical. As Kant puts it, 'the principles (*principia*) or grounds of cognition are so constituted that one connects the necessity of what one cognizes with the cognition itself, and the concepts are directed at objects that are not only cognized independently of all experience, but that also can never *possibly* become an object of experience, e.g., God, freedom, immortality' (29:945). These objects of cognition are far from human creations, mere figments, or idle speculation; they emerge naturally in the course of reason's coming to knowledge through a thoroughgoing determination of things. '[M]etaphysics thus', writes Kant, 'has no *a posteriori* principles (*principia*), but rather only *a priori*: they are given and are cognized through reason alone, but are not made' (29:945). Kant makes plain in these passages that we can cognize God, freedom and immortality as ideas (or theoretical problems), but that these cognitions gain a foothold in reason at a significant remove from mere opinion or wishful thinking.

Employing a primarily practical rationale, Kant argues that God and immortality are (or at least can become) the proper objects of rational faith. According to Kant, 'the existence of God and the hope of a future life can be cognized by any human being by common sense by considering nature and one's state … But this is merely a practical faith' (29:938). Kant's point here is that rational faith, even though its very possibility emerges in the context of a critique of pure (theoretical) reason, is grounded in moral reasoning. Faith, in this sense, is bound up with the human moral nature and cannot be excised from it without simultaneously removing the term 'rational' from its description. As Kant puts it, 'Belief in God and another world is inextricably bound with the cognition of our duty, which reason prescribes, and the moral maxims for living according to it' (29:778). Although God as an objectively valid concept arises from theoretical considerations, faith in the sense of trust in God is demanded only by practical considerations. In this sense, rational faith in God is not an arbitrary cognition or one necessarily relegated to mere opinion, but is rooted in pure cognition of God as a pure object of the understanding *and*, alongside freedom and the moral law, as an *a priori* principle of practical reason.

Juxtaposing his own position with that of Plato, Kant's contends that 'the principle of the possibility of representing *a priori* cognitions … is the first proposition of all metaphysical truths' (29:953). In Kant's view, Plato's mystical fusion of epistemology and ontology led him to the false belief that we could experience *a priori* cognitions directly as '*a priori* intuitions'. What Kant thinks Plato should have realized is that at best we only ever have rational access to pure cognitions in faith. Kant's understanding of the difference between cognized ideas and empirical knowledge thus distinguishes itself from Plato by making plain

that certain cognized ideas must always remain outside the realm of *knowledge*. Reason's proper attitude toward cognized ideas, or pure cognitions, is thereby two-pronged: they are either mere *opinions* (i.e., truth claims that we hold but that have no real support) or objects of *faith* (i.e., truth claims that we hold for rational/moral reasons but not empirical ones). In other words, Kant finds room for the critical incorporation of some cognized ideas in the transcendental recesses of reason as necessary conditions for the possibility of moral stability and moral hope, and these ideas constitute the essential elements of rational faith.

Keith Ward accepts many of the main features of this type of interpretation. He thinks that Kant's philosophy clearly allows us to get God in mind and that Kant's philosophy does indeed develop a rational foundation for speaking and thinking in theological terms. Nevertheless, Ward thinks that Kant wants even more than God-talk and God-thought. He avers that what Kant is after in his transition to the practical is a transcendental approach to theology that yields theological realism rather than scepticism and theological non-realism. The problem is, however, that Kant is never able to get beyond a purely formal expansion of his ethical theory. Like Strawson, Ward grants that there is some ambiguity in the first *Critique* regarding the status of transcendental idealism and suggests that interpreters of Kant must give some account of Kant's optimism regarding the eventual development of critical metaphysics. He writes, '[Kant] holds open the future possibility of a final synthesis of human knowledge under necessary principles, even though such a synthesis must wait for the analytic method to be fully explored first. So an *a priori* universal science remains the Kantian ideal, which he was never entirely to abandon'.[6] Despite Kant's well-meaning intentions, Ward argues that Kant's efforts are severely curtailed by the limiting conditions of the first *Critique* and the merely formal way his moral philosophy develops.

Ward's Kant is a theological moralist whose transcendental philosophy gradually moves from theological realism (in his pre-critical period) to theoretical agnosticism (in his early-critical period) and to moral non-realism (from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* onward). To support his view, Ward attempts to show a correlation between the latter part of Kant's pre-critical period (i.e., the progressively more sceptical and then silent part) and his critical period, utilizing an interpretation of Kant's theoretical philosophy that aligns itself closely with the type of interpretation we find in the early work of Strawson. Ward remains sensitive, however, to the many indications in Kant's philosophy that are meant to have positive implications for faith. In Kant's *Lectures on Ethics*, Ward points out that Kant explicitly affirms that 'though ethics cannot depend upon metaphysical or theological belief, it necessarily gives rise to theological belief and cannot exist without it'.[7] Although clearly positive in theological intent, little of Kant's pre-critical metaphysics survives the Copernican revolution in Ward's estimation.

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[6] Keith Ward, *The Development of Kant's View of Ethics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 28. Henceforth called *Kant's View of Ethics*.

[7] Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 59.

Kant's rational foundations for theology correspond directly to the support they receive from his moral theory, and, for this reason, remain but a formal aspect of his moral development of transcendental theology.

Metaphysics to the degree of Kant's pre-critical writings, according to Ward, does not emerge again for Kant until his moral theology of the second *Critique* and this in a very different form. This new form erases much of the robust realism of Kant's earlier and more conventional/dogmatic approach to metaphysics in favour of a kind of moral formalism conducive to the transcendental nature of reason. Ward believes that the task of establishing an *a priori* universal science, though begun in the first *Critique*, does not begin to receive Kant's full attention until *Groundwork* and the second *Critique*. In the practical writings, suggests Ward, Kant moves toward establishing a formal system of thought based exclusively on moral feelings: 'But the whole material content of morality – the belief that specific things and acts are good – must, [Kant] believes, derive from feeling'.[8] In the formalization of the rational resources that support this moral feeling, Kant developed his system of ethical ideas in four stages. The final stage, Ward argues, envisioned the triumph of reason over sense and the formalization of the moral realm in his thought.

Key to note about Ward's interpretation of Kant on religion is that human moral character and religious beliefs and practices are at some remove from each other (as long as religion does not lead to moral deficiency, the content of belief is not significant) and God is never to be thought of as though he were a real entity, but merely as an idea postulated for the religious life.[9] Ward sums up Kant's view of God this way: 'Thus not only is talk of God "empty" or purely formal – being not founded on sense perceptions – it is necessarily inapplicable to the object it attempts to conceive. So there is no question that a noumenal object might *correspond* to these ideas of reason'.[10] Ward's main point of interpretation is that 'the Critical doctrine of the formal nature of the categories of thought and their restriction to the role of functions of discursive thought requires that our concepts actually be denied any literal application to transcendent reality'.[11] The position common to both Strawson and Ward is that our beliefs, cast in theoretical language, are inherently agnostic because we not only cannot know if they correspond to a transcendent reality, but, logically speaking, our beliefs could never correspond

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[8] Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 29.

[9] Perhaps this comes into sharpest relief with Ward's understanding of Kant on fanaticism. 'Fanaticism' in the Kantian sense is, according to Ward, 'an illusion of the inner sense whereby we believe ourselves to be in fellowship with God and with other spirits'. According to Ward on Kant, communion with the Supreme Being is the highest moral perfection, but it is also an unreachable ideal. '[Kant] will not countenance any conception of an immanent work of grace or of mystical union with God'. Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 63.

[10] Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 79.

[11] Ward, *Kant's View of Ethics*, 79.

with reality in any sense. For this reason, Ward understands Kant's philosophical foundations for theology to support only non-realism.

Clearly, what Kant needs in order to establish his transcendental theology as something more than merely non-realism or moral formalism is some component of the rational conception of God that draws on cognition as distinct from knowledge in such a way as to provide existential import to our ability to get God in mind. Wood's *Kant's Rational Theology* finds this existential import in Kant's notion of God as the *ens realissimum* and, as such, provides an important counterbalance to Ward's assessment of the situation. Wood agrees with Ward that 'The term *idea* is borrowed by Kant quite consciously from Plato … [and] refers to any of several concepts formed *a priori* by our rational faculty, to which no possible experience can correspond'.[12] Wood also agrees that 'since our concept of God is an idea of reason, no sensible content corresponding to it can ever be given. This concept is thus an "empty" or "problematic" one, a concept incapable of serving as a vehicle of (empirical) knowledge'.[13] He likewise agrees, to a certain extent, with Ward's basic deduction:

> On the basis of a Kantian epistemology, it might look as if there is very little we are entitled to say about the divine attributes. For according to the critical doctrines, all the properties of which we can form any determinate conception are phenomenal realities, which are necessarily limited in their degree. We have no acquaintance with any of the *realitates noumena* which lie behind these appearances; and consequently no determinate conception of the properties which belong to an *ens realissimum*.[14]

Nevertheless, Wood provides an important supplementation to Ward's assessment of Kant's position. Even though Kant's denial of theoretical knowledge makes experience of God problematic from the point of view of empirical realism in the sense of Strawson, and Kant's practical philosophy, taken on its own, provides merely a formal expansion of the foundations for theology, the required seed of rational warrant for belief in the reality of God still exists in the transcendental recesses of reason. Referring to the difficulties surrounding knowledge of God and language about God in Kant's theoretical philosophy, Wood writes,

> These strictures, however, do not really apply to some predicates, such as those based on the categories, or on the "pure derivative concepts," such as duration and change. For although such concepts are "empty" ones in their application to noumena, they are nevertheless available to us *a priori* as formal elements of our concept of a thing or object in general. Kant gives the name "ontological

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12 Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 17.

13 Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 79–80.

14 Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 80.

> predicates" to these "*a priori* realities" which belong to God in virtue of the fact that they "refer to the universal attributes of a thing in general."[15]

The idea of God in Kant's work is among those that have a direct relationship to the conditions of reason that give rise to the very possibility of experience. The *ens realissimum* is, in more metaphysically explicit terms, the '**All** of reality', the '**original being**', the '**highest being**', '**being of all beings**', or again 'the concept of an individual being, because of all possible opposed predicates, one, namely that which belongs absolutely to being, is encountered in its determination' (A577–79/B605–07). Wood writes, 'the most proper idea of God, as a supremely perfect being or *ens realissimum*, … comes about in the course of our attempt to conceive the conditions for the "thorough determination" of things, that is, the unconditionally complete knowledge of them, or the thoroughgoing specification of the properties belonging to them'.[16] This insight leads to Wood's general thesis that 'Kant's argument for the rational inevitability of the idea of an *ens realissimum* is an original and well thought out one, making use of concepts that belong to the metaphysical tradition'.[17]

Nathan Jacobs and I expand on Wood's thesis in our book *In Defense of Kant's* Religion. We argue that Kant adopts these traditional metaphysical concepts of God via the link between human cognition and moral faith in order to develop out of his philosophy an expanded account of rational religious faith in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. We contend that the only way to understand fully Kant's presentation in *Religion* is to assume that Kant means to utilize metaphysical concepts from a tradition that originates with Duns Scotus and extends through the rationalists Gottfried Leibniz and Christian Wolff. In other words, Kant's concept of God as the *ens realissimum* is very similar to the 'univocity thesis' of Scotus and his followers and is meant to be far more realist than is conventionally supposed in the realm of Kant-studies. In the first *Critique*, Kant argues for an idea of God very much in line with this Scotist conception and that it emerges in 'the natural course of human reason':

> This, therefore, is how the natural course of human reason is constituted. First it convinces itself of the existence of **some** necessary being. In this it recognizes an unconditioned existence. Now it seeks for the concept of something independent of all conditions, and finds it in that which is the sufficient condition for everything else, i.e., in that which contains all reality. The All without limits, however, is absolute unity, and carries with it the concepts of one single being, namely the highest being, and thus reason infers that the highest being, as the

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15 Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 80–81.

16 Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 18–19.

17 Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 147. 'Kant's conception of God and his theory of the rational origin of the conception both depend heavily on ontological views which are part of a tradition which goes back at least to Plato'. Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 28.

> original ground of all things, exists in an absolutely necessary way. (A586–87/B614–15)

This notion of God provides a rational foundation for faith between abstract ideas and concrete existence and is rooted in the transcendental recesses of theoretical reason. For our purposes here, what we need to be aware of is that God as the *ens realissimum* is the point of departure for Kant's cognitive and systematic development of the grounds for religion and theology in the practical philosophy and beyond. In other words, Kant's doctrine of God does not originate either in the moral philosophy or his writings on religion (where it is combined with his analysis of the human moral disposition and the divine-human prototypical ideal), but is present as a distinct element of Kant's thinking about God in the earliest part of the critical period.

C. Stephen Evans was among the first readers of Kant to identify the usefulness of the *ens realissimum* conception of God for the development of a Christian epistemology of religious belief. In his book *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, Evans follows Wood in arguing that 'Kant's view … [is that] rational reflection on the process of empirically conceptualizing the world naturally leads one to the concept of an ultimate ground or unconditioned condition which completely determines the real universe with regard to all possible positive attributes. This concept is none other than the concept of an *ens realissimum*'.[18] Evans makes the case that Kant was fully aware that theoretical reason had to supply the idea of God for a realist conception of faith to be developed in accord with the subjective dimension of the critical philosophy. In the words of Evans, 'Theoretical reason must show that (1) the concept of God is thinkable, and (2) no knowledge of God is possible'.[19] Echoing Kant's distinction between pure cognition and empirical cognition, Evans affirms that 'Kant certainly held that the field of the thinkable is broader than the knowable, and even broader than the conceivable in that narrow sense in which the conceivable means the possibly knowable'.[20] Although no knowledge of God is possible, we can think God and raise relevant questions about the universe that demand appeal to God for their resolution. For example, the question 'Why is the world this way and not some other way?' is a perennial matter of philosophical interest. According to Evans, 'This question seems to demand some ground or sufficient reason why this universe is actualized out of the whole range of possible universes, and Kant conceives this ground as that which possesses in itself the possible reality of all beings, the highest reality'.[21]

Evans summarizes this account by suggesting that Kant adequately accounts for the logical possibility of God's existence. To this conclusion, he adds one further

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[18] C. Stephen Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief: An Historical, Critical Study* (Washington, D.C.: Christian University Press, 1978), 28.

[19] Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 19.

[20] Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 23.

[21] Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 25.

element – the concept of believability. Kant is aware, thinks Evans, that 'it must also be shown that the idea is meaningful … It must be shown that it is natural for a reflective person to think of this idea, or even regard it as plausible, or perhaps the most plausible alternative, when considering the nature of reality as a whole'.[22] This, argues Evans, is the true significance of Kant's analysis of the proofs for God's existence. Although these proofs, in Kant's estimation, end up being inconclusive, they are suggestive of one very important feature of Kant's philosophical grounds for theology – 'What these proofs show is that God's existence is a possible object of rational belief'.[23] According to Evans, these arguments 'possess some degree of plausibility' even though 'there is no way to determine with certainty the truth or falsity of their conclusions'.[24] This modest conclusion, avers Evans, 'is precisely what Kant needs to establish in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. All he needs to show is that rationally speaking, among the various metaphysical positions which are options, theism is a viable alternative'.[25] With this established, Kant is then able to transition to practical reason and there find sufficient reason to tip the scales toward belief in God. 'Here [in practical reason] the rational interest which man has in God's existence takes the form of necessary belief'.[26] Whatever discontinuity one might feel is present between the *ens realissimum* and the practical postulation of God for morality is then, according to Evans, overcome 'through the key concept of an end'.[27]

Evans's highly suggestive account stops right there. He does not explore the remainder of Kant's corpus, but instead turns to Søren Kierkegaard and William James to flesh out further the relationship of subjectivity and religious belief. It is, however, with the rest of Kant's philosophy (including the practical philosophy, judicial philosophy and the philosophy of religion) that our interests lie and many of the most important resources for theology reside. Having crossed one mountain peak, namely, the first *Critique*, several more remain – each as difficult to traverse as the previous one, but each potentially more fruitful than the last. In other words, Kant's account of rational faith from this point forward is complex, and it is incumbent on the reader to remain focused on the trail of theological resources that Kant appears to be marking out. The complexity, I believe, arises from the fact that the warrant for more specified forms of rational faith comes from his attempt to complete an intricate synthesis of his rationalist training in metaphysics regarding God as the all-reality with the revolutionary Copernican insight that makes up the epistemological core of the transcendental philosophy. With the rationalists, Kant believes that we can get God in mind via pure cognition and that rational faith in a realist conception of God is warranted (viz., if the world and our place in it make

22 Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 38.
23 Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 48.
24 Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 49.
25 Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 50.
26 Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 73.
27 Evans, *Subjectivity and Religious Belief*, 73.

sense, we must believe in God as the ground of all that exists), but, because of his Copernican turn, he believes that room for this faith, strictly speaking, cannot be established among either phenomena or noumena. Faith, if it is to be rational, must be located in the transcendental recesses of reason and developed via the transition from theory to practice along with the critical expansion of the rest of his philosophy. The crescendo of this development, as Jacobs and I contend, takes place in *Religion* when Kant transforms rational/moral faith into rational religious faith. Throughout the rest of this book, I will move toward a more complete understanding of what faith in this sense means for Kant.

To make the leap from rational faith to rational religious faith straightaway, however, would be premature. Pure cognition and rational faith are under some measure of control, but we still face a question over what the exact nature and extent of rational faith are or, put another way, how far the development of Kant's transcendental grounds can be extended beyond the *ens realissimum* conception of God. With this in mind, we turn now to a brief historical account of the possible alternatives for developing the aforementioned conception of faith in God into more complete and self-sustaining grounds for theology in Kant's philosophy.[28] Over the last century, interpretations of Kant's philosophy have developed in any one of three directions in order to explain the grounds for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason. These three directions correspond directly to three ways of conceiving the whole of Kant's philosophical program. Interpreters have understood Kant's philosophy as a system of two, three, or four realms, depending on which texts are emphasized and which are thus brought into the critical confines of Kant's transcendental philosophy. The roots of these three interpretive approaches go back to the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Shortly after the 'Back-to-Kant' movement in Germany, full treatments of Kant's philosophy began to emerge in English-speaking Kant-studies. These treatments dramatically impacted the way Kant's philosophy of religion would come to be understood in the twentieth century.

Among the first, was Friedrich Paulsen's *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine* (1902). Paulsen stressed Kant's early critical position of there being essentially two intellectual realms. At the time Kant wrote the first edition to the first *Critique*, he had hoped a complete critical philosophy would only need theoretical and practical explications. Kant's transcendental philosophy, Paulsen thus believed, 'falls into two branches: the metaphysic of nature and the metaphysic of morals or natural philosophy and moral philosophy. This corresponds to the great division of the objective world into spheres of nature and of freedom. The physical and moral worlds constitute as it were the two hemispheres of the *globus intellectualis*'.[29]

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[28] For a more complete account, see Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, 'Editors' Introduction', in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, (eds.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 1–31.

[29] Friedrich Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 110.

Paulsen downplays the importance of Kant's work after the second *Critique*, highlighting Kant's failing health and inability to construct an adequate metaphysic upon the foundation of his transcendental philosophy.[30]

Henry Sidgwick's *The Philosophy of Kant and Other Lectures* (1905) provided a complement to Paulsen's work. The book was compiled posthumously from Sidgwick's lecture notes. His account of Kant's philosophy runs parallel to Paulsen's in that it too asserts the systematic sufficiency of Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy. It differs slightly, however, by rejecting the image of dual spheres in Kant's work, positing instead the idea that Kant's theoretical philosophy served as the foundation for the practical philosophy. To Sidgwick's mind, Kant believed the 'ultimate aim of the whole of his philosophy is to establish the beliefs in "Immortality, Freedom, and God"' and he 'establishes them primarily as postulates of the practical reason, resting ultimately on our certain, irrefragable conviction of duty, together with our equally strong conviction that, in order that morality may be more than an idle dream, reason must assume a supersensible world in which happiness depends on the performance of duty'.[31] Significantly, Sidgwick to my knowledge never mentions the third *Critique* or *Religion* in his published writings and, when addressing topics such as the imagination or God, he limits himself to the technical applications of the first *Critique* or the postulates of the second *Critique*.[32]

If we fast forward into the middle of the twentieth century, we find a similar interpretive strategy developed by Richard Kroner in *Kant's Weltanschauung* (1956).[33] For Kroner, 'Two great cultural powers are at the very foundation of the Kantian philosophy: natural science and moral life. The manner in which Kant pits these two powers against each other constitutes the dynamics of his system. For in their reality he sees the foci around which all philosophical thought moves, and he regards it as of the utmost importance to co-ordinate the two within a system'.[34] Kroner carried the theme of dualism throughout his interpretation of Kant's writings, seeing in them a complex system of dualisms based upon the scientific and moral emphases of the first two *Critiques*. This aspect of his interpretation permeates his view of theology as well. He writes, 'One can say that the entire separation of object and subject as well as that of theoretical and practical reason is only human; in the comprehension of God it does not exist. How far this comprehension can be fathomed by us is a difficult question'.[35] Kroner's understanding of the dualisms

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30 See, for instance, pages 43 and 111. 'Thus in all respects the "doctrinal" construction fell far short of the "critical" foundation'. Paulsen, 111.

31 Henry Sidgwick, *The Philosophy of Kant and Other Lectures* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1905), 17 and 18, respectively.

32 Sidgwick, 63 and 184–195.

33 Richard Kroner, *Kant's Weltanschauung* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956).

34 Kroner, *Kant's Weltanschauung*, 2.

35 Kroner, *Kant's Weltanschauung*, 81–82.

in Kant's philosophy captures the radical difference between the divine and human standpoints. For him, Kant's prolegomena to metaphysics ends there, and the only way to say more is to move to Kant's practical philosophy.

More recently, Ronald M. Green has taken up the task of developing the two-realm interpretation of Kant's philosophy into a fully worked out philosophy of religion. In his three books, entitled *Religious Reason* (1978), *Religion and Moral Reason* (1988) and *Kierkegaard and Kant: The Hidden Debt* (1992),[36] he offers perhaps the most thorough case in the current literature for what I call 'the moral interpretation'. Green writes, 'At the heart of [my] program is the conviction that the moral judgments that we make and the array of religious beliefs that surround them arise from complex but ultimately comprehensible operations of practical reason'.[37] His interpretation of Kant continues the stream of interpretation consisting of Paulsen, Sidgwick and Kroner. This group emphasizes the two-realm reading of Kant's philosophy and interprets Kant's philosophy of religion as based on Kant's moral philosophy. Green argues that Kant provides an opening in the theoretical philosophy and thereby creates a transcendental bridge between theoretical and practical reason. This connection between the theoretical and practical provides the transcendental grounds for meaningful forms of religion and theology. Key to Green's interpretation is the practical philosophy; it not only provides the justification necessary for metaphysical beliefs, but also provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for metaphysics in all its rational forms. We will take a closer look at Green's interpretation in chapter four.

John Watson presented a second option for interpreting the whole of Kant's philosophy in his *The Philosophy of Kant Explained* (1908). He held that Kant's critical philosophy was in fact a consistent and coherent whole. He pointed out that an inordinate gap existed in the two-realm interpretation of Kant and claimed that the largely ignored third *Critique* had only to be properly understood to see the adequacy of Kant's own three-realm resolution. In the theoretical philosophy, the phenomenal/noumenal gulf represented an impassable barrier. Practical reasoning compels us to go beyond sense perception, because nature must 'permit … the realisation of freedom; in other words, the sensible and supersensible realms must be so adapted to each other that the former does not present an insuperable obstacle to the realisation of the latter'.[38] For Watson, this meant the third *Critique* was no simple corollary to the theoretical or practical philosophy, nor was it an afterthought of little consequence. Even though Kant had not envisioned the need

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[36] Ronald M. Green's Religious *Reason: The Rational and Moral Basis of Religious Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), *Religion and Moral Reason: A New Method for Comparative Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), and *Kierkegaard and Kant: The Hidden Debt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[37] Ronald M. Green, 'Probing the Depths of Practical Reason: Looking Back over Twenty-five Years', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 25/1 (Spring 1997), 15.

[38] John Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose and Sons, 1908), 396.

for writing it in the early 1780s,[39] the third *Critique* was, in Watson's opinion, the necessary and natural next step of Kant's critical inquiries. 'We must therefore expect that Judgment will mediate between understanding and reason by bringing into harmony the realm of nature and the realm of freedom, and that it will also be related to the feeling of pleasure and pain as the link between knowledge and desire'.[40] Watson nowhere mentions religion with regard to the critical philosophy, but he does find consistency and completeness in Kant's three-realm understanding of reason.[41]

If we move once again to the middle part of the twentieth century, we see that Stephan Körner in *Kant* (1955) (as opposed to Richard Kroner in *Kant's Weltanschauung* (1956)) held to a three-part view of Kant's philosophy. According to Körner, 'The Critiques of theoretical and practical reason are a systematic survey of *a priori* principles of empirical knowledge and of morality. They are not the whole system and not even the whole outline of the critical philosophy. … Another Critique had to be thought out and written by Kant'.[42] Körner understood Kant to be holding to a close connection between morality and religion.[43] Yet he argued for the possibility of a 'rational faith' that is more than just morality in the writings of Kant. It proceeds from a required connection between nature and freedom found in a separate realm. Körner argues,

> the two *Critiques* have prepared the ground for an act of faith which is in harmony with the findings of his critical philosophy. It can in this sense be called a rational faith. According to Kant it is rational also in the sense that it satisfies "an interest of pure reason", namely the connexion between the realms of nature and of moral freedom.[44]

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[39] In some of his earlier letters, Kant does mention the possibility of a book on aesthetics as being an important part of the coming critical philosophy. Lindsay, in support of the three-*Critique* interpretation, writes, 'It will be remembered that Kant, in his letter of June 1771 to Marcus Herz, where he first talks of the work which was to become the *Critique of Pure Reason*, says that he has been concerned with what is "involved in the theory of taste, metaphysics, and moral theory."' Lindsay points out other references in Kant's earlier letters that suggest 'aesthetics ranked with metaphysics and moral theory as part of the general Critical program'. A. D. Lindsay, *Kant* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1934), 215–220.

[40] Watson, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained*, 396–397.

[41] In Watson's earlier work, he links morality and religion, but writes that Kant in the third *Critique* 'points beyond the abstractions of the sensible and the supersensible to their actual concrete unity; but … the most he can persuade himself to say is, that man is entitled to a rational faith in God, freedom and immortality, though these are objects which lie beyond the range of his knowledge'. John Watson, *Christianity and Idealism* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1897), xxxvi.

[42] Stephan Körner, *Kant* (London: Penguin Books, 1955), 175.

[43] Körner, *Kant*, 168–171.

[44] Körner, *Kant*, 169.

Körner highlights the importance of faith and the role of the third *Critique* for providing harmony among the critical components of the program. However, Körner does not elaborate on the possibility of a link between these two aspects. In Körner's view, Kant's philosophy of religion is distinct from his ethics in that it provides the vital unifying function. Nevertheless, it remains an enigmatic feature of Kant's thought; its only definitive place, 'the realm of faith', remains outside the confines of standard philosophical dialogue.

More recently, Adina Davidovich presents a case for the three-dimensional view of Kant's philosophy in line with Watson and Körner, and applies it to Kant's philosophy of religion. In her book *Religion as a Province of Meaning* (1993), she focuses on Kant's third *Critique*, making the case that the faculty of judgement became, for Kant, reason's most important faculty. This insight is not only crucial, thinks Davidovich, for understanding how Kant's whole programme comes together, but also decisive for determining the nature of Kant's philosophy of religion. She summarizes her interpretive strategy in her prefatory remarks: 'I contend that in his last systematic works Kant considered religion an essential bridge between the worlds of theory and praxis and elevated its status as such to that of a necessary principle through which alone the unity of reason is established'.[45] The picture of Kant's philosophy that emerges is a bifurcated sphere of theory and practice held together and harmonized by judgement. *Religion*, in her view, expresses Kant's developed understanding of what is most important to judgement. She calls this kind of judgement 'reflective' and 'contemplative' reasoning in its highest form, the form of judgement that deals with life's most important questions. Her contention is that Kant's faculty of judgement, as explicated in the third *Critique*, not only provides an explanation of the language used to express human metaphysical beliefs, but also provides the only meaningful access we have to metaphysics.[46] Judgement in her interpretation of Kant is less a direct access or bridge between theory and practice and more an approximation process in which humans strive to understand God as the provider of harmony between nature and freedom and the ultimate guarantor of justice. Her interpretation, as an example of what I call 'the poetic interpretation', will be the focus of chapter five.

Additional grounds for theology are found in the work of interpreters who understand Kant to be articulating a kind of fourth perspective within the critical philosophy. They take theology to be grounded in what might be called a distinctly

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[45] Adina Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), xv.

[46] See Chris L. Firestone, 'Kant's Two Perspectives on the Theological Task', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2/1 (March 2000), 63-78. There, I argue that Davidovich's thesis is an example of the 'poetic hypothesis' for interpreting Kant's philosophy. The poet uses reflection and error to project images of the Highest Good and in this way seeks contemplative harmony for reason. For Kant's definition of the poet, see *Critique of Judgement*, (trans.) James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 176–77 (314).

religious realm. Edward Caird produced a pioneering piece of Kant scholarship along these lines. Caird's two-volume work, entitled *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (1889), was the first substantial work on Kant in English covering the full extent of his philosophy (including Kant's philosophy of religion).[47] His interpretation of Kant's philosophy is divided into four 'books'. The first three correspond to the three *Critiques* and the fourth addresses Kant's *Religion*. For Caird, the most natural reading of Kant is the holistic one. 'For the theoretical, the practical and the aesthetic and religious consciousness are not really independent things, or the products of independent faculties, which stand side by side with each other; they are different forms of one conscious life, forms which rise out of each other in a certain order determined by the very nature of the intelligence'.[48] Caird understood Kant's thought to be a coherent and dynamic whole, in which apparent contradictions find their resolution in the development and filling out of ideas, rather than in their relative demise due to logical inconsistency.

To my knowledge, few scholars have picked up on Caird's interpretation over the last 100 years of English-speaking Kant interpretation. The consensus of opinion seems to be that Caird's reading of Kant is too close to the German Idealism that Kant clearly despised.[49] What Caird's reading of Kant does better than most of his era, however, is capture the sense of smooth transition in Kant's transcendental philosophy. According to James Collins, somewhere along the line in the twentieth century Kant scholarship lost the interpretive art of locating the smooth transition between writings in Kant's thought and the sense of wholeness that this recognition affords. 'Whereas every preliminary survey moves easily from one *Critique* to the next – from theory of knowledge and metaphysics to ethics and esthetics, and to theory of history and religion – this movement of tranquil passage becomes the first victim of the advanced Kant seminar'.[50] Collins' work points a way forward in trying to understand Kant's philosophy of religion in relation to his other critical writings. He captures a more complete sense of Kant's religious emphasis on a moral kingdom under God held together by a common faith in God's providential plan in history. His interpretation of Kant is worked out in detail in his book *The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion* (1967), wherein he argues that the question of hope leads Kant's philosophy ineluctably toward religion. Collins argues that the question 'What may I hope?' constitutes 'a purposive and religious type of inquiry, which Kant begins in the *Critique of*

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47 Edward Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, Vols. I and II (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1889).

48 Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 644.

49 See Theodore M. Greene, 'The Historical Context and Religious Significance of Kant's *Religion*', in Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Row, 1934), lxviii.

50 James Collins, *Interpreting Modern Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 328.

Judgement, continues in his briefer writings on the meaning of history, and brings to a climax in *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*'.[51]

In more recent literature, we find a renewed attention to Caird's style of Kant interpretation. Like Caird, Stephen Palmquist makes the case that Kant's philosophy is best understood as a system of three standpoints with an overarching ontology.[52] For Palmquist, one of reason's three standpoints is always operative in human experience, but, considered as a whole, the overarching ontology of reason itself delineates its true boundaries and governs the other standpoints. Palmquist's interpretation provides a good example of what I have termed here 'the four-realm interpretation' and elsewhere 'the religious interpretation'.[53] His interpretation argues that Kant's later writings, particularly the writings on religion and the posthumously published writings, bring into sharp relief a 'Transcendental Perspective' in which reason comes to consummation in the pre-reflective interface of reason and being at the outermost bounds of human experience. This fourth realm arises out of this 'Transcendental Perspective' and becomes vital to the coherence and completion of Kant's philosophy. Palmquist's interpretation is based on the conviction that, for Kant, the religious uniquely manifests itself in the reality of human experience. According to Palmquist, Kant's understanding of religion is founded on the experience of God as being-itself. This is the origin and ground of all reasonable theological discourse and belief. Properly understanding this feature of Kant's thinking provides the conditions for what Palmquist calls 'Critical Mysticism'. Palmquist's religious interpretation understands Kant's philosophy of religion to allow for the experience of God as a powerful personality and a loving lord.[54] His interpretation is the focus of chapter six.

The moral, poetic and ontological interpretations of Kant have come into prominence in the field of Kant-studies in recent years. These interpretive strategies have spawned corresponding theological projects which, in the chapters to follow, we will study in conjunction with their philosophical counterparts. Like Green, John Hick understands Kant's moral philosophy as selflessness. He writes that for Kant 'the good will, instead of making practical decisions from the standpoint of a particular individual whose interests will inevitably conflict with those of

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[51] James Collins, *The Emergence of Philosophy of Religion*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 96.

[52] See also Gregory R. Johnson, 'The Tree of Melancholy: Kant on Philosophy and Enthusiasm' in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, (eds.) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[53] Palmquist accepts the designation 'the religious interpretation' in the 'Editors' Introduction' to *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*.

[54] As Palmquist puts it, '[Kant] not only *believed* in the reality of a transcendent God represented by our theoretical idea, manifested in our practical reason (speaking to our conscience), and communing with us in prayer, but also actively *experienced* this reality in his daily life'. Stephen R. Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), 313.

others, makes them from the universal standpoint of impartial rationality'.[55] Unlike Green, however, he does not believe that Kant suggested or even desired a prudential exposition of practical reason. Hick believes that moral prudence is the very opposite of 'Reality-centredness'. Ethics, being founded upon an impartial or selfless morality, 'derives from God, not in the sense that it is divinely commanded but in the sense that the personal realm, of which it is a function, is God's creation'.[56] Hick's assumption is that God as the creator of all guarantees that practical reason exists and is operative in everyone. Where Green believes that to act rightly is to act in accordance with both virtue and happiness on the basis of postulated religious beliefs and practices, Hick believes that 'to act rightly is to act rationally, on unrestrictedly valid principles, rather than on the basis of one's own personal desires and preferences'.[57] In the latter portions of chapter four I will argue that this difference between Green's interpretation of Kant and Hick's appropriation of Kant is only superficial and that below the surface of their respective programs are nearly identical internal logics. The strengths and weaknesses of the transcendental grounds for theology will be shown likewise to hinge on this internal logic.

Gordon Kaufman's theology may be aptly described as a theological analogue of the poetic interpretation of Kant. In his view, the meaningfulness of human experience is based primarily upon the human capacity to contemplate and communicate creatively. Although Kaufman himself admits that he is 'deeply indebted' to Kant, his indebtedness is only documented specifically in his discussion of ethics. This fact conceals an even deeper alliance with Kant that can be located in his primary theological proposal. Part of our task in chapter five will be to clarify those features of Kaufman's project that, when compared with Kant's philosophy, will demonstrate this alliance. I will argue that Davidovich's interpretation of Kant is precisely the approach to Kant that yields theologies like Kaufman's. In order to get beyond the shortcomings inherent in Kantian religious theories that diminish the significance of theology by focusing exclusively upon theoretical and practical considerations, Kaufman argues for a new point of view for beginning theological inquiry. A theologian's true task is to analyze and articulate the highest point at which language and concept unite – the word and idea *God*. Important for our purposes is the fact that Kaufman's most recent writings make an advance on the way in which Kant's philosophy has been typically appropriated in theology. Instead of reducing all theological discourse to either moral utterances or inadequate attempts to explain ineffable religious experience, Kaufman understands God to be a uniquely theological and imaginative construction, neither real nor unreal (as these terms are commonly understood with reference to objects), but mysterious. The mystery of God is that

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[55] John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989), 39.

[56] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 98.

[57] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 98.

God is always and only just beyond the reach of language and concept. God is embedded in the hidden creativity that guides the flow of world history. Chapter five will assess the strengths and weaknesses of Kaufman's theology in relation to Davidovich's poetic interpretation.

Alongside Palmquist's interpretation, in chapter six, we will turn to the theology of Paul Tillich. Upon initial inspection it might seem surprising to select Tillich as a theological response to the religious interpretation, or indeed any interpretation, of Kant. It is well known, for instance, that Tillich was a great admirer of Friedrich Schelling and that Kant never appreciated the versions of German Idealism that he encountered late in his career.[58] However, there are good reasons for Tillich to be the appropriate choice as exemplifying the theological appropriation of Kant's philosophy in the sense of Palmquist. First of all, Palmquist uses certain parts of Tillich's writings to explain the broader significance of Kant's philosophy.[59] He draws a link between these two thinkers not only because Tillich drew consistently upon Kant's insights in the explication of his theology, but also because Kant's writings are thought to point to Tillich's system as a good example of philosophy coming to culmination in the theological enterprise. Another good reason for choosing Tillich relates to the work of the Kantian philosopher of religion Rudolf Otto (1869–1937). Palmquist is a contemporary interpreter of Kant whose main works were all published in the last quarter century. Otto's most influential writings pre-date not only Palmquist's writings, but also, more importantly, most of Tillich's writings. Because Otto's work has a close affinity with Palmquist's interpretation of Kant's philosophy and had a significant impact upon Tillich's thought, we have good reason for choosing Tillich as an appropriate theological response to the religious interpretation of Kant. Our objective in chapter six will be to assess both the strengths and weaknesses of theology when it is built upon Kant's ontological grounds at the transcendental boundaries of reason.

In sum, the next three chapters will show how each of these three approaches to interpreting Kant's philosophy provide grounds for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason as well as assess the strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches. Considering the work of Ronald Green, Adina Davidovich and Stephen Palmquist, we examine each interpretation for exegetical insight and for its potential to provide a Kantian basis for theology. I argue that each of these interpreters is successful, albeit in markedly different ways, in establishing rational grounds in Kant's critical writings for the development of theology. However, each interpreter has to make interpretive concessions in order to make

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[58] In his open letter to Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Kant shows a clear disdain for Fichte's version of idealism (even though he had never read Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*). See Kant's 1799 'Declaration Concerning Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*' in *Correspondence*, Arnulf Zweig, (trans. and ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 559–561 (12:370–371).

[59] See Stephen R. Palmquist, *The Tree of Philosophy* (Hong Kong: Philopsychy Press, 2000), Chapters 8 and 11.

Kant's philosophy of religion consistent or 'fit' with his philosophy as a whole. Theologians such as Hick, Kaufman and Tillich, in their respective articulations of contemporary Kantian theology, capitalize on these interpretive grounds and concessions. Through a comparison of these Kant interpretations and theological appropriations, I will argue that, in order to understand Kant's philosophy of religion to be a consistent philosophical proposal and one capable of grounding theology critically in the recesses of reason, we must have a better understanding of what Kant means by 'rational religious faith'.

This enquiry carries right into the heart of his philosophy of religion as expressed in the classic text *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. This book has stood as a stumbling block for both traditional and affirmative interpreters alike. Until recently, no exposition of the text has been able to withstand the barrage of scrutiny over its supposed incoherence. To a large extent, this lacuna in the field of Kant-studies is addressed in my book, co-authored with Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion. In the closing chapter therefore, I will summarize some of the central insights of this work as it relates to Kant's grounds for theology, put this summary into the context of other theologically affirmative interpretations of Kant's philosophy of religion, and raise the question of theology's role relative to philosophy today.

Chapter Four
Kant's Moral Grounds for Theology

As we move now into Kant's grounds for theology after the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is important to keep in mind the progress that has been made thus far. The grounds for theology, as we have seen, cannot be empirical; no empirical grounds, thinks Kant, are rationally sufficient for belief. This does not mean, however, that theology is without a touchstone in theoretical reason. Theology can proceed from objectively valid ideas rooted in the logic of pure cognition and according to the systemic needs of reason in its endeavour to bring order to the manifold of cognition in human experience. From the perspective of theoretical reason alone, we are not able to say definitively whether or not God exists. Nevertheless, belief in God is not merely formal nor somehow whimsically transcendental; Kant does not categorize the idea of God as part of a world of ideas populated by figments and phantasms. The idea of God emerges in the natural course of reason and is 'present' to reason as soon as transcendental inquiry begins. Theoretical reason presents the idea of God as one necessarily inherent in reason and, according to Allen Wood, 'Kant has only respect for our natural interest in the content of this idea and our theoretical curiosity about the existence or nonexistence of an object corresponding to it'.[1] Belief in God, as noted previously in reference to Wood's interpretation, is grounded on the *ens realissimum* conception and Kant's expressed intention is to expound and develop this seed of theism in the first *Critique* and beyond.

Before building on the convergence between cognition of God and faith in God by moving straight into an assessment of Kant's moral grounds for theology, it is important to look carefully at Wood's interpretation once again. According to Wood, the argument for moving from theoretical to practical reason to establish belief in God (rather than the factual existence of God) is closely tied to Kant's irrefragable belief in the overall meaningfulness of the world and the moral potential of the human disposition in this context. Wood writes, 'According to Kant, we believe in God because this belief harmonizes with, and is rationally required by, our moral disposition to pursue the highest good'.[2] Inasmuch as human identity is wrapped up in a *prior* commitment to belief in the reality of a human moral disposition and commitment to living as though the world has moral order, Kant is likewise committed to a robust faith in a living God. Wood contends, 'Kant was convinced that an upright moral disposition rationally required belief

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[1] Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 19.

[2] Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 24.

in a moral world, purposively ordered by a supremely wise and morally perfect being, very much along the lines of traditional theistic religions'.[3]

Practical reason is very different from theoretical reason in this regard; it requires what Gordon Michalson calls 'the principle of proportionality'. According to Michalson, 'God enters Kant's scheme by riding on the coat-tails of the principle of proportionality…. On Kantian grounds, I cannot conceive of a universe in which, in the long run, the wicked prosper and the virtuous or innocent … find only suffering and wretchedness'.[4] By consistently employing this principle, Kant assumes that the universe is essentially moral and, despite whatever pitfalls may befall a person or group, justice will eventually win out. Practical reason, to the extent that it depends on something like this principle of proportionality for its constitution and stability, tips the scales of existence, which were at first delicately balanced by the theoretical philosophy, toward belief in God and, in so doing, makes it possible for a critical extension of transcendental theology. Even though Wood's argument stems less from the assumption of a morally proportional universe and more from the logic of practical reason itself, it is consonant with implications of this position (and more positively inclined toward its philosophical utility than Michalson's position). According to Wood,

> Moral faith, in Kant's view, requires "theism," the belief in a "living God," a being endowed with knowledge and free volition, who governs the world wisely according to moral laws…. Transcendental theology, says Kant, is an indispensable "propaedeutic" to a fuller theology, but remains "idle and useless" from a moral-religious point of view unless supplemented by it.[5]

What distinguishes Wood's interpretation from Michalson's is that Wood is careful to show that belief in God is rooted in transcendental recesses of the theoretical philosophy as much as it is in purely moral considerations. Wood sums up his point this way: 'Kant's justification of theism must be sought not only in the moral and existential considerations leading to practical faith, but also in the theoretical dialectic which is supposed to furnish this faith with a clear and compelling conception of its natural object'.[6]

The moral considerations only become pivotal for Wood when we try to understand Kant's theism as an advance beyond deism and the first *Critique*. Wood's main evidence for moral faith in a 'living God' turns on a complex logical deduction – what Wood terms the '*absurdum practicum*' argument – emanating from Kant's practical philosophy. Moral faith is required, according to this argument, if reason is to hold on to a stable conception of the Highest Good and

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[3] Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 92.

[4] Gordon E. Michalson, Jr., *Fallen Freedom: Kant on Radical Evil and Moral Regeneration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 24–5.

[5] Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 82–83.

[6] Wood, *Kant's Rational Theology*, 26.

avoid retrograde moral decision-making based exclusively on self-seeking motives. Wood's interpretation, in combination with the previous analysis of cognition and faith, demonstrates that moral faith in God is the properly rational epistemic category for grounding theology according to Kant. Moral considerations, thinks Kant, provide subjectively (but not objectively) sufficient reasons for belief. The faith that results, however, is far more than mere opinion, it is rationally warranted belief in the 'living God'. Jacobs and I provide a thorough analysis of Wood's defence of Kant's moral religion in *In Defense of Kant's* Religion and I will not take the time to rehearse his work further here.[7] What should be noted, however, is precisely where Wood's interpretation ends up and why I believe, despite all its many merits outlined both in our book and in this book, it does not itself provide a completely satisfying interpretation of Kant's philosophical grounds for theology.

Toward the end of Wood's interpretation of *Religion*, we find the payoff portion of his interpretation where theology is concerned – namely, Wood's understanding of Kant's resolution to the problem of human depravity outlined in Book One of *Religion*. Wood writes, 'Man justifies *himself* insofar as he does everything in his power to become good; but God, for the sake of man's disposition to holiness, forgives him the evil which is not in his power to undo, and by this justifying verdict renders the disposition equivalent to that of moral perfection which is the unconditioned component of the highest good'.[8] God, on Wood's reading of Kant, becomes something of a 'judicial fudger' for the sake of humanity's good works and good intentions. Although human works fall short of what God requires of us, God must be thought of as overlooking human sin for those who try hard to obey God's commands. From this conception of God, Wood moves quickly through Kant's account of atonement and analysis of punishment and justification (in Book Two of *Religion*), arguing for what he calls 'the postulate of divine grace'. Nicholas Wolterstorff has pointed out numerous theological conundrums that emerge when humanity and divinity are understood in this way and, in *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, Nathan Jacobs and I detail these conundrums. Again, I will not rehearse them all here, but simply point out one of Wolterstorff's most potent criticisms. Wolterstorff writes, 'Kant cannot have it both ways: he cannot hold that we can expect God's forgiveness, since God's failure to forgive would violate the moral order of rights and obligations, and also hold that God's granting of forgiveness is an act of grace on God's part'.[9]

Wood is so focused on the *absurdum practicum* of the moral philosophy that he passes over the essential thrust of Kant's solution to the problem of human

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[7] Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), Chapter One.

[8] Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 242.

[9] Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, "Conundrums in Kant's Rational Religion," in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, Philip J. Rossi and Michael Wreen, (eds.) (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1991), 45.

depravity, opting instead for a Pelagian hypothesis where the human being's only hope in this life is to join together with other humans and collectively try their best to create moral communities that aspire to an Ethical Commonwealth. This leap-frog strategy utilizes only Kant's concept of grace from Book Two of *Religion* while jettisoning the insights which make the anatomy of grace intelligible. Where Kant presents his resolution to the problem of human depravity directly in his analysis of the divine-human prototype and the possibility of moral conversation (prior to human beings coming together), Wood's interpretation combines a generic concept of grace with a Book Three strategy that focuses on the moral fecundity of human beings banding together for moral renewal. The problem with this position is that, for Kant, humans coming together are just as likely to corrupt one another as they are to be moral. Persons making up moral communities must be converted to 'the good principle' or the divine-human prototype, thinks Kant, if any hope in an Ethical Commonwealth is to be maintained.

According to Wood, 'God's grace must be presupposed if an *absurdum practicum* is to be avoided as regards the unconditioned component of the highest good'.[10] Trust in divine forgiveness is a central aspect of Kant's understanding of moral faith, not because it is granted by the free volition of a holy God, but because it is rationally necessary to overcome moral absurdity. Such faith is justified in *Religion* by a supposedly 'logical' extension of the *absurdum practicum* argument into theology proper. Divine grace is needed to resolve the first antinomy of practical reason, and therefore grace itself must be granted the status of a 'postulate' of practical reason. 'In faith', Wood writes, 'the moral agent places his rational trust not only in God's beneficence as world-creator and wise providence as world-ruler, but also in God's just forgiveness as the moral judge and the loving and merciful Father of mankind'.[11] Such is the outcome of Kant's philosophical employment of practical reason, according to the Wood, and is the ultimate structure of Kant's moral theism.

The problem with this endpoint in Wood's analysis is that God must be thought of in a somewhat contradictory fashion. God is the supreme, just judge who *must* also be the merciful, forgiving lover of humanity. This type of divine judicial fudging, without a workable understanding of the anatomy of justification, is out of step with what Christian theologians would accept as a theological foundation from Kant's philosophy and, as Jacobs and I argue, reveals the inner tensions and limitations of Wood's moral interpretation. Although suggestive and insightful at many points, it cannot provide a coherent account of the philosophical grounds for theology at the transcendental boundaries of reason as a stand-alone philosophy of religion. God is a necessary condition for the thoroughgoing determination of things and for avoiding moral absurdity, but God cannot be required to deliver mercy and grace (transcendentally or otherwise), and postulating to the contrary only weakens the grounds for theology in Kant's philosophy.

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[10] Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 236.

[11] Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 248.

In this chapter, I will therefore move to the interpretation of Ronald Green for a theologically affirmative account of the grounds in Kant's philosophy for faith that moves us out of merely moral considerations into more robust religious considerations. Green's interpretation of Kant, in contrast to Wood's, is not merely a cognitive version of the *absurdum practicum* argument based on rationalist assumptions, but instead is driven by the inner logic of practical reason in a way that allows for empirical considerations to enter into one's practical deliberations through an 'aperture' or along what Green sometimes terms a 'bridge' between theory and practice.

Before we get ahead of ourselves, it is important to take a step back. In the most general sense, Green's interpretation of Kant's critical writings amounts to a self-contained and systematic philosophy of reason.[12] It is self-contained in the sense that almost all human experience is said to derive from reason's often intense need to be logically consistent and systematic in the sense that every significant human trait is held to be either directly or potentially treated within the system's general framework. The interesting thing about Green's interpretation is that it posits a two-realm view of Kant's philosophical programme that does not reduce religion to morality in an eliminative way; instead it provides a coherent account of Kant's philosophy as an integrated system based on two realms of philosophy in dynamic relationship and a philosophy of religion that is theologically affirmative. The first realm of the philosophy he calls theoretical reason and designates as Kant's 'epistemology'; the second is practical reason or Kant's 'ethics'. Taken together, these two realms constitute the overarching structure of Kant's entire philosophical programme. The questions of hope and human identity, which are questions from the first *Critique* that appear on first blush to transcend the questions of knowledge and duty, can be explained by the 'deep structure' of reason in its theoretical and practical employments. This deep structure not only provides a clear picture of the whole of Kant's philosophical programme, but also a clear indication of what Kant was trying to accomplish in his writings on religion.

Green focuses most of his attention on the inner workings of practical reason. Although Kant's critical writings emphasize what Green calls practical reason's moral viewpoint, practical reason is necessarily composed of three interrelated 'points of view' – the moral, the prudential and the religious. In describing Green's interpretation, we will try to maintain his most recent usage. Thus, for the two overarching parts of Kant's philosophy, we will use the terms 'theoretical reason' and 'practical reason', and designate his three subdivisions of practical reason as either 'points of view' or 'viewpoints'. Green believes that each point of view is important for, though the latter two are only implicit in, Kant's system. The implicit nature of these two viewpoints should not, however, lead the interpreter to think that they are somehow less important. According to Green, the internal logic of Kant's thinking depends on rightly understanding these points of view. By

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[12] Ronald M. Green, *Religious Reason: The Rational and Moral Basis of Religious Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 28.

understanding the implications of these viewpoints on Kant's critical philosophy, we can understand its internal consistency as well as the consistency and profundity of Kant's philosophy of religion. Green contends that the logic of transcendental philosophy suggests three practical points of view taken together are all that is necessary to complete reason, that is, to bridge the gap between freedom and nature. This bridge of the fact/value divide establishes the location of the philosophical basis for religion and theology. Reason, thus, comes to consummation with the three viewpoints of practical reason.

The first point of view, or the surface structure of practical reason, is moral reasoning. In answering the question 'What ought I to do?' in any given situation, reason is naturally led to seek the ideal answer from a point of view which suppresses or even ignores our own 'special needs and desires'. This viewpoint of practical reason is what Green calls 'a direct expression of reason'.[13] Moral reasoning orients us to knowledge of the ideal action in any situation (subject of course to the limits of one's knowledge of the facts). An ideal action is a selfless act of doing on behalf of others, not in the sense of completely ignoring the self, but in viewing oneself as just one amongst others affected by the decision. '[Moral reason] involves a perspective of radical impartiality or "omnipartiality" before the choices facing us as moral agents. It asks us to choose as though we might be any of the people affected by our conduct'.[14] Practical reason acting morally is by definition so completely impartial that the term 'impartial reason' may be used as its synonym. By standing outside of ourselves so to speak, as though we were our own moral legislators, reason is able to establish the standard of perfect impartiality necessary for moral effectiveness. Green believes that the impartial/moral point of view is the only viewpoint of practical reason that legitimates the categorical imperative as a constitutive principle of practical reason.[15]

Despite the crucial role that the categorical imperative has for Kant's moral philosophy, it was not the only principle that Kant thought necessary in order for practical reason to know what to do in a given situation. Green believes that the second half of the second *Critique* shows that happiness is related to practical reason in a way that transforms its inner workings into a new point of view.

> Now we learn that happiness plays an important, indeed indispensable, role, in moral reasoning. In addition to the categorical imperative, Kant tells us, practical reason has as its presupposition and requires belief in the attainability of the "highest good," understood as the proportionate and exceptionless union of virtue and happiness. Without a constitutive role for the highest good, he says,

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[13] Green, *Religious Reason*, 34.

[14] Ronald M. Green, *Religion and Moral Reason: A New Method for Comparative Study*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 6.

[15] Ronald M. Green, *Kierkegaard and Kant: The Hidden Debt* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 45.

> morality would lack a complete object and moral striving itself would become empty and vain.[16]

Green contends that Kant's discussion of happiness and the Highest Good at this crucial juncture implies practical reason has or at least should have deeper structural levels than the moral point of view alone (which he believes is constituted without reference to happiness and the Highest Good). In the second stage of practical reason, just as impartial reasoning compels us to do what we ought to do in an ideal world of thought or from a perspective of 'omnipartiality', prudential reasoning, given the reality of our individual situations in the actual world, urges us to choose according to our 'personal concerns'. It is that self-centred employment of reason that Kant would later develop into his theory of radical evil.

Below the surface of moral deliberation, personal happiness ineluctably transforms the inner workings of practical reason and constitutes a completely different and competing point of view. Moral reasoning, when personal happiness is seriously considered below the surface of moral deliberation, becomes prudential reasoning. One might say that if moral reasoning answers the question of duty by emphasizing duty to others, prudential reasoning answers the question by emphasizing the duty that we have to ourselves. Green does not use the term, but his view of prudential reasoning could be called *partial reasoning*, where partial is taken to mean 'favouring oneself' as opposed to the less desirable 'reasoning in part'. Prudential reasoning provides a viewpoint for making decisions that are partial to one's self. When reasoning prudentially, we are compelled to act according to our own special needs and desires because 'impartiality before the social array of desires can cause all or most of my desires – and the most important among them – to be suppressed'.[17] Prudential or partial reasoning puts the urgency of our own concerns to the forefront of our minds; it condones selfishness when selfishness is necessary to maintain our essential interests in the real world.

Like Green, Wood calls feeling (or the pursuit of happiness), when it constitutes a form of practical decision-making, 'reason as prudence'; however, unlike Green, instead of ascribing to it a status equal (and subsequent) to moral reason, he treats it as a preliminary form of practical reason which must give way to pure practical reason. 'Reason as prudence, therefore, defines a natural good for man prior to any moral considerations. … Human happiness, well-being, or the natural good in given instances, however, may be either included in the object of pure practical reason, or excluded from it'.[18] If feelings of happiness can be included in the object of pure practical reason then it is 'a good for morality'; if feelings of happiness decide one's actions and remove the moral law as the necessary condition of practical deliberation, then it 'is in fact a moral evil in Kant's view'.[19] For the

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16 Green, *Kierkegaard and Kant*, 50.

17 Green, *Religious Reason*, 35.

18 Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 82.

19 Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, 82–3.

purpose of attaining the purest practical reason, Kant argues in the essay 'Toward Perpetual Peace' that we must decide to give the formal principle precedence over the material principle in practical reason, 'for, as a principle of right, it has unconditional necessity, whereas the [material principle] necessitates only if the empirical conditions of the proposed end, namely of its being realized, are presupposed' (8:377). Practical reason has no necessary conflict with itself in its pure form; only prudential reasoning introduces conflict.[20] In contrast to Wood, Green's insight is that prudential reasoning is logically inevitable and a necessary component of honest human reasoning. This honesty creates the opportunity for reason both to embrace religion and to bridge the gap between nature and freedom.

If one's initial reaction is to doubt the centrality of this notion of prudential reason in Kant's philosophical programme or to think that it cannot be made to cohere with Kant's strict emphasis on the moral law, Green asks us to wait for his complete explication of Kant's system of practical reason. Admitting happiness into moral deliberation does not degrade virtue; it, as already suggested, makes practical reason honest. When theoretical reason encounters the world, we learn that we not only have knowledge of things as they appear, but we also have knowledge of our own desires in relation to those things. Theoretical reason in a sense transforms moral reasoning, which before might have been called the 'pure' practical reason of virtue, into prudential reasoning, or a more genuine form of practical reason based on personal happiness. This complete transformation sets up a conflict in practical reason. In difficult situations, impartial and partial reasoning compel us to choose diametrically opposed courses of action. If these two employments of practical reason were our only recourse, we would find ourselves in constant turmoil and be forced in the most difficult circumstances to give up rational deliberation. Difficult moral decisions provide so much internal tension that reason's only 'reasonable' way forward is to seek an even deeper level of practical deliberation. Here, the concept of the Highest Good becomes vitally important.

Employing what Kant designated in the second *Critique* as an 'object' of practical reason (5:4 and 5:115), Green suggests that the idea of the Highest Good can have a constitutive role in practical reason. All that is necessary in Green's opinion to secure such a role for the Highest Good are the postulates God and immortality *fully clothed in culturally contingent religious beliefs and practices*. They allow us to act on behalf of the Highest Good knowing perfectly well that it

[20] The conflict with which Kant appears explicitly concerned is not between impartial and partial reasoning, but between the fluctuating (conditional) judgements opposing one another *within prudential reasoning itself*. 'The world will by no means perish by there coming to be fewer evil people. What is morally evil has the property, inseparable from its nature, of being at odds with itself in its aims and destructive of them (especially in relation to others similarly disposed), so that it clears the way for the moral principle of the good, even if progress is slow' (8:379).

may not be achievable in this life. 'There is, in fact, no third use of reason that can adjudicate the conflict between morality and prudence. But it may be that there is another way of handling the dispute between reason's two employments*, one that involves showing that no dispute really exists*'.[21] Religious reason, constituted by the Highest Good and supported by religious adherence, does not adjudicate the conflict; it simply views the situation in a whole new way. This new way is rooted in the religious beliefs and practices emerging out of the cultural/linguistic context of history. We can believe in the reality of our central religious doctrines because reason demands these beliefs as a stabilizing bridge between theory and practice (prudence and impartiality).

Reason employed religiously insists that the discrepancy between morality and prudence is 'only apparent, not ultimate'. Religious reason teaches us that the only rational way forward in decisions that affect our special needs and desires is to believe that moral retribution and rewards are certain. 'Just as a belief in retribution eases the apparently insuperable opposition between prudence and morality, so religious beliefs can make it rational to renew our dedication to moral effort even as we realize the difficulty of this task and the failures that loom before us'.[22] Because reason necessarily finds itself in conflict between the action of virtue and the action of happiness, only the postulation of a moral will greater than our own and faith in this postulate can guarantee that virtue and happiness will ultimately be brought together in their proper proportion. It is an improbable choice, but when all else is eliminated it is our only hope. 'Kant's total argument', Green contends, 'drive[s] us to the realization that his own transcendent resolution, as offensive as it may be, is the one to which reason is ineluctably driven'.[23] Although it is not entirely clear how this reconciliation is effected and sustained, it may not be wide of the mark to summarize it in the following way. Religious reason allows us to embrace the internal strife caused by practical reason's other two employments: it urges us to act morally, and, in the event that special needs and desires require strictly prudential decision making, it justifies our actions through faith in postulated religious beliefs. For Green then, transcendental belief is grounded in the relationship between the practical conflicts of reason and the theological beliefs of actual religious traditions.

Green's analysis of Kant's practical philosophy makes sense out of Kant's drive toward the religious in his later writings by linking them decisively to the practical philosophy. In so doing, he goes a long way toward establishing a reasoned foundation for religion and theology in Kant's philosophy. He argues that the relentless logic of Kant's moral philosophy, divided into partial and impartial components, requires faith not just in a formal idea of God suitable for right action, but also faith in the reality of God consonant with Kant's theoretical strictures on knowledge. According to Green, the logical force of reason in conflict

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21 Green, *Religious Reason*, 54.

22 Green, *Religion and Moral Reason*, 20.

23 Green, *Religious Reason*, 68–9.

conjoins morality and metaphysics and leads to a breakthrough of Kant's first *Critique* strictures on knowledge. By appealing to the logic of a practical faith in God and immortality clothed in the phenomena of culture-specific religious beliefs and practices, Green argues that Kant shows how theology is critically rooted in reason. Green avers that practical faith in God and immortality 'opens a narrow aperture in the restraining wall of human cognition [Kant] built in the first *Critique*'.[24] Theory is breached by the needs of practical reason, which, by its inherent logic, demands belief in those ideas which can guarantee the eventual fulfilment of the Highest Good. Because theoretical reason has already linked itself to practical reason through prudential reasoning, the way back to theory is open along the same path, which at a still deeper level is transformed into religious reasoning.

At the core of Green's interpretation of Kant then is a two-way bridge connecting nature and freedom. The empirical realm of reason, by forcing us to take our personal interests and predicaments seriously, links itself to practical reason, transforming its inner workings by changing moral reasoning into prudential reasoning; practical reason, by postulating God and immortality as moral beliefs according to strict logic applied to our internal conflicts and external cultures, links itself to theoretical reason by creating an aperture in its limits, transforming the conflict of impartial and partial reasoning into religious reasoning. In this simple and straightforward manner, Green's interpretation systematizes a number of the important elements in Kant's practical philosophy. It accounts for both Kant's primacy of practical reason doctrine and his later turn to religion with a powerful hermeneutic hypothesis for understanding Kant's philosophical programme as a whole. This whole provides the philosophical framework for theology rooted in the various religious traditions and practices around the world. Belief in and discourse about God is possible because the internal logic of reason is driven out of necessity to fuse morality and metaphysics. Historical religious beliefs and practices are the means by which this synthesis takes place. In the second half of *Religion and Moral Reason*, and then again in his work *Kant and Kierkegaard*, Green begins the task of showing how Kant understood in this way provides a fruitful account of religion in its various forms and a foundation for discourse about God that makes sense of human experience.

Green, however, is not a theologian; he is an interpreter and defender of Kant, who utilizes his craft to draw out insights in applied ethics and comparative religion. John Hick is a self-described Christian theologian. His book *Interpretation of Religion* confirms the fact that Hick's theology is, in a significant sense, built on a version of the moral interpretation of Kant's philosophy very much like Green's. Green and Hick are contemporaries, but to my knowledge never refer to one another's work. Nevertheless, a close examination of their respective work in and around Kant's philosophy reveals striking similarities that are worth closer scrutiny. According to Hick, 'God was not for [Kant] a reality encountered in

[24] Green, *Kierkegaard and Kant*, 57.

religious experience but an object postulated by reason on the basis of its own practical functioning in moral agency'.[25] He describes Kant as an enlightening philosopher whose system of thought is essentially true. Nevertheless, he also sees a problem that is directly attributable to religious limitations of the moral interpretation of Kant. According to Hick, Kant's philosophical programme is hopelessly reductionistic with regard to religion. In order to correct the problem, he suggests a theological reproof of Kant in the form of a philosophical amendment of his position.

Before we take a look at how Hick actually amends Kant's system, it is important to understand how he contextualizes his position. Like Green, Hick understands Kant's moral philosophy as selflessness. He writes that for Kant 'the good will, instead of making practical decisions from the standpoint of a particular individual whose interests will inevitably conflict with those of others, makes them from the universal standpoint of impartial rationality'.[26] Unlike Green, however, he does not believe that Kant suggested or desired a prudential exposition of practical reason. Hick believes that moral prudence is the very opposite of 'Reality-centredness'. Ethics, being founded upon an impartial or selfless morality, 'derives from God, not in the sense that it is divinely commanded but in the sense that the personal realm, of which it is a function, is God's creation'.[27] Hick's assumption is that God as the creator of all guarantees that practical reason exists and is operative in everyone. Where Green believes that to act rightly is to act in accordance with both virtue and happiness on the basis of postulated religious beliefs and practices, Hick believes that 'to act rightly is to act rationally, on unrestrictedly valid principles, rather than on the basis of one's own personal desires and preferences'.[28]

As it turns out, however, this difference between Green and Hick is only superficial. Hick knows perfectly well that few actions are done for the sake of duty alone. Our observations of human experience around the world reveal this well. This situation does not leave us without hope, however, because our observations also reveal that many people are at various stages of moral maturity and that the key features of their personal development are most often related to some variety of religious belief and experience. For Hick, this is decisive evidence that Kant's epistemology needs to be amended. '[F]or Kant God is postulated, not experienced. In partial agreement but also partial disagreement with him, I want to say that the Real *an sich* is postulated by us as a pre-supposition, not of the moral life, but of religious experience and the religious life'.[29] In order to escape the religious reductionism in Kant, Hick contends that we have to amend the theoretical philosophy. Hick does this by explicitly equating immediate

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[25] John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 242.

[26] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 39.

[27] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 98.

[28] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 98.

[29] Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 243.

experience and religious experience, with one condition: 'the categories … of religious experience are not universal and invariable but are on the contrary culture-relative'.[30]

Hick's religious epistemology, upon closer inspection, reveals a deep structure of its own that is remarkably similar to that of Green's interpretation of Kant. Like Green's interpretation, Hick's view of religion requires theoretical reason to have two distinct points of view. The first point of view is theoretical reason based on synthetic *a priori* principles without appeal to experience. We might call this the Kantian part of his proposal or the ideal/internal use of scientific reason. The second point of view is theoretical reason based upon our limited epistemic positions at any given moment in life. This might be called the Hickian rejoinder to Kant or the real/external use of scientific reason. According to Kant's understanding of critical realism, the sole difference between the world as it appears to us and the world *an sich* is the *a priori* spatial-temporal order of the mind. Hick believes that true critical realism requires us to take one step beyond Kant to what Hick calls a *critical religious realism*. 'For it arises out of elementary reflection upon our experience. We quickly realize that the same thing appears in either slightly or considerably different ways to people owing both to varying spatial locations in relation to it and to differences in their sensory and mental equipment and interpretive habits'.[31] Beside the *a priori* limits of theoretical reason in its ideal employment, humans have further epistemic limits, which constitute our actual employment of theoretical reason.

One could say, although Hick has not put it quite in this way, critical religious realism appeals to a *partial* point of view in theoretical reason. This time the word partial actually means 'reasoning in part' rather than 'favouring oneself', as it did in Green's account of practical reason. Each person's limited epistemic viewpoint or partial point of view is necessarily something less than the ideal, fully employed, theoretical reason. This difference suggests that partial experiencing of the Real is to be expected; but more than that, because our different cultural contexts and personal histories (which are factors beyond the influence of reason) are actually constitutive of the experience itself, we have access only to an individualized *appearance* of the Real. Hick would likely not want to say, as Kant did with regard to appearances and things-in-themselves (Bxxvi, *Critique of Pure Reason*), that we must be able to think of God as-he-appears as the same God as-he-is-in-himself. Hick rejects any theology that attempts to say that we are made in God's image and therefore have access (either potentially or actually) to a personal or direct relationship with God. Any divine appearance, for Hick, is necessarily and completely relative in a cultural-linguistic sense.

How can we escape the religious solipsism inherent in this position? The situation requires only religio-moral discernment. By taking into account the claims of others with regard to religious experience, we could conceivably derive a full picture of

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30 Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 244.

31 Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 242.

God as He appears to all humanity. Only this kind of holistic vision approximates the complete appearance of God which is possible from the ideal human point of view. Theoretical reason in Hick's critical religious realism has its own conflict. That is, we have the ideal or trans-cultural capacity to know the Real as it appears fully, but we only know the appearance of the Real insofar as partial reasoning allows. This gap between the ideal and the actual in our theoretical experience of God forces reason (to avoid frustration) to create an aperture in the restraining wall of its practical employment. In order to know that our own experiences and the experiences of others are genuine manifestations of the Real, Hick believes we need to apply a moral test. Because 'religious experiencing-as more commonly occurs in the awareness of situational rather than object-meaning', the moral life becomes an object of experience 'mediating either the external claim of God or the internal requirements of Dharma'.[32] Thus, we must assume that something like a cause and effect relationship exists between genuine religious experience and the moral life that it creates.[33] In this way, Hick links theory to practice in a way analogous to Green. Like Green's interpretation of Kant, Hick's theology has at its core a two-way bridge between theory and practice. Where Green's interpretation of Kant has *partial reason* in the sense of moral prudence coupled with *religious reason* which grounds empirical religion rationally, Hick's appropriation of Kant has *partial reason* in the sense of human finitude coupled with *religious reason* which embraces theological realism rationally on the basis of hope.[34] At a formal level, these two systems are virtually indistinguishable.

To this point, we have suggested that the moral interpretation, which assumes that Kant's philosophy is a two-realm system of theory and practice and that Kant's view of religion is confined to the practical realm, has two general procedures for trying to construct a coherent world view. The philosophical procedure, represented in the work of Ronald Green, assumes that God, if God exists, is radically unknowable, and contends that practical reasoning, under cultural and situational constraints, determines the religious beliefs and practices observed worldwide. The theological procedure, represented in the work of John Hick, assumes that God (the Real) is knowable, but only in appearance. It points to a philosophy

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[32] John Hick, *Disputed Questions* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993), 22.

[33] Hick uses a moral test to argue the case that Christianity is probably not unique. John Hick, *The Rainbow of Faith* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1996), 16. Even 'salvation', according to Hick, can be observed as 'an actual change in human beings'. Hick, *The Rainbow of Faith*, 17.

[34] Hick notices remarkable similarities between his moral realism and the moral non-realism of scholars like Don Cupitt. He confesses, 'Given the non-realist hermeneutic, Cupitt's religious vocabulary is virtually indistinguishable from that of the religious realist'. Hick, *Interpretation of Religion*, 200. Hick goes on to list four similarities between realist and non-realists under the title of penultimate issues. The sole difference in Hick's estimation between his system and non-realist ones in the sense of Cupitt is hope. Hick's God is *Real*, while Cupitt's God is not real. See Hick, *Interpretation of Religion*, 203–205.

of religion that links theory to practice according to the phenomena of religious experience and a moral test. Perhaps the most important similarity between Green's interpretation and Hick's appropriation of Kant's critical philosophy, however, is that they both perform a kind of hypercritical *transformation*. Green employs 'an aperture' in Kant's theoretical philosophy to argue for a transformation of the moral point of view; namely, when understood in light of theoretical considerations, the moral point of view transforms into the prudential point of view. Only a further transformation made possible by practical faith allows reason to overcome the paralyzing internal conflicts between impartiality and prudence. The mind accepts culturally contextualized religious themes and submits to belief in them to resolve the conflict. Hick's theological proposal turns on a transformation of the ideal theoretical perspective into an independent and partial point of view. The discrepancy between the ideal and actual appearance of God (which leads him to propose an aperture in Kant's practical philosophy) gives rise to his philosophy of religion. Where Green privileges knowledge of our own desires, Hick privileges knowledge about God's appearances and human responses to that knowledge.

There are a variety of points at which Green's interpretation is open to criticism. For example, it could be contended that freedom in Green's interpretation is very different from freedom in Kant's moral philosophy proper. According to Henry Allison, for example, freedom and the moral law imply each other. Outside of its relationship to the moral law, freedom is curtailed rather than enhanced.[35] Green's interpretation could also be criticized insofar as it answers the questions of duty and hope at the expense of the questions of knowledge and human identity. Are our own prudential concerns the most appropriate theoretical aperture for the establishment of religious reasoning as a ground for empirical religion and theology proper? Most significantly, however, the viability of Green's interpretation as an interpretation of Kant seems to hinge on the concept of transformation. Green's interpretation of Kant's philosophy of religion centres around an unresolved problem in Kant's practical philosophy. When practical reason encounters the world and incorporates our desire for personal happiness into our moral deliberations, it leads to the reconstitution of morality into a new prudential form. This new viewpoint, Green contends, constitutes a new kind of freedom; we are 'free to be immoral' as well as free to do our duty.

The freedom to be moral and the freedom to be immoral constitute opposing practical viewpoints, which lead reason into what appears to be an irresolvable conflict, one which is only exacerbated when we are confronted with the most difficult of life's decisions.[36] According to Green, the problem is resolved for Kant

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[35] See Henry E. Allison, *Idealism and Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114–18.

[36] Kant, in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, highlights two concepts of freedom: negative freedom and positive freedom. This division does not suggest competing notions of freedom, but complementary notions of freedom that lead to practical reason's fulfilment. '*Freedom* of choice is this independence from being *determined* by sensible impulses; this

in the transformation of practical reason into a third viewpoint. The purpose of this second and final transformation of practical reason is to replace the uncertainty and inequity inherent in the dual employments of practical reason with the certainty and equity of one dominant religious employment. In this light, the transformation of freedom moves one step beyond even prudence. Instead of having two disputing notions of freedom, one emphasising the freedom to be moral and the other the freedom to be immoral, practical reason in Green's account is logically driven to transform freedom once again according to the concept of the Highest Good. We, as individuals, are no longer compelled to act according to ends designed to enhance our innate capacity to be free, but ends based on our capacity to be just. Green's interpretation thus comes to culmination in the concept of justice as the supreme moral principle.[37]

Although Green is right to link the moral law and the Highest Good to Kant's philosophy of religion, his interpretation is vulnerable, it seems to me, on the issue of moral transformation.[38] For Green, Kant's transcendental boundaries serve as adequate grounds for theology only insofar as they are progressively transformed from moral postulation into religious faith by the 'relentless logic of practical reason'. Contrary to Green's interpretation, Kant seems to affirm *transition*, and not transformation, as the *modus operandi* of his philosophical system and its significance as grounds for theology. What Kant wants to do is expand the grounds for theology by the progressive unfolding of pure cognition in moral faith through transcendental transition from theoretical to practical reason and from practical to judicial reason, rather than transform and transcend the practical view point of God seed of postulation that Kant deems vital for overcoming theoretical ignorance of God. To the extent that Green's interpretation diverges from Kant's concept of transition, it becomes less persuasive as an interpretation of the whole of Kant's philosophy in general and less cogent as a Kantian foundation for religion and theology in specific.

To clarify and substantiate this claim let us begin with the first *Critique*. There, Kant made two points of note concerning transformation and transition: firstly, the concept of transition is to be favoured over certain kinds of transformation,

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is the negative concept of freedom. The positive concept of freedom is that of the ability of pure reason to be of itself practical. But this is not possible except by the subjection of the maxim of every action to the condition of its qualifying as a universal law' (6:213–214).

[37] In the last section of *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant's discussion of ethics and morals, like that of Green, concludes with the concept of justice. Instead of focusing on human justice as the supreme end of all our actions, Kant appeals to 'divine justice' (6:489). Divine justice has to do with the ultimate ends of our actions. Divine justice incorporates the concepts of eternity (immortality), God, and the Highest Good by appealing to reflective teleology and the end of the human race in love (6:488).

[38] I first put forward this argument, but for a very different purpose, in Chris L. Firestone, 'Kant and Religion: Conflict or Compromise?' *Religious Studies* 35 (June 1999), 151–171.

and secondly, the concept of transition will be useful for the ultimate completion of the transcendental philosophy. In discussing some of the positive aspects of Plato's philosophy in the Transcendental Dialectic, a practical application of transformation, similar to one which Green's interpretation espouses, is the target of Kant's indignation:

> Whoever would draw the concepts of virtue from experience, whoever would make what can at best serve as an example for imperfect illustration into a model for a source of cognition (as many have actually done), would make of virtue an ambiguous non-entity, changeable with time and circumstances, useless for any sort of rule (A315/ B371).

Notice how Kant's tone is stern and personal. His main point is that giving a determinative role to experience (or the personal concerns which arise because of experience) in practical deliberation turns virtue into something it cannot be. This transformative procedure is the very opposite of what Kant took to be correct about Plato's theory, that is, his method of moving from the original idea of virtue to judgements about moral worth and not the other way round. For Kant, a conception of virtue transformed under the conditions of experience becomes literally a nonentity. Transforming moral reasoning into prudential reasoning is not a matter of simply transforming virtue into something like qualified self-interest. On the contrary, the above passage suggests that our understanding of self-interest, given the varying conditions and complexities of life that contribute to it, is critically unstable and incapable of attaining any usable form.

Within the context of the first *Critique*, Kant had not fully articulated the concept of transition, and we have to follow the development of his thought carefully to avoid reducing it simply to the sum of its parts. Kant's negative view of moral transformation is offset in his system by the positive affirmation of the concept of transition. Although the details are not specifically worked out in this text, Kant did go as far as suggesting that the concept of transition would allow the critical philosopher to navigate beyond the realm of scientific reason into the 'broad and stormy ocean' of metaphysics itself (A235/B294-295). The possibility of this role for transition is first brought to light in the chapter entitled 'Transcendental Doctrine of Judgement'. In writing of perception, Kant notes, 'Now from empirical consciousness to pure consciousness a gradual alteration [*Veränderung*] is possible, where the real in the former entirely disappears, and a merely formal (*a priori*) consciousness of the manifold in space and time remains' (A166/B208). Although this suggestive remark was meant to provide only one part of numerous smaller arguments for categorical thinking, it anticipates further developments in Kant's thinking and his later more extensive use of transition (*Übergang*) in explicating his critical philosophy.

Kant is sure enough of the merits of transition to bring up the idea later and in increasingly important contexts. One of these contexts is a section immediately following the one in which Kant discusses transformation (quoted above). While

noting the limitations that theoretical reason imposes upon the critical philosopher, Kant asserts that the concept of transition could play an important role in seeing the ideas of freedom, immortality and God as potential avenues for reason's self-consistent extension. '[T]he ideas', he writes, 'make possible a transition [*Übergang*] from concepts of nature to the practical, and themselves generate support for the moral ideas and connection with the speculative cognitions of reason. About all this we must expect to be informed in due course' (A329, B385–386).[39] The importance of transition for moving from the theoretical employment of reason to the practical employment is later confirmed in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Written between the first and second *Critiques*, Kant describes the purpose of this short work as 'nothing more than the search for and establishment of the *supreme principle of morality*' (4:392). Kant divides *Groundwork* into three sections which all bear the word 'transition' in their titles. In fact, Kant makes it clear that the book as a whole was to serve as a transitional phase for a '*Critique of Pure Practical Reason*' and a prolegomena to his proper *Metaphysics of Morals*. According to Kant, all this would be done without severing 'the unity of practical [reason] with speculative reason … which must be distinguished merely in its application' (4:391).

Groundwork, understood as a preparatory and transitional phase in Kant's writings, leads directly to the second *Critique*. This movement is not, as we have already noted, performed in any way by transforming reason, only by the promise of moving to a new vantage point, one appropriate for a critical answer to the question of duty (viz., what ought I to do?). This explanation of transition is most closely related to the definition of the German word *Übergang*, meaning literally 'to walk over', as to gain another perspective. *Übergang* connotes movement 'over' or 'across', whereas a word like *Umformung*, meaning 'transformation', connotes a *turning* 'over' or 'around'. Only by moving to a different point of view – one with its own rule – can reason hope to resolve the question of duty. As would be expected, the concept of transition surfaces at key junctures in the second *Critique*. In that work, Kant makes it clear that it is not only desirable to go beyond his first *Critique* (of theoretical reason) in order to make a critique of practical reason, but also possible to do so 'because reason is considered in transition to quite a different use of those concepts from what it made of them *there*. Such a transition makes it necessary to compare the old use with the new, in order to distinguish well the new path from the previous one and at the same time draw attention to their connection' (5:7). Kant later provides a synopsis of the details for this transition after his table on freedom in the Analytic of Practical Reason. He highlights an analogous connection between theory and practice: 'One quickly sees that in this table freedom is regarded as a kind of causality – which, however, is not subject to empirical grounds of determination – with respect to actions possible through it as appearances in the sensible world' (5:67). The

[39] Kant refers to freedom, immortality, and God as 'unavoidable problems set by pure reason' in the 'Introduction' to the first *Critique* (A3/B7).

passage goes on to assert that freedom, considered under the concept of transition, can be understood as a 'causality outside the sensible world' because it is presented to practical reasoning in association with the moral law (5:67).[40]

Putting aside for a moment the conceptual debates surrounding this claim, it will be useful for the aims of this section to juxtapose this positive portrayal of transition with the resolutely negative portrayal of transformation that Kant reaffirms in the second *Critique*. One such passage associates transformation with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers of the ancient Greek schools. Interestingly, we find it near the beginning of the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason, the part of the second *Critique* that Green often refers to in support of his interpretation:

> One must regret that the acuteness of these men (whom one must, nevertheless admire for having in such early times already tried all conceivable paths of philosophical conquest) was unfortunately applied in searching out identity between extremely heterogeneous concepts, that of happiness and of virtue. But it was in keeping with the dialectical spirit of their times, which sometimes misleads subtle minds even now, to suppress essential and irreconcilable differences in principle by trying to change them … and this usually occurs in cases where the unification of heterogeneous grounds lies so deep or so high, or would require so complete a transformation of the doctrines assumed in the rest of the philosophic system, that they are afraid to penetrate into the real difference and prefer to treat it as a diversity merely in formulae (5:111–112).

The identity of 'the real difference' between the concepts of happiness and virtue to which Kant alludes in this passage is open to some debate, but one thing seems clear: whatever it is, it should not be overcome by transformation. Empirical considerations of happiness are primarily a matter for theoretical reasoning and moral considerations of virtue belong to practical reasoning. This is not to say that there is no relationship between them, but only that a critical explanation of such a relationship should resist all forms of transformative synthesis. As mentioned earlier, Kant calls the idea of the Highest Good 'the object' of practical reason, but, in the context of the second *Critique*, its significance is not fully explored.

If there is one conclusion to the Analytic in the first half of the second *Critique* that seems to demand complete adherence by any interpreter of Kant, it would have to be the proposition that 'The moral law is the sole determining ground of the pure will' (5:109). The moral law is the very proof that freedom 'does in fact

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[40] Henry Allison has defended at length two theses that are important to mention with regard to freedom and the moral law. They are the 'Incorporation Thesis' and the 'Reciprocity Thesis'. The Incorporation Thesis is 'the view that inclinations or desires do not of themselves constitute an incentive or sufficient reason to act but do so only insofar as they are "taken up" or "incorporated" into a maxim'. Allison, *Idealism and Freedom*, 109. As noted earlier, the Reciprocity Thesis is that the moral law and transcendental freedom imply each other.

belong to the human will', that 'pure reason can be practical … [and that] it alone, and not reason empirically limited, is unconditionally practical' (5:15). To say that a prudential decision is practical is to make either a false statement or to make a conditional statement. The first possibility we need not consider here, for some prudential decisions are selfish in a quite negative sense or simply evil. The second possibility, however, Kant does seriously consider. The condition which makes a prudential decision practical in the strictly Kantian sense is the condition that all our prudential musings conform to the moral law. Green is clearly correct to notice that Kant is aware of another principle (viz., our desire to be happy) at work in moral deliberation, and that the moral law and the prudential law are logically opposed to one another, and even that they call for a synthesis to complete a full critique of practical reason. However, he appears outside the parameters of what Kant's writings will allow when he argues that the moral law must give way to happiness in the first instance and the Highest Good in the second, and that freedom must be transformed from its pure moral state to a more honest moral/religious state.

Green's interpretation is most convincing in demonstrating both the primacy of practical reason and the central place of logical exactness and analytic thoroughness in Kant's thinking. Green sees the capacity of reason to articulate the content of faith as among reason's most important virtues and part of the drive that animates virtually every aspect of Kant's philosophical programme. Practical reason is crucial in this regard and it is difficult to overestimate its importance in Kant's thinking. It is practical reason that allows Kant to answer the sceptic of religious faith. Green argues that 'Kant's response to the strict empiricist's position [on religion] is not waged at all on the empiricism's terrain, the terrain of theoretical reason, but from the opposing side of practical reason'.[41] This is one reason why Kant believed in the primacy of practical reason, for as Lewis Beck remarks, 'every interest is ultimately practical, even that of speculative reason being only conditional and reaching perfection only in practical use'.[42] According to Green, even theoretical reason's purpose is practically oriented 'to comprehend nature's causal sequences in order to facilitate our command and control of the environment around us'.[43] For these reasons, it should come as some concern to readers of *Religion* that the book appears to threaten the coherence of Kant's thinking on the moral enterprise. When Kant's moral philosophy is actually employed (or, as Kant puts it in the Preface to the third *Critique*, when nature and freedom are considered simultaneously), problems emerge for understanding morality that reason must address lest it be found ineffectual in dealing with life's most basic problems. The transcendental grounds for theology must be firmly rooted in the moral and with

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41 Green, *Religious Reason*, 70.

42 Lewis White Beck, *Early German Philosophy: Kant and His Predecessors* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1969), 126.

43 Green, *Religious Reason*, 72.

careful, critical precision move outward to address the issue of the Highest Good as it pertains to the question of hope.

Clearly, Green is right to emphasize the importance of practical reason. Practical reason gives theoretical reason a purpose and at the same time moves reason beyond purely empirical concerns.[44] Practical reason has objective resources especially suited for addressing the problems and answering the questions emanating from the theoretical philosophy. However, these resources come with some restrictions. Green lists three rules that govern the ventures of practical reason beyond empirical reason: 1) it cannot oppose theoretical reason, 2) it cannot contradict theoretical reason, and 3) it must move beyond empirical knowledge in a minimalist way.[45] These rules are the fruit of Green's analysis of the transcendental grounds for theology in Kant's philosophy. Green also adds that practical reason must recognize that its knowledge is not knowledge in the empirical sense, but a kind of practical knowledge. Kant refers to this practical knowledge as 'faith' or 'pure rational faith'. It is, according to Green, 'no less objective and valid than that produced through experience'.[46] We know freedom and the moral law, and by extension we know *of* the real possibility of the Highest Good even if it cannot be proven to obtain in this world. Says Green, 'practical reason can be content with the affirmation only of the real possibility of the Highest Good and does not require absolute proof of its reality'.[47] This is true of other beliefs as well. 'I can act rationally if I obey the moral rules and at the same time hold certain beliefs not supported by experience'.[48] Green calls these beliefs 'religious beliefs'. Religious belief is mustering the cognitive self-assurance that moral obedience is valid in the face of empirical indifference and that the religious resources of our world are sufficient to meet whatever moral challenges we might face in nature.

As an advance on the traditional interpretation, Green's interpretation has the inherent strength of emphasizing the force of Kant's desire to be logically consistent along with the primacy of practical reason.[49] These appear crucial to the establishment of transcendental grounds for theology in Kant, and Green appears to be correct on these points. His view also accounts for the eventual emergence

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[44] Green submits that '[Kant] was convinced that the traditional objects of religious faith could be given a firm basis in the needs of practical reason rather than theoretical reason'. Green, *Religious Reason*, 78.

[45] Green, *Religious Reason*, 70

[46] Green, *Religious Reason*, 71. Kant's most systematic discussion of this point is in the first *Critique* (645–52.)

[47] Green, *Religious Reason*, 71.

[48] Green, *Religious Reason*, 73

[49] Because religion is inherently a rational activity, religious adherents must be committed to the consistency of their beliefs. This means that they can in good conscience admit paradoxes in their beliefs, but not overt self-contradictions. Green, *Religion and Moral Reason*, 4.

of grace in Kant's programme to a certain degree by softening Kant's moral philosophy to include the legitimacy of selfish action and providing a place for prudential reasoning. Grace becomes a potential object of rational religious belief to the extent that it balances the scales of moral conflict and completes the logic of relating nature and freedom on practical terms.[50] Nevertheless, the way Green understands practical reason in Kant shows limitations regarding how we are to understand Kant's philosophy on the one hand and its relationship to theology on the other. Green avers that practical reason culminates in the religious belief that acting morally is the only rational course of action in difficult situations.[51] Acting immorally, on the contrary, occurs because, in the actual employment of our radically free natures, there are occasions in which we choose to act irrationally. For Green, acting immorally is tantamount to acting irrationally – or, at least, with a strong sense of flawed practical reasoning. This, however, appears to be some distance from Kant's position in Book One of *Religion*. There, Kant is unequivocal: evil is both innate to and freely chosen by the humanity.

Glaringly absent from Green's understanding of Kantian religion is a detailed explanation either of the significance of Kant's judicial philosophy (emphasizing the question of hope) or of the doctrine of corruption (as the religious analogue of the problem of hope). For Green, Kant's notion of corruption is best understood as a break in the logical precision of reason and the will to act on such a break. It is an empirical reality requiring a religious bridge. For Kant, however, the disposition *itself* – that aspect of the human person that grounds action and secures dignity – is evil. This transcendental doctrine of corruption remains one of the most remarkable features of *Religion* and precisely how Kant arrives at it is a perennial matter of dispute. Green's interpretation never fully accounts for this dimension. For Kant in Book One of *Religion*, humans are 'evil by nature' and this means that something fundamental to the human species is prone to evil. Kant calls this proneness 'a propensity'. It threatens the very possibility of realizing a good disposition and presents a problem, the solution to which is the primary argumentative thrust of *Religion*.

The moral grounds for transcendental theology establish theology in Kant's critical philosophy, but, on their own, appear inadequate to account for this turn in Kant's thinking on religion. They provide the transcendental point of orientation for the development of Kant's more complete grounds, acting as a rudder that must guide the quest for more secure and complete grounds through the subsequent development of the critical philosophy. For Kant, the primacy of practical reason

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[50] 'We can think of religion as the effort to utilize a possible but unknowable domain beyond our experience as a way of rationally harmonizing … those demands of our reason which must be affirmed but which … remain contradictory'. Green, *Religious Reason*, 117. According to Green, grace is a requirement for any rational religious belief system. See Green's table on 'The Requirements of Pure Religious Reason', which lists the minimum set of beliefs that one must hold to be fully rational. Green, *Religious Reason*, 109.

[51] Green, *Religious Reason*, 83.

is never in doubt, but its ability on its own to address the remaining perennial questions of human existence (i.e., those centring on the questions of hope and human identity) becomes suspect for Kant. To answer these questions, he must transition to an examination of judicial reason and there seek new resources in the transcendental recesses of human cognition. In this light, a critical analysis of the faculty of judgement became for Kant the only reasonable way forward. It promised him not only a bridge between the facts of nature and the values embedded in the very make-up of the human moral conscience, but also the place where positive religion and theology find their full articulation and rational warrant. This is where we turn our attention in the next chapter.

Chapter Five
Kant's Poetic Grounds for Theology

Adina Davidovich's *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* advances the three-realm interpretation of Kant's philosophy.[1] Where Green finds the ground of religion and theology in Kant's practical philosophy, Davidovich finds this ground in Kant's transition to a third employment of reason. Davidovich's interpretation draws attention to the fact that Kant's philosophy has at its disposal the faculty of judgement, which, in the context of the first and second *Critiques*, has no constitutive function. In *Critique of Judgement*, however, aesthetic and teleological judgement, which are the themes of the first and second halves of the book respectively, work together to form reason's third perspective – or what I will call 'judicial reason'. According to Davidovich, the faculty of judgement is the supreme faculty of reason and judicial reasoning is the supreme employment of reason. They generate the human capacity to contemplate by poetically fusing feelings and concepts. Contemplation, as such, is the constituent feature of religion as a realm of meaning and the chief means by which the gap between theory and practice can be overcome. Davidovich explains, 'Kant is led to a position that we can only characterize as the supremacy of contemplation over both practical and scientific concerns'.[2] Understanding the inner workings of contemplation and its relationship to the third *Critique* is crucial to understanding the novelty and profundity of Davidovich's interpretation of Kant.

The significance of Kant's third *Critique* for Davidovich comes to the fore early in *Religion as a Province of Meaning*. In the chapter entitled 'The Conflict between the Interests of Reason', she argues that, even though Kant at one point did hold to the primacy of practical reason, the third *Critique* reveals that this was not his final position. As Kant's philosophical programme developed, the transcendental method of reason in transition (first modelled in Kant's move to the second *Critique*) demanded that a third *Critique* be thought up and written. If Kant's philosophy is thought of in a bifurcated form, the Copernican revolution as an answer to Hume's dilemma of causality is as much a problem for philosophy as it is a solution. The nature-freedom divide is, philosophically speaking, as potentially problematic as the causal gap between experience and knowledge. Where for Hume we have only a feeling of a necessary connection between repeatable observations and scientific knowledge, for Kant we have causality and freedom as opposing *a priori* constituents of reason. Hume's philosophy admits

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[1] Adina Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning: The Kantian Foundations of Modern Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

[2] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 40.

to an inductive bifurcation between facts of experience and general truth claims, while Kant's philosophy appears to be on the verge of transcendental contradiction in its affirmation of causality and freedom as two defining conditions of human experience. According to Davidovich's interpretation, this is a sufficient reason to expect from the third *Critique* a resolution to the problem of unifying the whole transcendental system of philosophy.

As with Hume, Kant in the third *Critique* turns to feeling in order to resolve the problem of a gap. Feeling, for Kant, is not limited to the empirical context, but refers more fully to an experience of beauty and the sublime in the context of hope and the Highest Good. His expressed intention is to undertake a transcendental quest to find *a priori* constituents, if they exsist, for the faculty of judgement.[3] The extent of Kant's success in this regard is a long-standing debate in the field of Kant-studies. Realizing this, Davidovich thus begins her interpretation with a frontal assault on the common assumption that the primacy of practical reason is a cornerstone of Kant's philosophy. According to her defence, Kant asserts the primacy of practical reasoning only over theoretical reasoning and only because of the stifling effects caused by the conflict between our inclinations (theory) and the moral law (practice).[4] Davidovich does not find in Kant, however, the kind of prudence and religious belief (understood as purely practical resources) for bridging this gap that we find in Green's interpretation. The insoluble conflict between theoretical and practical reason is exacerbated by the infinite gap between them and no bridge can be constructed with the resources of either side. Kant explicitly addresses the gap between nature and freedom only in the third *Critique*, and, for this reason, it is there, and not in the second, that we should expect Kant's unification of nature and freedom.[5]

As a hypothesis for understanding the trajectory of Kant's philosophical programme, Davidovich's interpretive strategy has considerable appeal; it gathers in Kant's third instalment to his critical philosophy while maintaining the purity and integrity of the previous two, and provides an important role to Kant's highly influential but sometimes maligned theory of aesthetics and contemplation. However, as an interpretation of Kant's philosophy in the context of a lengthy

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[3] As Kant writes in the third *Critique*, 'But now comes judgement, which in the order of cognitive faculties forms a middle term between understanding and reason. Has it got independent *a priori* principles? If so, are they constitutive, or are they merely regulative, thus indicating no special realm? And do they give a rule *a priori* to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, as the middle term between the faculties of cognition and desire, just as understanding prescribes laws *a priori* for the former and reason for the latter?' (168)

[4] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 33.

[5] 'Albeit, then, between the realm of a natural concept, as the sensible, and the realm of the concept of freedom, as the supersensible, there is a great gulf fixed' (175–176). 'There must, therefore, be a ground of the unity of the supersensible … [which] renders possible the transition from the mode of thought according to the principles of the one to that according to the principles of the other' (176).

tradition, it must overcome a couple of obvious objections. If judicial reasoning or contemplation did actually become primary for Kant in the years after writing the *Critique of Practical Reason*, why did he neither reconfigure the original doctrine nor defend the supposedly new doctrine? And why are his later writings on religion at least as prone to a moral interpretation as they are to a poetic interpretation? Davidovich's arguments are most convincing in establishing the necessity in Kant's mind for the unification of reason. There are textual obstacles, however, to establishing contemplation as the supreme concern of Kant's critical philosophy that she has to overcome and it will be worth taking a closer look at these obstacles as they present themselves in the third *Critique*.

The chief concern of the third *Critique* is to understand how it is that reason can hold the theoretical and practical perspectives simultaneously and in unity. From the perspective of theoretical reason, 'free' actions have specified consequences so that both freedom and consequence can only be understood meaningfully according to the category of causality. From the perspective of practical reason, all deliberate human action must finally be free action, even if only in a highly qualified sense. For example, in situations of physical coercion, freedom manifests itself only as the 'free' objectification of oneself and, as such, falls outside the influence of the moral law. These two interpretations of 'freedom' – one theoretical/pragmatic and the other practical/transcendental – appear at odds with one another. Davidovich places this problem under the rubric of epistemology. In trying to live a moral life, reason confronts the following problem: How do we know 'that moral acts, worthy and vicious, do take place'?[6] We need to know that good and evil actions 'are realized' in order to have a reasonable hope of overcoming the state of nature that threatens to undo us. In other words, the problem of the gap between nature and freedom boils down to a problem of history. Davidovich sums it up this way: 'Kant sees this as a problem that can be answered through a teleological principle, from the point of view of a conception of the end of history in light of the rational Ideal of the Highest Good'.[7] We need to know that there is history, because only in knowing that we are actually capable of acting freely (in spite of the causal nexus of the world) can we hope to become truly moral.[8]

For Davidovich, the problem of unity creates the critical space necessary for a third employment of reason based on human 'contemplation' or 'contemplative reason'. This space is dependent on the idea of the Highest Good and the existence of an all-powerful moral judge who insures its viability. 'Armed with this contemplative principle, humans can interpret the world itself as the stage

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6 Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 54.

7 Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 69.

8 Recent research suggests that 'the hope for the summum bonum is irreducibly important for Kant, even where its function is not that of providing the content or motivational force of the moral law'. Christopher Insole, 'The Irreducible Importance of Religious Hope in Kant's Conception of the Highest Good', *Philosophy* (2008), 83:333.

for moral evolution and not just as the scene of blind mechanical causality'.[9] She unpacks the method of contemplation in reference to the third *Critique*. '[W]e learn from the *Third Critique*', she writes, 'by reflecting on the cognitions of various reflective judgments, we reach contemplative conclusions'.[10] The key words in her definition are 'reflecting' and 'reflective judgments'. The former, she contends, refers to 'thinking' (or discursive reasoning), while the latter involves the conjoining of 'feeling' and 'purposiveness'. Reflective judgements provide the grounds for theological faith and religion as a realm of meaning. The fusion of our theological reflections and the purposiveness that we feel in nature provide Kant's first truly secure philosophical foundation for religious belief and practice.

Feeling is the main focus of Kant's account of aesthetic judgement in the third *Critique*. The faculty of judgement, in this sense, 'finds a reference in itself to something in the Subject itself and outside it, and which is not nature, nor yet freedom, but is still connected with the ground of the latter, i.e., the supersensible – a something in which the theoretical gets bound up into unity with the practical in an intimate and obscure manner' (353). Davidovich identifies this 'something' as the notion of a 'supersensible substrate' by which 'Kant accounts for the universal validity of judgments of taste'.[11] She likewise writes that 'The analysis of taste thus becomes a decisive stage in the restoration of unity to our cognitive powers'.[12] This designation, if taken literally and in the context of Davidovich's overall interpretation, can be misleading, however. In Davidovich's way of interpreting Kant, aesthetic judgement is only 'decisive' in the sense that it paves the way for an even more decisive role for teleological reflection. She supports this interpretive strategy by comparing the form of the third *Critique* to that of the first *Critique*. 'According to my interpretation of the first part of the *Third Critique*, the task of the analysis of judgments of taste is analogous to the aesthetic of the *First Critique*. Like the discussion of space and time, the analysis of the judgments of taste is a propaedeutic. It paves the way for the study of teleological judgments'.[13] The purpose of her comparison is to argue that the role of aesthetics in Kant's philosophical economy is subordinate to that of teleology.

Davidovich's interpretation, with its emphasis on teleology over aesthetics, might give the impression that Kant's grounds for theology are most suitable to theological non-realism. Davidovich is convinced, however, that 'central elements of [Kant's] system ... have been obscured by an overzealous portrayal of his

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[9] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 57. For Davidovich, however, 'Religion cannot be interpreted as providing an account of the historical evolution of Practical Reason … [or] an "evolutionist" theory of Practical Reason because for him the moral law is a fact of Reason'. Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 142.

[10] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 154.

[11] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 70.

[12] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 71.

[13] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 71.

thought as a rigoristic abstract formalism'.[14] 'Like many theologians of our time', she writes, 'Kant refused to ground the validity of religious vision in the authority of revelation or tradition and insisted that we cannot know if our thought about God corresponds to ontological reality'.[15] This does not mean though that religion is meaningless or that we are unable to think and speak of God in meaningful ways. Important to her interpretation of Kant and his relationship to theology is that thinking and speaking about God are not exclusively linked to the moral enterprise. At work in Kant's thinking are at least three different theological models, each useful in its own right, which 'aspire to find a universal role for faith that is rooted in the predicament of finite and subjective beings'.[16] They are 'ethical postulation', 'imaginative projection', and 'contemplative construction'. While the first is clearly dependent on the extension of Kant's moral philosophy, the other two are derived from resources found primarily in the third *Critique*. It is the last of these three models, the one farthest removed from Kant's moral philosophy, that Davidovich goes on to utilize in her interpretation of *Religion*.

The theological model called 'ethical postulation' constructs theology on the basis of the moral law and the ultimate moral end – the Highest Good. '[In order to] protect the practice of morality we must cultivate trust in a divine being who will assist in the realization of the ultimate moral end'.[17] This model has come under some attack because it attempts 'to derive the rationality of faith from an alleged duty to pursue happiness which, together with virtue, comprises the ideal of the highest good'.[18] Davidovich defends Kant's use of this model by limiting what it purports to show. She argues that the use of the Highest Good in theological construction can show faith to be rational, but not rationally necessary. The main reason is that realizing the Highest Good cannot be shown to be a duty; it is a regulative principle that guides us in moving from a formal moral theory to a theory of ethics. According to Davidovich, a 'better reading [of Kant's theory of the *a priori* nature of the moral law] observe[s] that practical reason regulates activity not by generating abstract precepts from the categorical imperative, but through licensing maxims that express interests of finite beings'.[19] This understanding of the categorical imperative sees it more as a *regulator* of given maxims than as the *generator* of particular maxims. The process of generation considers other incentives along with the moral law and introduces happiness into moral deliberation. The best argument Kant gives for including happiness as part of moral deliberation, according to Davidovich, thus involves the concept of justice. If, in our thought experiments, we conceive of a holy and omnipotent

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[14] Adina Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', *Harvard Theological Review* 86 (July 1993), 323–324.

[15] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 324.

[16] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 324–325.

[17] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 326.

[18] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 326.

[19] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 332.

rational being (God), the concept of justice makes a proportionate understanding of happiness and righteousness the only bearable (viz., rationally consistent) option.

The theological model called 'imaginative projection' arises in 'Kant's struggle to respond to the predicament of a person in moral deliberation'.[20] In a manner reminiscent of Ronald Green, Davidovich asserts that the dynamics of a person's conscience when in moral deliberation lead us to 'experience our conscience [itself] as an authoritative figure watching over us'.[21] Our personified conscience, complete with the characteristic of omnipresence, acts 'as a figure from which nothing can hide and from which we cannot run away'.[22] As Kant put it in *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 'Every rational being must act as if he were by his maxims at all times a lawgiving member of the universal kingdom of ends' (4:438). Davidovich adds that 'In fulfilling its function, conscience must project itself outwardly as an image that takes on an uncanny resemblance to the traditional biblical idea of God'.[23] Where Green understands the empirical fact of human religiosity and specific beliefs that have emerged within the social/cultural nexus of human affairs to be inherent in Kant's position, Davidovich argues for the purity of imaginative projection in conjunction with a definite movement in Kant's thinking toward 'contemplative construction'.

Davidovich points to the third *Critique* in support of the projection model and to the connection between the third *Critique* and *Religion* for the contemplative construction model. In the third *Critique*, Kant argues that 'it is possible to admit a moral Legislator existing apart from the world, and to do so without regard to theoretical proof, and still less to self-interest, but on a purely moral ground, which, while of course only subjective, is free from all foreign influence, on the mere recommendation of a pure practical reason that legislates for itself alone' (446). Davidovich believes that 'Kant took pains to clarify that this imaginative projection does not entitle us to suppose that such a supreme being actually exists outside ourselves'.[24] The idea of God formed by the projection of our conscience, far from mere fantasy however, can be judged by its usefulness for the moral life. This criterion for theological construction is recommended by practical reason and brought to completion by judicial reason. If one idea of God is more adequate in its support of our moral volitions than another, it should be judged rationally superior and – at least contingently – be acceptable as an idea of God for the belief

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20 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 340.

21 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 341.

22 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 341.

23 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 341. This projection also sees God as an all-knowing judge. With practical reason, 'men are merely pointed in the direction of thinking of conscientiousness ... as accountable to a holy Being ... distinct from us yet present in our inmost being, and of submitting to the will of this Being, as a rule of justice'. Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 342. See *Metaphysics of Morals*, 235/339.

24 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 343.

of rational people. This process of belief acquisition is both rational and real, and rooted in practical considerations as they are brought into contact with empirical reality in judicial, or more specifically teleological, reasoning.

In *Religion*, Kant takes the 'projection' argument a step further by describing the idea of a Highest Good as a social reality that can and should be realized in this world. This can happen only if moral agents, in the spirit of mutual cooperation, combine their limited powers in a common enterprise of seeking the Highest Good. Kant recognizes, however, that this necessity has a stumbling block: the reality of human nature points to evil. Citing the opening arguments of Book Three in *Religion*, Davidovich argues that humans are more likely to corrupt each other's moral dispositions than to cooperate in the realization of the kingdom of morality. 'To overcome [the difficulty posed by mutual corruption in the social make-up of humanity], people must form a social alliance uniquely designed to combat mutual corruptability. This can be done only through theological constructivism'.[25] It should be noted that Davidovich's interpretation emphasizes Kant's focus in Book Three on the moral community and the future prospect of developing an ethical commonwealth, rather than the more controversial and difficult passages in Book Two. Theological constructivism is based on the collective understanding of aesthetic feelings united with teleological concepts, not on moral faith or redemption. Davidovich calls this process 'contemplation'.

This third model of theological constructivism is based on the subjectivity of feeling and the process of individual and communal reasoning in dynamic relation: 'The contemplative idea of God that this model suggests is a necessary correlate of both moral decision and the scientific quest for truth'.[26] Davidovich understands contemplation to be the imaginative middle ground between theory and practice, resolving the problem of unity that neither theory nor practice could resolve on its own. For Kant, contemplative construction means creating a unifying concept or ultimate reference point for reason that, as in his theory of aesthetics, is indifferent to the existence of its object. Since neither theoretical reason nor practical reason in the first two *Critiques* provide resources by which to reconcile the apparent disparity of nature and freedom, the third *Critique* had to 'establish the transcendental unity of the realm of freedom and the realm of nature'.[27] This endeavour leads Kant to the conception of faith as a reflective contemplation on the idea of a moral designer of the universe, linking it directly to Kant's understanding of the idea of the Highest Good.

In Kant's analysis of three applications of the faculty of reflective judgement**,** namely, aesthetic judgement, scientific belief in the empirical laws of nature and the method of biology, humans use reflective judgement to detect purposive order in natural objects. This involves 'a contemplative idea of a supernatural substrate

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25 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 344.

26 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 345.

27 Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 346.

of reality that bridges the gap between freedom and nature'.[28] Although we cannot establish the existence of God, Kant believed that 'we are justified in claiming validity for our contemplative thought about [a moral designer of nature]'.[29] Reason is compelled to try and understand the purposiveness that it feels in nature. There is thus a dynamic relationship between aesthetic and reflective judgement. 'Even though the aesthetic judgment does not rely on determinative rules and concepts of theoretical reason, we nevertheless require universal assent to our judgments of taste'.[30] Such universal assent carries with it a rationale to understand this felt purposiveness. Davidovich writes, 'Kant believed that the critique of taste shows that our feelings of pleasure in the beautiful object commit us to thinking about a possible supersensible substrate, in which the unity of givenness and purposiveness resides'.[31]

The discursive process of understanding in the third *Critique* presents itself as a weaker form of judgement than we find in the first *Critique*. Where the first *Critique* requires intuition and concept in synthetic union, the third *Critique* requires only aesthetic and teleological judgement contemplatively combined.[32] Just as everyone will not likely agree with any single judgement that an object is beautiful, everyone will not concur with my reflection on God and the Highest Good. Nevertheless, the dynamic union of aesthetics and reflection in the form of contemplation 'conveys my conviction that everyone ought to agree with it'.[33] Contemplation is a reflective process aimed at coming to some understanding of God and the Highest Good, and is necessary to fulfil the need of reason for systematic completion and experiential harmony. 'Thus, the analysis of the

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[28] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 346–347.

[29] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 347.

[30] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 347. According to Davidovich, Kant made two important points in his exploration of the transcendental conditions of aesthetic judgement. 'First, he argued that the pleasure we feel in contemplating a beautiful object results from our ability to impose order on a given manifold of intuition and is our only means of awareness of this capacity'. Second, the purposiveness found by employing a reflective judgement of taste can only be accounted for 'by envisioning a supersensible will who designed nature in a way to which our cognitive faculty responds with pleasure'. Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 348. See *The Critique of Judgement*, 406–408 (62–64).

[31] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 348. See *The Critique of Judgement*, 422 (82).

[32] Despland makes the point that judicial reason demonstrates the employment of the mind constitutive of genius. The genius has the capacity to produce aesthetic ideas or 'soulful representations'. He writes, 'the imagination displays a creative activity, animates the mind, opens for it prospects into fields of kindred representations, and thus stretches the mind beyond its accustomed representations and limited vision'. Despland, *Kant on History and Religion*, 152. See also *The Critique of Judgement*, 175–82.

[33] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 347. Kant used the term 'exemplary' to label the necessity of aesthetic judgements.

faculty of reflective judgment lays the foundation for a justification of faith as a reflective contemplation on an idea of a moral designer, an idea we construct as a necessary correlate of various employments of reflective judgment'.[34] For Davidovich, therefore, 'Reflective faith is a necessary correlate to both scientific and moral visions of human life as it secures their much-needed integration in a comprehensive worldview'.[35]

Of course Davidovich, like Green, is an interpreter and defender of Kant's philosophy of religion, rather than Christian theologian committed to grounding theology on Kantian tenets. For such an application of the poetic interpretation, we must turn to the work of Gordon Kaufman. In order to get beyond the shortcomings inherent in those Kantian religious theories that diminish the significance of theology by focusing exclusively upon theoretical and practical considerations, Kaufman argues for a new point of view for beginning theological inquiry. A theologian's true task, for Kaufman, is to analyze and articulate the highest point at which language and concept unite – the word and idea *God*. Important for our purposes is the fact that Kaufman's late writings make an advance on the way in which Kant's philosophy has been typically appropriated in theology. Instead of reducing all theological discourse to either moral utterances or inadequate attempts to explain ineffable religious experience, Kaufman understands God to be a uniquely theological and imaginative construction, neither real nor unreal (as these terms are commonly understood in reference to objects), but mysterious. The mystery of God is that God is always and only just beyond the reach of language and concept. God is embedded in the hidden creativity that guides the flow of world history and inspires human reflection on the whole.

Kaufman's unwillingness to enter into the realist/non-realist debate is one of the most important features of his theological methodology to be aware of at the outset. We might say that, for Kaufman, this debate puts the cart before the horse. To assert that God is either real or unreal before we begin discussion is to miss the whole point of theology. From the disciplines of science, morality and art, we have learned that human interaction within the world through language is the decisive feature of human understanding. This fact makes art the privileged medium of theological discourse, and sets apart one kind of art as supreme – namely, poetics. Kaufman's poetic understanding of theology defines the theological task as an imaginative use of words meant to capture the mystery of our existence as an experienced whole. For Kaufman, this means that 'the theologian is essentially an artist'.[36] Like poetics more generally conceived, theology's task is to evoke feelings and create mental pictures that together help us to assimilate life's experiences into a single unified perspective.

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[34] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 350–351.

[35] Davidovich, 'Kant's Theological Constructivism', 351.

[36] Gordon Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995), 39.

The use of the term 'poetics', however, does not mean that reading and writing poetry of any kind sufficiently provides human beings with the rational resources to live a meaningful life. Kaufman understands that any creative and meaningful use of language requires interpretation. In order to harvest a sense of purpose through poetic reasoning, that is, to interpret the world and our situatedness within the world with a coherent sense of meaning, we need an ultimate reference point from which to orient our reflections. Since this reference point has traditionally been called 'God', Kaufman believes us to be justified in identifying the discipline of theology as the highest calling for the contemporary poet. This small step of faith means that the primary task of theology is to use ordinary words to construct a picture of God that will meet the needs of society today. Theology matters to philosophy, according to Kaufman, because it provides meaning and hope for our human predicament in the form of a poetically constructed ultimate reference point known as 'God'.

To explain his position, Kaufman situates his theory along a spectrum of realist theologies. In so doing, however, he wants to make it clear that the distinguishing feature of his theology is that it takes seriously the fundamental significance of human imagination for all theological discourse (an important concession to the non-realist positions). On one side of the theological spectrum, Kaufman locates the method of appealing to religious experience as the point of departure for theology. Such appeals, in his view, constitute an oversimplified understanding of the relationship of language to human experience, including religious experience itself. Despite what many religious thinkers believe, 'There is no such thing as a raw pre-linguistic experience of "transcendence," say, as distinguished from experience of "ultimacy" or of the "infinite." Each of these "experiences" is shaped, delimited and informed by linguistic symbols which also name it. Without those symbols to guide our consciousness these "experiences" would not be available to us at all'.[37] On the other side, Kaufman locates all theologies which appeal to divine revelation as their point of departure. These theologies demonstrate the continuing meaningfulness of the word 'God' for contemporary people, but they also reveal an out-of-date and out-of-touch approach to theology. A theology that begins with revelation quickly finds itself in a question-begging conflict with the other disciplines. Kaufman notes that the language which constitutes theological discourse and religious experience should not be defined as 'God's revelation', for such an appeal 'presupposes as self-evident and clear and already given concepts that surely must be established and explained'.[38] The term 'revelation', like all other theological words, was developed by human beings at a definite time in the past.[39] Imaginative construction is and has always been the theologian's only real

[37] Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 7.

[38] Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 2.

[39] If, in assuming the role of a theologian, one has to change fundamentally the meaning and significance of one or more doctrines (or to create wholly new doctrines) in order to accommodate the needs of society, then, according to Kaufman, this must be done. Like

calling, and today, more than ever before, theology needs to recognize this fact and pursue its rightful vocation afresh.

Kaufman's programme attempts to steer a creative course between these two remarkable, but misdirected, attempts to forge a realist theology. In order to enable a theologian to navigate such a complex global discourse on God, he proposes two delimiting moves to define theology's central aim in its proper role as a process of imaginative construction. The first of these delimiting moves is based upon what Kaufman calls the 'idea of an ultimate reference point'. The appeal to God as this ultimate reference point is the obvious starting place for theology, according to Kaufman, because 'All experience involves a unification of plurality and thus presupposes (at least implicitly) some ultimate unifying ground' and 'some point of reference in terms of which all else is understood must be presupposed'.[40] What better choice do humans have than the commonly conceived and used concept of God? This concept is already ingrained in our ordinary language and continues to be meaningful to most people (though many, according to Kaufman, are beginning to ask why). The task of theology under the first delimiting move is clear: to understand better what 'God', as the ultimate reference point, means and to discover better ways of expressing this meaning. Kaufman sums up the second delimiting move in one sentence: 'Theology does not consist merely in speaking and understanding these words but rather in reflection upon them, criticism and interpretation of them, and deliberate extension, refinement or reconstruction of their meaning and use'.[41] Theology is the human attempt to transform common, ordinary, or even universal ways of thinking God in the past into new ways which are both more meaningful to human beings today and anticipatory of human needs tomorrow; it is the human attempt 'to see what we are trying to do and say with these complexes of meaning so as to enable us to do and say them better – more accurately, more precisely, more effectively'. [42]

Behind Kaufman's reflections upon this new theological method, we find a robust appeal to Kant. Like most interpreters of Kant, Kaufman recognizes that the idea of God functions as a postulate of practical reason in his system.[43] Unlike the traditional interpreters, who understand all theological discourse as fundamentally linked to this moral postulation, he also believes there are parts of Kant's moral philosophy which suggest that the idea of God must function as an overarching regulative principle of all thought and experience. Just as the 'world' is never a direct perception, but 'a concept with which we hold together in a unified totality all our experience and knowledge of objects', 'God' is an overarching regulative principle with an even wider field of application. God is 'the mind's most profound

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other doctrines, the doctrine of divine revelation met the needs of the church and society at a certain time in the past. Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 3.

40 Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 15.

41 Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 11.

42 Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 11.

43 Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 29.

and highest creation'.[44] It functions as the great unifier of all knowledge, both objective and subjective, both of the world of experience and the world as a whole. This ultimate reference point, which unifies the scientific world of phenomena and the mysterious world of noumena, becomes the centrepiece of his proposal for theological construction.

The most theologically illuminating aspect of Kant's philosophy, according to Kaufman, is not purely moral. Every human endeavour, including theology, religion and the entire field of metaphysics itself, stems not from the relentless logic of practical reason, but from what we might call the creative logic of poetic reason. Kaufman's insight follows Kant one step beyond both theoretical and practical reason. Poetic reason has its own logic at work in the individual – a 'symbolic' logic – that is funded by the bio-historical processes that define our existence. This symbolic logic is part and parcel of the poetic perspective. In order to illustrate the importance of this poetic reasoning, Kaufman expounds Kant's practical philosophy emphasizing certain implicit aspects. The result is an insightful portrayal of Kant's ethical theory based upon three commandments.

A decent summary statement of Kaufman's interpretation and appropriation of Kant's philosophy, which we will have to examine in more detail, can be achieved by juxtaposing passages specifically referring to its practical themes in Kaufman's *In Face of Mystery*:

> According to the interpretation I am suggesting here, Kant's several versions of the categorical imperative (far from being independent unrelated principles, as some interpreters have claimed) each express an aspect of the same fundamental point (as Kant himself believed); and taken together they contain the rudiments of a full theory of (the moral character of) action. For this theory (when made explicit), moral *rightness* – that is, the principle underlying our moral rules, virtues, social ideals, et cetera – is whatever supports or enhances the web of action, making possible its fecundity for further action. Right action, thus, is that which (a) is in accord with duty and thus consistent with itself at the deepest level; (b) treats agents as *agents*, that is, as "ends in themselves," responsible persons, not as means only; and (c) supports the social fabric of interacting agents (the "realm of ends").[45]
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> These three commandments – 1. Act (don't just coast)! 2. Act morally (that is, so as to sustain the moral fabric and enhance future action)! 3. Act ethically (that is, with awareness the wider meaning and significance of what you are doing)! – … [each] calls attention to a moment that is indispensable to fully responsible action in our complex interconnected world today; taken together

[44] Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 29.

[45] Gordon D. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 198–9.

> they express the increasing interpenetration of human life and activities by morally reflective self-consciousness.[46]

It should be noticed that Kaufman's commandments correspond directly with Kant's formulations of the categorical imperative. Like the various formulations of the categorical imperative, these commands increase in meaning and significance, never wholly divorcing themselves from the previous (or initial) formulation, but developing its usefulness and complexity (just as science develops from awareness to theory and in so doing illumines and enhances human life). The key ingredient to this development is the 'reflective self-consciousness'. Unlike proponents of the moral interpretation, who use morality to reduce religion to its perspective or who use theory to explain away religion, Kaufman's response to the poetic interpretation is meant to enhance and complete Kant's moral philosophy.

Kaufman chooses to expound (and defend) his theory by beginning with Kant's so-called impartial point of view of reason. In words that sound strangely similar to Green's moral interpretation, Kaufman writes, 'According to Kant, a moral act is one deliberately willed because it is the *right* thing to do, regardless of our likes or dislikes'. [47] We have already seen the limitations associated with this interpretive viewpoint on Kant's theory. Kant's practical perspective is not meant to espouse a theory of radical impartiality. Be this as it may, this point of departure is of minor consequence to Kaufman's theory. Unlike many proponents of the moral interpretation, Kaufman's appeal to the impartial point of view does not lead (at least not directly) to non-critical transformations of practical reason or to the absorption of all religion into purely practical reason. Instead, he goes on to posit a more robust view of Kant's practical philosophy that is at once in line with the conclusions of the previous chapter and beyond them.

The impartiality of Kant's practical philosophy, in Kaufman's view, leads only to the maxim 'Act!', without empowering us actually to carry it out. Without desires, the impartial point of view of the faculty of desire is incomplete and woefully inadequate. Impartial reason, assuming we are able to speak coherently in these terms, can only be the starting point of Kant's practical philosophy. It can only answer the question 'What ought I to do?' with a truism: *You must do something!* For Kaufman, this rather incomplete answer is representative of only the first formulation of the categorical imperative: 'Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law'. Since *non-action* due to the suppression or non-existence of desires from a certain point of view could never be considered a universal law, except in individual instances when doing nothing might actually constitute a *right action* of the will, the commandment 'Act!' describes only the point of departure of Kant's theory of action (and Kaufman adopts it as such). From here, Kaufman appeals to the second formulation of the categorical imperative to begin filling out Kant's

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[46] Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 206.

[47] Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 195.

practical theory, finding Kant's practical philosophy deeper and more consistent than is often supposed.

The second formulation of the categorical imperative – 'Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, always as an end and never as a means only'[48] – demonstrates that impartial reason is not a self-sufficient point of view of practical reason which can be transformed into other equally valid viewpoints on moral action, but only a point of departure for a more complete practical perspective. Unlike the first formulation, the second highlights the agency of the self and other selves, that is, it brings into focus the fact that we are all people and that my actions matter, both to myself and to others. Human dignity, in this account, is of central importance. We are called not just to act under the impulse of impartial considerations, but to act in full recognition of ourselves and our community of other selves under the moral law. Thus, according to Kaufman, the second commandment implied in Kant's practical philosophy is 'Act morally!' This commandment captures what is inherently missing in the moral interpretation and appropriation of Green and Hick. Kant's practical philosophy has no lasting role for impartial reason, nor even the combination of impartial and prudential reason, but is constituted as a moral perspective in line with what might be called a 'critically partial' or 'morally impartial' reason.

The third formulation of the categorical imperative makes a transition into the fourth, and, according to Kaufman, they together constitute a third commandment derivable from Kant's practical philosophy.[49] Not only do we need to recognize that we are agents, full of dignity and inherent value as moral beings, but that we are also self-determining moral beings. According to Kaufman, Kant calls this feature of the human person 'autonomy'. The third formulation addresses the same issue (viz., the universal moral law) as expressed in Kaufman's other commandments, but with particular reference to the *responsibility* of the acting agent. This formulation alone is not substantial enough to constitute a commandment by itself, but serves for Kaufman as a stage of transition to an implicit fourth formulation. Here we find the most illuminating aspect of Kaufman's interpretation and theological appropriation of Kant. Although Kant never actually formulated a fourth version of the categorical imperative, he came close and Kaufman supplies the rest: 'act as a member of a "realm of ends"!' In this fourth version of the moral law, the responsible individual agent is situated in the midst of the wider community of similar such agents; the individual is compelled to act as a responsible member of the community by 'supporting and helping to enhance the complex social fabric that makes possible the freedom and responsibility of all'.[50]

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48 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 196.

49 Using Kaufman's lead in to Kant's moral philosophy, the third formulation of the categorical imperative brings in 'the idea of every rational being as making universal law … as self-legislative and only for this reason as being subject to the law'. Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 197.

50 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 197–8.

The combination of formulations three and four yields Kaufman's third commandment: 'Act ethically!' This third commandment is the most constructive aspect of Kaufman's interpretation of Kant. It signals a decisive break with all conceivable versions of the moral interpretation and initiates a theory of interpretation that I have named poetic. Before we can understand the full significance of what is actually claimed in the poetic interpretation and why Kaufman's appeal to a third commandment actually demonstrates its importance, we need to understand what Kaufman means by the command to act ethically. In the first three formulations of the categorical imperative, the depth to which one's awareness of oneself and other selves grows more profound on each occasion, but this awareness is never what we might call a complete awareness. Only when one becomes aware of one's 'situatedness' in the full community of like selves can the rational self become a holistic self. In the fourth formulation, 'Action is right if it helps to support and build up th[e] complex socio-moral structure (the "realm of ends"); it is wrong if in any way it undermines or otherwise weakens it'.[51] Here, according to Kaufman, Kant's moral philosophy crosses over to ethics and achieves its fullest expression.

Truly ethical actions are only possible when theoretical considerations are taken into account. The realities of immediate experience, though not indicative of a transformation of the moral perspective, can either inhibit or foster our moral efforts. For Kaufman, this means that 'certain sorts of social institutions, practices, and expectations' must exist to encourage moral growth.[52] Kant knew this, and, for this reason, was able to articulate a profound practical philosophy 'with a specific philosophy of history in mind'.[53] Human beings are only able to reach their full potential, that is, to become holistic beings, when, as moral beings, advantageous social conditions evolve and empower us to choose wide ranging and far reaching objectives. This should not be taken to mean that we are helpless or hopeless until such a time. Kaufman believes that we have poetic access to our moral potential through the reflections and constructions of the mind as it relates to the whole of experience. The interplay between social conditions and moral situations in the poetic imagination leads to a new way of conceiving moral living, thinking and speaking. We are able to be moral *and* ethical beings only when our bio-historical development (evolution) transforms communities into the kinds of socio-political networks which encourage and reward moral and just behaviour or when poetic reason enables us to access the entire spectrum of human socio-political history morally in the imagination. The combination of the fourth formulation of the categorical imperative and Kant's theory about the historical development of moral communities yields a 'holistic picture which ties the several dimensions of action

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51 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 198.

52 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 198.

53 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 198.

together into a coherent interlocking and interdependent historically developing process'.[54]

On the face of it, this fourth and final commandment appears strictly to be regarded as a commandment for society, not the individual. How can one be commanded to act ethically when it requires a holistic view of the human place within history? Of the three commandments, the third is seemingly the most difficult to put into practice for the individual. It requires the human capacity, which presumably must be universal, to combine a holistic kind of knowledge with moral reflection at the precise moment of decision. Such a capacity would have to take into account the whole of human experience, both in the communal sense of all persons and in the historical sense of connecting lessons of the past and prospects for the future in the situation here and now. Fortunately, Kant did not leave us without resources to resolve this problem. The problem as so far presented seems very similar to the one that Kant faced after the publication of *Groundwork*. When his philosophy was conceived of as a two-realm system of theory and practice (as under the moral interpretation), a seemingly unbridgeable gap develops between nature and freedom. The third *Critique*, however, brings clarity and cogency to Kant's philosophical grounds for theology by providing the solution to this seemingly insuperable problem. It is there that Kaufman seems to have found the singular most important resource for his understanding of theology.

The main point of Kaufman's discussion of Kant's practical philosophy is to show, on the one hand, that feeling is just as important as knowing and doing, and, on the other hand, that the reflective imagination, when understood as a constitutive feature of certain sorts of feelings, unifies the scientific and moral perspectives of human experience. This unification of the fact-value divide is the decisive feature of our becoming both human and humane. Kaufman's reconfiguration of Kant's philosophy reaches its climax when the moral law is raised to the level of ethical action by the power of the reflective feelings. Kaufman calls these reflective feelings 'intuitive aesthetic sensitivities'.[55] When we encounter situations in which definitive action is called for, instead of simply applying the moral law, which can be cumbersome and stifling (viz., impractical), immediate reflective feelings allow us to act freely and rationally in the spirit of the moral law. They work in accord with our intuitive conception of being situated in the 'whole'.

Kaufman's third commandment – to act ethically – is best understood as an intuition that can only be constituted rightly under the concept of the whole of human experience. In this light, 'the conception of freedom has now been further expanded and transformed'.[56] Instead of morality dealing primarily with human agents, it now is conceived of as a communal affair in the midst of the natural order. Kaufman writes,

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54 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 198.

55 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 199.

56 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 207.

> Freedom and agency, from the vantage point we have now reached, are seen to be much more complicated matters than they at first seemed; a wider set of considerations must be taken into account if they are to sustain themselves and not simply self-destruct. We could say that the result of our investigations has been to bring us to a more *ecological* understanding of freedom: we now see that in our actions we must take into account (so far as we can) *all* that we are doing, long-range ramifications as well as immediate consequences (expedience).[57]

According to Kaufman, the whole of humanity, so far as morality is concerned, is best defined under the rubric of 'historico-cultural existence'. Putting morality into the wider picture of this conception of the whole transforms it. As Kaufman puts it, 'morality turns out to be a thoroughly practical matter: it has to do with the very survival and well-being of human existence as such, the survival of women and men as free and responsible agents'.[58]

For Kaufman, then, morality (as traditionally conceived in Kant's practical philosophy) and an ecological pragmatism (which understands humans as essentially historico-cultural beings) come together in moments of poetic experience. 'Ultimately, thus (as we noted), there is a significant convergence of the moral and the aesthetic dimensions of action'. Kaufman calls this convergence 'a very long-range expediency' or 'a kind of ultimate prudence'.[59] When we are confronted with moral decisions, if we have a meaningful conception of the whole and our place as bio-historical beings within that whole, reflective/aesthetic judgements allow us to experience 'true freedom', based upon a far-sighted and wide-ranging pragmatism. True freedom is thus a poetic transformation of or evolution beyond the kind of freedom that constitutes the simple moral decisions we make as individual agents. Kaufman would probably hold, as presented in the previous chapter, that to allow happiness or the Highest Good to constitute choices in individual situations of moral deliberation would corrupt practical reason. What he is arguing for instead is a methodology that synthesizes the scientific understanding of humanity with human responsibility. Precisely what this synthesis will become we cannot say, but for now it is best described as a form of poetic theology. The final form of this theology awaits the ongoing process of human evolution.

The result of Kaufman's theorizing is an answer to the question of hope. Although Kaufman's analysis of human reflection 'split[s] into three distinct dimensions', he argues that it 'can come together once again in a wider, more comprehensive circle' based on a conception of the whole. According to Kaufman, such a whole provides

> a vision of human society and culture in which the practical, the aesthetic, and the moral all find their proper place in a truly harmonious and meaningful ordering

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57 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 207.

58 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 208.

59 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 208.

> of life. Such a fully humane personal and social order is not, of course, at hand; it exists only in our eschatological dreams, our dream of that ultimate human – and humane – world to which all of us are called to give ourselves.[60]

Thinking and acting as we feel, when that feeling is constituted by an ultimate prudence (that is itself based upon our personal and communal conceptions of the whole), allows us to hope that humanity is progressing towards a perfect world order. Such a place is where we will finally actualize our 'power to lift our humanity beyond mere desire to a new and significantly different mode of existing, to live as responsible members in communities of freely interacting persons'.[61] Thus, Kaufman's answer to the question of hope can properly be called the Kingdom of God on Earth. Such a Kingdom will only be actualized when the human ability to construct imaginatively has developed to such an extent that everyone is able to participate in its poetic practice. Just how this poetic theology is to be practised, by Kaufman's lights, is determined by the concept of the whole, which must continually fund any and all rational inquiries.

The idea of the whole is a key theme that continually emerges in Kaufman's writings and it will facilitate our comparison of Davidovich and Kaufman to examine it more carefully. According to Kaufman, the whole is the most useful of all of our thoughts. Though essentially mysterious, it compels us to consider and reconsider the concepts of 'world' and 'God' without ever allowing us to believe that we have captured them completely in our rational deliberations. The whole cannot be completely conceptualized; it lies before us (as individuals in time and as a species in history), indeed beyond us, and compels us to find new and more inspiring ways in which to orient ourselves in the world. Only language used imaginatively gives us the concepts that we need to progress in our thinking. This is what separates (or elevates) theology from (beyond) art: where much of art is concerned only with peculiar instances of experience (a particular kind of holism), attempting to bring distinction and clarity to them, theology 'addresses itself to the *whole* within which all experience falls'.[62] Precisely what this whole is must, in its most important sense, remain a mystery.[63] Similarly, Davidovich's interpretation

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60 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 208.

61 Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery*, 207.

62 Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method*, 39.

63 In Kaufman's *In Face of Mystery*, we find his most definitive account of the whole in his description of the Whole with a capital 'W' and the whole with a small 'w'. The uppercased-Whole is that 'overarching world-picture or frame of orientation [that] can never be something "given" directly in and to experience like an ordinary object of knowledge: for it provides the background structure and patterning within which our particular experiences occur'. The lowercased-whole is our particular conception of all that is and all that can be. If we can say that the uppercased-Whole is everything as it actually is, the lowercased-whole by contrast is everything that is possible given our epistemic limitations (or, what Kaufman describes as our situatedness in the world as bio-historical beings).

of Kant understands the whole as a 'regulative' concept of contemplation. In reference to its importance to science, she writes, 'Kant introduces the concept of an *organized whole* as a regulative concept of reflective judgment that guides Reason, in its manifestation as Judgment, in its search for the efficient causes of organisms'.[64] Clearly, however, the idea of the whole has an even more important role in Davidovich's interpretation than merely the advancement of science. The whole guides reason towards a unified conception of experience by regulating the expansion of reflective reason towards the contemplation of nature and freedom under one purpose. It unifies theory and practice by contemplating the purpose of the world and constituting a realm of meaning in open rational discourse and religious faith.

As with Kaufman, Davidovich's interpretation of Kant understands the whole as a regulative concept of contemplation. Although she does not explicitly relate the idea of the whole to morality, she does imply that part of the regulative function of wholeness is to help unify moral and immediate experience. The whole thus guides reason towards a unified conception of experience by regulating the expansion of reflective reason towards the contemplation of nature and freedom under one purpose. This account highlights an important point of contact between Kaufman's theology and Davidovich's interpretation of Kant. Like Kaufman's theology of 'construction', Davidovich's philosophy of 'contemplation' leads to the need for an ultimate point of reference. Kaufman, as we have seen, argues that the task of theology is to construct an ultimate reference point, which he calls 'God'. This God, however, is not God the real referent or the Most High God, but the idea of *the Highest God* – a poetically constructed ultimate reference point available to all human beings. In a similar way, Davidovich believes that 'The search for the unifying principle of nature and freedom culminates when moral teleology supplements physical teleology with a concept of an intrinsic purpose that establishes a perspective from which nature as a whole can be regarded as a system of purposes'.[65] This supplement is not to be derived from historical theology, which, as we saw with Kaufman, steers our contemplation to reflect teleologically upon the idea of the Highest God. Instead, the resourcefulness of poetic reason directs 'Our contemplation … to reflect on the universe as created in

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The uppercased-Whole is not accessible to any experience, including the intuitive aesthetic sensitivities of poetic reason. Conversely, the lowercased-whole is accessible for us through feeling and reflection. If I might be permitted to amend Kaufman's analogy, the uppercased-Whole would represent the imaginative canvas on which the poet uses language to create a picture indicative of the lowercased-whole. This picture is our mental image of God; it becomes both our ultimate reference point and the material with which the artist/theologian refashions the object of theology. Only through this process does God become a conceptual manifestation of the whole. God, understood in this way, is the symbol through which we experience the whole without capturing it or discovering its mysteries.

64 Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 110.

65 Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 116.

order to realize *the Highest Good*'.[66] From the philosophical perspective, only the idea of the Highest Good unites the teleology of nature with the teleology of morals by providing a concept that makes it possible to view the same purposiveness in both realms.

What Davidovich and Kaufman have uncovered is that the concept of the whole is one of the main driving forces for theology in Kant's philosophy. It provides the key point of contact between her interpretation and his appropriation of Kant and is worth examining more closely. The German root word for 'whole' in virtually all of the important references in Kant's corpus is *Ganz*. *Ganz* is found, in one form or another, over 700 times in Kant's three *Critiques*. Careful scrutiny of these uses reveals that at least two senses of holism are present in Kant's writings. For ease of reference, we can gather these uses under the headings *hermeneutic* and *hermetic* conceptions of the whole.[67] The hermeneutic conception of the whole follows from Kant's constant reminders to his readers of the importance of keeping in mind his whole system when reading its parts. It is found throughout Kant's critical corpus and serves as a bulwark against those readers of Kant's philosophy who would want to read and criticize isolated portions of his work as if these portions were somehow complete works of philosophy in themselves. I have in mind here, for example, the holism exemplified in the First and Second Prefaces of the first *Critique*. There, Kant writes that **'many a book would have been much clearer if it had not been made quite so clear**. For aids in clarity help in the **parts**, but they often confuse the **whole** [*Ganzen*]' (Axix). And again, 'Any philosophical treatise may find itself under pressure in particular passages (for it cannot be as fully armored as a mathematical treatise), while the whole structure of the system … can be very easily resolved by someone who has mastered the whole [*Ganzen*]' (Bxliv). The same hermeneutic emphasis on the motif of wholeness is found in the Preface to the second *Critique*, where Kant writes, 'I must leave it to connoisseurs of a work of this kind to estimate whether such a system of pure practical reason as is here developed from the *Critique* of it has cost much or little trouble, especially so as not to miss the right point of view from which the whole [*Ganze*] can be correctly traced out' (5:8).[68]

In the Introduction to the third *Critique*, Kant takes careful measures to justify the writing of a third part of his critical philosophy and it was the motif of wholeness that provided the crucial justification. In the opening paragraphs of section three of the Introduction, entitled 'The Critique of Judgement as a Means of Connecting the Two Parts of Philosophy in a Whole [*Ganzen*]', Kant argues for the expansion of the critical conception of reason in the following way:

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[66] Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 118. Emphasis mine.

[67] These terms are developed in Chris L. Firestone, 'Kant's Two Perspectives on the Theological Task', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2/1(March 2000), 63–78.

[68] We find an expansion and clarification of this idea later in the Preface of the second *Critique*; see 5:10.

> Concepts of nature contain the ground of all theoretical cognition *a priori* and rest, as we saw, upon the legislative authority of understanding. – The concept of freedom contains the ground of all sensuously unconditioned practical precepts *a priori*, and rests upon that of reason. Both faculties, therefore, besides their application in point of logical form to principles of whatever origin, have, in addition, their own peculiar jurisdiction in the matter of their content, and so, there being no further (*a priori*) jurisdiction above them, the division of Philosophy into theoretical and practical is justified.
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> But there is still further in the family of our higher cognitive faculties a middle term between understanding and reason. This is *judgement*, of which we may reasonably presume by analogy that it may likewise contain, if not a special authority to prescribe laws, still a principle peculiar to itself upon which laws are sought, although one merely subjective *a priori*. This principle, even if it has no field of objects appropriate to it as its realm, may still have some territory or other with a certain character, for which just this very principle alone may be valid. (176–177)

Instead of the two-realm system of philosophy, the third *Critique* makes it clear that the whole of Kant's philosophy includes all three *Critiques* and the perspectives that they each expound. The true 'Critique of Pure Reason, which must settle this whole question before the above system is taken in hand, so as to substantiate its possibility, consists of three parts: the Critique of pure understanding, of pure judgement, and of pure reason, which faculties are called pure on the ground of their being legislative *a priori*' (179). The hermeneutic whole, then, is comprised of the three faculties of reason corresponding to the three *Critiques*; and only with this minimal conception should one attempt to survey the particular elements of Kant's philosophical writings.

Alongside the concept of hermeneutic holism is what I have called a kind of 'hermetic' holism. Hermetic holism has more to do with the whole as it pertains to the larger concept of reason coming into contact with reality. The term hermetic, as I am using it here, means to seal off completely. Since the whole, for Kant, is always more than the sum of the parts, the question must be asked about the consummation of reason. The motif of wholeness in the hermetic sense in Kant's writings often refers to the ultimate culmination of reason, or to the full excavation of reason in its possible and actual employment. Graham Bird calls 'such holistic tendencies a trademark of Kantianism'. Kant's 'consistent appeal to such a notion', Bird contends, is found 'throughout the Critical philosophy'. He further relates this systematic wholeness to experiential wholeness and comments that one finds 'Kant's commitment to some form of holism, in which experience or its salient features is regarded as a systematic whole, at many points in the *Critique*'.[69] The whole makes possible reason in its empirical employment, but is also part the

[69] Graham Bird, 'Kant and Contemporary Epistemology', *Kantian Review*, vol. 1 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 9.

integral structure of reason itself and crucial to resolving the perennial questions of knowledge, duty, hope and identity.

The contact between reason and reality manifests itself in at least two distinct ways under the motif of wholeness in Kant's work. The first, which we have already alluded to repeatedly, has to do with reason's contact with reality as an empirical whole. One good example is found in the explanation of the second 'Antinomy of Pure Reason':

> When I talk about a whole which necessarily consists of simple parts, I understand thereby a substantial whole only as a proper composite, i.e., as a contingent unity of a manifold that, **given** as **separated** (at least in thought), is posited in a reciprocal combination and thereby constitutes an entity. Properly speaking one should call space not a *compositum* but a *totum*, because its parts are possible only in the whole, and not the whole through the parts. (A438/B466)[70]

In this sense, the empirical whole brings together the parts in a substantial union. The whole is somehow greater than the sum of its parts and those parts alone could never alone constitute the whole. For Kant, the 'completion of a science cannot reliably be assumed from a rough calculation of an aggregate put together by mere estimates; hence it is possible only by means of an **idea of the whole** of the *a priori* cognition of the understanding' (A64/B89).

It makes no sense for Kant to talk about the parts outside their context in the whole, and yet the reverse is not the case. The whole is something more than the concept of the world beyond our rational limitations; it is reason and reality coming together, initially in the act of perception and then in feeling. The full sense of whole is born in this contact. It constitutes the parts of immediate experience, which in turn give rise to the whole of immediate experience and witnesses to a deeper concept of the whole that can only be cognized from perspectives beyond the empirical. In this second and deeper sense, the motif of wholeness is suggestive of what Rudolf Otto later called 'a sheer overplus' of experience.[71] The whole refers to the surplus of meaning in cognition that yields the possibility of metaphysics.

In the hermetic sense, the Kaufman/Davidovich understanding of the whole and Kant's understanding of the whole are very similar. Where they separate, however, is over the technical adaptation of wholeness in the third phase of the critical philosophy. From this vantage point of Kant's philosophy, the downplaying of the critique of taste and the playing up of contemplative reasoning are the most

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[70] Compare with A162–3/B203–4: 'I call an extensive magnitude that in which the representation of the parts makes possible the representation of the whole (and therefore necessarily precedes the latter). I cannot represent to myself any line, no matter how small it may be, without drawing it in thought, i.e., successively generating all its parts from one point, and thereby sketching this intuition'.

[71] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), 150.

distinctive aspects of Davidovich's interpretation of Kant (and, by extension, Kaufman's reception of Kant) and important for understanding its strengths and weaknesses. The third *Critique* appears to be as much an exploration as it is a discovery. Kant turns in the third *Critique* to judgement in order to assess whether or not or to what extent judgement might be constituted by *a priori* principles.

Contemplative judgements make their first appearance in the third *Critique* in the 'First moment' of the 'Analytic of the Beautiful'. There, Kant forwards a definition that puts aesthetic judgements under the rubric of contemplative judgements. '[T]he judgement of taste is simply *contemplative*, i.e., it is a judgement which is indifferent as to the existence of an object, and only decides how its character stands with the feeling of pleasure and displeasure' (209). Now, a question immediately arises: Does this mean that aesthetic judgements are determined in any sense by reflective concepts or simply that they fall into a new non-empirical category of judgement? Kant's answer is clear: 'But not even is this contemplation itself directed to concepts; for the judgement of taste is not a cognitive judgement (neither a theoretical one nor a practical) and hence also is not *grounded* on concepts, nor *intentionally directed* to them' (209). The principal difference between the faculty of judgement and its counterparts understanding and reason in this context is not that judgement ascribes a purpose to feelings of pleasure, although it certainly does reflect in this way, but that it enables us to experience purposefully, freely and without interest, and in so doing allows reason to make a transition smoothly and peaceably between nature and freedom.[72]

For Kant, pure judgements of taste are not derivable from concepts chosen from the free play of contemplation, since such judgements would inevitably have interest attached to them. They are instead 'aroused' when 'the imagination (as the faculty of intuitions *a priori*) is undesignedly brought into accord with the understanding (as a faculty of concepts) by means of a given representation' (190). This free sense of purpose, without a definitive purpose of its own, unites freedom and nature using only its *a priori* resources, that is, without an imaginative notion of purpose. What then is the function of contemplative/teleological judgements in relation to the broader economy of Kant's judicial philosophy? An indication of this function can be found in Kant's third moment of judgements of taste. In summing up why feelings of pleasure in aesthetic judgements are 'merely contemplative', Kant explains that 'We dwell on the contemplation of the beautiful because this contemplation strengthens and reproduces itself' (222). Kant implies here that even though there is an immediacy and universality to feelings that we call beautiful,

[72] In the second moment of aesthetic judgement, Kant argues that taste has a universal quality. It is this universal quality that moves us to imagine taste as a possible manifestation of purpose (purposiveness), even as part of a grand purpose (a finality), and to share in this with others. 'The judgement of taste does not postulate the agreement of everyone … it only imputes this agreement to everyone … it looks for confirmation, not from concepts, but from the concurrence of others'. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 56 (216).

they are not necessarily lasting impressions. Only through the contemplation of teleological reflection are aesthetic judgements able to persist.[73]

While it is true that the second half of the third *Critique*, like the first half, has both analytic and dialectic chapters, thus signalling a significant critical function, it is not evident that the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgement' is, as Davidovich believes, a propaedeutic to the 'Critique of Teleological Judgement'. If anything, the details of their functions in the third *Critique* suggest quite the reverse order. Aesthetic judgements serve to unite freedom and nature through feeling (178). The role of teleological judgements is to lead us to understand such feelings as full of purpose; they 'affect' our understanding of metaphysics from a philosophical point of view by treating science and morality as a 'propaedeutic' to theology (417). This subtle distinction in the relationship of aesthetic and reflective judgement in Kant's third *Critique* is perhaps the most important feature to keep in mind in trying to develop an adequate account of the third *Critique*.

Paul Guyer, in his book *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, addresses the relationship between aesthetic and reflective judgements in Kant's judicial philosophy. He writes, 'We may use the theory of reflective judgment to interpret Kant's model of aesthetic response, but not to identify the *a priori* principle of aesthetic judgment'.[74] To identify the *a priori* principle of aesthetic judgement using a deduction of reflective judgement is to unravel (to make objective) that which by its very nature is enigmatic (subjective, or, more exactly, intersubjective).[75] Guyer expresses this point succinctly as follows:

> [W]hat Kant's theory of aesthetic judgement can adopt from his general theory of reflective judgment is the idea of a cognitive goal, analogous to that of systematicity, the satisfaction of which is a constant objective on our part, but not an idea that the fulfillment of such a goal must or even can be postulated in advance of the experience of particular objects. … Kant's ultimate connection between the faculty of reflective judgment and our pleasure in objects of taste depends on the fact that the fulfillment of the aesthetic analogue of systematicity cannot, if it is to be pleasurable, be anticipated on the basis of any conceptualization of the object of taste. Thus a principle which allows us to postulate *a priori* that nature possesses a property in virtue of which it conforms to our own faculty of reflective judgment is not merely irrelevant to

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[73] 'It is of note that the imagination, in a manner quite incomprehensible to us, is able on occasion, even after a long lapse of time, not alone to recall the signs for concepts, but also to reproduce the image and shape of an object out of a countless number of others of a different, or even of the very same, kind'. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 77 (234).

[74] Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 65. See also Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 33 (191–92).

[75] Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 50.

> Kant's theory of taste; it is actually precluded by the explanation of aesthetic response which lies at the basis of that theory.[76]

If Davidovich appeals to aesthetic judgement as that instance in which reflective unity is experienced, then taste, and not contemplation, must be the essence of Kant's judicial solution to the problem of unity. Guyer argues convincingly for the hermeneutic priority of 'aesthetic judgement' for reason in its third employment over 'reflective judgement'.[77] Basically it is the aesthetic experience of the subject that, according to Kant, occasions a smooth transition from theory to practice and not the meaningfulness attributed to that response by reflective judgement. Reflective judgement, instead, helps us to understand how it is humanly *possible* to conceive of a unity between the theoretical and practical perspectives of reason. Aesthetic judgement provides the unity that we actually experience. Through the feeling of harmony (*purposiveness*) which is totally mysterious (*without a purpose*), we experience things as 'beautiful'.

All this is not to say that reflective judgement is superfluous or nugatory. Davidovich understands that 'To be able to recognize spatio-temporal events as moral acts, we need an ability to contemplate nature in terms of final causes'.[78] The main feature of reflective judgement is not to constitute an instance of aesthetic judgement, but to demonstrate that it is *possible* to ascribe meaning to those ineffable (but genuine) feelings of purposiveness that are part of a purely aesthetic experience. It fills in the teleological blind spot of judicial reason with a creatively constructed, humanly oriented *possibility*. This poetic designation pushes to the very borderline of the philosophical quest and is consonant with Kant's first *Critique* strictures on knowledge. In this way, Davidovich's doctrine of contemplation can provide an important philosophical resource for doing theology, because it makes sense of the purposiveness that we feel without being able to identify definitively its source or to adjudicate decisively its truth. Provided we reflect passionately and soundly on life's deepest questions in full recognition of the empirical facts and in obedience to the moral law, the religious life can flourish.

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76 Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 50–51.

77 See Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, 50–51.

78 Davidovich, *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, 89.

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Chapter Six
Kant's Ontological Grounds for Theology

The insights of Ronald M. Green and Adina Davidovich have provided the structure of our analysis thus far. Depending on which part of Kant's post-theoretical philosophy is held to be primary, a completely different understanding of the extent and limitations of Kant's philosophy of religion emerges. When practical reason is held to be both the primary standpoint of reason and the only standpoint of real significance to theology, the resulting 'gap' leads to partial reasoning and a prudential theory of religion. Theology on this philosophical scheme is both grounded in and developed according to the inherent logic of practical reason. If judicial reason is understood to be the bridge connecting theory and practice and the supreme standpoint of reason, the whole becomes the constitutive element of all theological reflection and religious practice. The grounds for theology on this interpretation of Kant are comprised of feelings of beauty and sublimity poetically understood in the unceasing dialogue of human beings concerned with the whole of reality. In both cases, Kant's philosophy is useful for grounding theology, but, as I have argued, this grounding comes at a cost. In the case of Green, it marginalizes certain developments in Kant's thinking on religion and theology (particularly, Books One and Two of *Religion*), and, in the case of Davidovich, it misprioritizes the critical components of Kant's judicial bridge between theory and practice.

Stephen R. Palmquist's interpretation defends the notion that Kant's resources for theology transcend both the moral and poetic dimensions of Kant's philosophy. He contends that one overarching perspective is fundamentally important for understanding the nature and extent of Kant's philosophical grounds for theology. The most distinctive inference of Palmquist's interpretation, the part separating it from the other two so far examined, is that he understands religious experience to be experience of a special kind. This experience is not, strictly speaking, scientific, moral, or aesthetic, but instead is mystical. Religious experience is the experience of something mysterious impinging itself upon us and is constituted as it were by the overarching perspective governing the whole of reason. According to Palmquist, reason considered as a whole has a kind of fourth dimensional or distinctly 'religious' encounter with reality. A critical examination of this religious function of reason is both necessary and sufficient for a complete explication of rational religious faith. Palmquist's technical name for what I am calling this 'fourth dimension' or overarching perspective of reason is the 'Transcendental Perspective'.[1] The Transcendental Perspective does not have a special relationship

[1] Stephen R. Palmquist, *Kant's System of Perspectives: An Architectonic Interpretation of the Critical Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 61.

to any single *Critique*, but is the overarching perspective governing all of them. As Palmquist writes, 'This over-arching "Transcendental (or 'Copernican') Perspective", which is based on the assumption that the subject imposes certain *a priori* conditions on the object, defines the systematic context into which all three Critical systems fit'.[2]

The very idea that Kant might desire a third transition to this overarching fourth perspective is not obvious just by simply surveying his major works in a linear or chronological fashion. Kant's system does not appear either readily equipped for such a transition or in the immediate need of one. His philosophy, as Davidovich argues, is composed of three Critiques in dialectical formation, each representing a different standpoint and each in active interface with the others. Reason, fully extended, depends upon this interface for its constitution and stability. Under Palmquist's interpretation, however, this structural description of reason serves only as a technical explanation of reason's inner workings; it is indicative only of a careful analysis of reason under the strict condition that such an analysis takes place without appeal to experience. This sort of inquiry constitutes a critical account of the fundamental *parts* of reason, but does not constitute a critical account of the *whole* as it manifests itself in our actual encounter with the world. Only a critical assessment that takes into account our being in the world is able to complete Kant's transcendental philosophy.

This way of understanding Kant's philosophy is indicative of Palmquist's interpretation in his book *Kant's Critical Religion*. What I have not yet made clear is how Palmquist links his understanding of the Transcendental Perspective with Kant's turn to ontology. As we move into Kant's later writings, Palmquist understands Kant to be going a step further than even Davidovich's interpretation espouses. He understands the ontological features of Kant's posthumous writings in such a way that they fill in what Kant terms a second 'gap' in his critical philosophy. After Kant comes to an understanding of the judicial standpoint as the necessary link between theory and practice, he realizes that the bridge is not as secure as he would have liked, and, according to Palmquist, a gap remains in the critical philosophy. Kant refers to this gap in a letter to Christian Garve in 1798 (12:256–12:258). The letter was written seven years after the third *Critique*, and speaks of a gap that Kant thought still needed to be filled in the critical philosophy. Armed with Kant's pre-critical essay 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics' and the notes left on Kant's desk when he died (now called the *Opus Postumum*), Palmquist makes a bold and original case for the way

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Palmquist asserts that 'There is no 'transcendental standpoint' - i.e., no separate *Critique* corresponding to the transcendental perspective - because this perspective forms the Transcendental Perspective which governs *all* the [perspectives] on the very highest level on which the principle of perspective operates in Kant's System'. The capitalization of Transcendental Perspective signifies the overarching nature of this perspective.

[2] Palmquist, *Kant's System of Perspectives*, 58.

in which Kant intended to fill in this gap. This picture of Kant's philosophical system, as it pertains to religion, Palmquist terms 'Kant's Critical Mysticism'.

Critical mysticism assumes that human experience has, as its source, the Transcendental Perspective. The Transcendental Perspective is the place where Palmquist believes reason and reality intersect in Kant's philosophy. This intersection raises finite human experience to a uniquely ontological and infinite level. This assumption involves the conviction that we actually have religious experiences that, though they may seem to originate from one of the three original standpoints, are somehow distinct from all other kinds of experience, being rooted in our encounter reality at its most fundamental level. These experiences are hard, if not impossible, to put into words, but they are among the most basic or primordial features of our experience. They make up a unique dimension of human experience – the religious – and provide the ground for all theological and metaphysical discourse. Humans as a species have universal access to this religious dimension of reason, but, for some, this capacity to experience religiously remains dormant. When this capacity is critically assessed, Palmquist believes it becomes clear that the Transcendental Perspective provides the decisive perspective of reason – what we might call the hermetic seal of reason and the rational grounds from which all true theology must begin. In other words, it unites Kant's philosophy into a metaphysical whole and leads reason to its final consummation.

Palmquist's interpretation depends upon showing a relationship between the beginning and end of Kant's philosophy. At the beginning of Kant's philosophy, Palmquist contends that the seeds of Kant's mature ideas were originally sown in his encounter with the mystical writings of Swedenborg in the 1760s. In 1766, this encounter led Kant to write 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer'. In this essay, Kant vehemently criticized Swedenborg's account of his supposed mystical experiences for lacking any sense of philosophical rigour and 'contain[ing] not a single drop of reason' (2:360). Often interpreters take this firm rejection of Swedenborg's writings to mean that Kant was against the possibility of any kind of mysticism whatsoever.[3] Gregory Johnson, in the Introduction to his translation of 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer', joins Palmquist in disagreeing with this conventional wisdom. Johnson asks essentially three questions: (1) Why did Kant choose to publish 'Spirit-Seer' anonymously? (2) Why does Kant here depart from his notoriously stolid academic prose? (3) Why does Kant vacillate between such extremes of scorn and admiration, indifference and fascination, for Swedenborg's work?[4] The

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[3] See, for example, the discussion of Keith Ward's interpretation in Chapter Three above.

[4] *Kant on Swedenborg: 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' and Other Writings*, (ed.) Gregory R. Johnson, (trans.) Gregory R. Johnson and Glenn Alexander Magee (Swedenborg Foundation, 2002). Johnson points to the possibility that Kant was 'two-faced' in his dealings with Swedenborg - interested as much in career advancement as with being perfectly transparent about his real affinities with a controversial figure like Swedenborg.

evidence seems to suggest that Kant's attitude to mysticism was more ambivalent fascination than philosophical antagonism.

The capstone of Kant's philosophy is represented not by the second or third Critiques, but by the *Opus Postumum*. In Palmquist's interpretation, the *Opus Postumum* is, among other things, Kant's attempt to compose a mystical finale to his system. Its primary task, according to Palmquist, was to seek to understand the inner workings of the Transcendental Perspective. This perspective unifies theory, practice and judgement into a whole system of transcendental philosophy. For Palmquist, Kant's third *Critique* had shown how to begin the task of bridging the gap between theoretical and practical reason, but 'the bridge he has built is not nearly as strong and secure as might be desired'.[5] The *Opus Postumum* supports the view that Kant desired a final Transcendental Perspective that could provide ontological closure for his philosophy (21:37). In answer to the question 'What is man?' Kant in the *Opus Posthumum* wants to say that man is at the perspectival centre between God and world. For example, Kant writes, 'God and the world are the two objects of transcendental philosophy; thinking *man* is the subject, predicate and copula'. Palmquist holds the combined force of re-evaluating the significance of 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' and the *Opus Postumum* supports an interpretation based on the compatibility of mysticism with Kant's philosophy.

Palmquist begins his interpretation of 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' by acknowledging the obvious point that Kant rejects most of Swedenborg's visionary claims as being critically untenable. Kant's language is at times harsh and his tone often sarcastic. The reason for this uncharacteristic approach is not clear. Whatever the actual case, he later seemed somewhat embarrassed by 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' and did not include the essay in a book of his collected writings.[6] Palmquist suggests that the tone of 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' is often over-interpreted. Limiting ourselves to what Kant actually writes, argues Palmquist, we discover that Kant is clearly against mysticism of a certain kind, namely, fanatical kinds of mysticism, which attempt to usurp reason's authority in its rightful domains, and superstitious kinds of mysticism, which attribute special powers to worldly things without good reason for doing so (2:360). Palmquist contends that, although Kant condemns Swedenborg's writings as an *ad hoc* mixture of both of these bad forms of mysticism, Kant devotes an entire chapter to agreeing with and defending Swedenborg's mysticism. Kant even states with no apparent sarcasm that Swedenborg's account of mystical experience is identical to the account of the mind-body relation of which Kant himself has previously thought.

If Palmquist is right, it is conceivable to think of Kant as being both critical of Swedenborg's spiritual visions at one point while later accommodating parallel ideas under the paradigm of transcendental philosophy. Palmquist believes that the main difficulty of finding anything other than disdain in Kant's application

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[5] Palmquist, *Kant's System of Perspectives*, 310.

[6] Stephen R. Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion: Volume Two of Kant's System of Perspectives* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), 21–31.

of the critical method to mysticism is that interpreters often read 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' and the first *Critique* as compatible 'Copernican' rejections of mysticism. 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer', according to Palmquist, represents a pre-Copernican mixture of perspectives in which Kant vents his frustration at not being able to cope satisfactorily with Swedenborg's claims. Palmquist writes, 'The fact that "glimpses [of 'the infinity in the finite and the universality in the individual'] are distrusted" by Kant is taken by most interpreters as a distrust in *immediate* [religious] experience, when in fact Kant's expression of distrust in such "glimpses" always relates to their inadequacy when viewed from reason's *theoretical standpoint*, the standpoint that aims at and depends on empirical knowledge'.[7] The question of knowledge that commanded Kant's attention in the first *Critique* led to the formulation of a theoretical account of reason in which mysticism finds no secure foothold. In short, Palmquist boils down the role of 'Dreams' to two points. Firstly, he argues that in writing 'Dreams' Kant's goal was 'to reject uncritical (speculative or fanatical) forms of mysticism, not in order to overthrow all mysticism, but to replace it with a refined *Critical* version, directed towards *this* world and our reflection on it from various perspectives'. Secondly, Palmquist argues that Kant also wanted 'to prepare the way for his own attempt to provide a metaphysical System that could do for metaphysics what ["Dreams"] does for mystical visions'.[8]

By focusing on the beginning and end of Kant's critical period, Palmquist makes a cumulative case for a distinctly religious interpretation of Kant's philosophy. The posthumous writings are especially important to Palmquist's interpretation in that they serve as the launching pad for his inference about the significance of the Transcendental Perspective for Kant. However, Palmquist admits that 'it is now extraordinarily difficult – if not impossible – to know for sure just what Kant himself was aiming to get across in that final work'.[9] Employing the critical method meant that Kant would weigh both sides of an issue, searching for what was right about both, before making a judgement. For this reason, making definitive claims regarding the meaning of the *Opus Postumum* is difficult. This does not mean that these writings should be ignored, however. As Palmquist puts it, 'The final confirmation of the mystical character of Kant's world view will require a thoroughgoing examination of [the *Opus Postumum*], for in this work Kant attempts to realize his long standing dream of establishing a Critical mysticism on the basis of his Critical metaphysics'.[10] Palmquist thus extends his understanding of 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' to the *Opus Postumum* by viewing the latter as Kant's attempt at constructing the final instalment to his critical philosophy – the 'Critique of mysticism'.[11] The *Opus Postumum*, in this light, not only makes more sense

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7 Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion*, 301.

8 Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion*, 42–3.

9 Palmquist, *Kant's System of Perspectives*, 322.

10 Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion*, 321.

11 Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion*, 292.

than it otherwise would, but also has significant ramifications for interpreting Kant's critical philosophy as a whole.

Palmquist argues that the *Opus Postumum* appears to be Kant's attempt in his final years to provide an ontological climax to his philosophical system. One of Palmquist's most important arguments in support of his interpretive emphasis on the *Opus Postumum* is to be found in an essay entitled 'What is "Tantalizing" about the "Gap" in Kant's Philosophical System?'[12] This essay draws attention to a conundrum arising in Kant's last years. The conundrum surfaces in Kant's correspondence. Consider the following excerpt from Kant's September 21, 1798 letter to Christian Garve:

> I see before me the unpaid bill of my uncompleted philosophy, even while I am aware that philosophy, both as regards its means and ends, is capable of completion. It is a pain like that of Tantalus though not a hopeless pain. The project on which I am now working concerns the "Transition from the metaphysical foundations of natural science to physics." It must be completed, or else a gap will remain in the critical philosophy. Reason will not give up her demands for this; neither can the awareness of the possibility be extinguished; but the satisfaction of this demand is maddeningly postponed, if not by the total paralysis of my vital powers then by their increasing limitation. (12:257)

Kant confides to his friend that there was a tantalizing 'gap' in his system and that he was working on (in what is now the *Opus Postumum*) a final transition that would resolve the problem. In the light of our earlier analysis, such a transition might not seem out of place. This situation, however, is unusual and deserves further consideration.

In the Introduction to the Cambridge translation of the *Opus Postumum*, the translator Eckart Förster suggests, on the basis of a 1795 letter from Kiesewetter, that Kant must have wanted to make some kind of 'transition' since at least as early as 1790. Quoting Kiesewetter, Förster reports 'that "for some years now" Kant had promised to present the public "with a few sheets which are to contain the transition from your *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* to physics itself"'.[13] If the 'gap' mentioned in the letter to Garve in 1798 was referring to the same issue, then the *Opus Postumum* is in fact Kant's preparation for repairing the first *Critique*. In this view, the *Opus Postumum* is best read as an amendment to the theoretical philosophy, and not as a formal transition to a completely new perspective.

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[12] Stephen R. Palmquist, 'What is "Tantalizing" about the "Gap" in Kant's Philosophical System?', *Studies in Early Modern Philosophy IV*, (ed.) Stanley Tweyman and David A. Freeman (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1997), 171–195. This essay became Chapter XI of *Kant's Critical Religion*.

[13] Eckart Förster, 'Introduction', *Opus Postumum*, (trans.) Eckart Förster and Michael Rosen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xxviii.

Palmquist argues against Förster's explanation of the gap. He suggests that the gap mentioned in Kant's letter to Garve refers to something more in line with the natural *development* of his thoughts than a *change* in the first *Critique* itself. Palmquist argues that the 'gap' referred to in Kant's letter to Garve is bound to be misunderstood 'if it is read through the closed and relatively bland spectacles of Kt1 [the first *Critique*] and Kt3 [*Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*], rather than through the more open and fresh spectacles of Kt7 [the third *Critique*] and Kt8 [*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*], where Kant's Critical Mysticism comes to the fore'.[14] Given the fragmented nature of the *Opus Postumum* and the conjecture involved in relating its content to the arguments of Kant's early writings, Palmquist's thesis is interesting, but difficult to substantiate. He must appeal broadly to considerations outside of Kant's critical period and at the same time forward disparate pieces of data from the critical period to support his thesis.[15]

According to Palmquist, critical mysticism depends, not on sloppy reasoning or an emotional encounter with the world, but upon symbols.[16] He identifies the starry heavens above and the moral law within, from Kant's famous passage in the second *Critique* (5:161-162), as two of the most important symbols. Similar examples can be found in the third *Critique* and *Religion*.[17] Perhaps the chief difficulty in Palmquist's interpretation is that nowhere in all the textual evidence from Kant's writings do we find an instance of sustained defence for 'Critical Mysticism' and an

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[14] Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion*, 342.

[15] Palmquist adds to the evidence for his cumulative case a number of examples that show that Kant's daily life involved quasi-mystical experiences. Palmquist cites a particularly illustrative incident that occurred on one of Kant's daily walks (reported by Gabriele Rabel). 'Kant was a profoundly religious man … When Kant had discovered [on one of his daily walks] that in a bad summer swallows threw some of their own young out of the nest in order to keep the others alive, he said: "My intelligence stood still. There was nothing to do but fall on one's knees and worship'. Gabriele Rabel, *Kant* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), vii. Cited in Palmquist, *Kant's Critical Religion*, 314. Quotations like this go against the grain of the caricature of Kant as a lack-lustre philosopher who made up in intellectual prowess what he lost in personal rigidity.

[16] Two other symbols used by Kant, according to Palmquist, are the 'land before' and the 'sea beyond'. Combined with the starry heavens and the moral law, these symbols constitute 'Kant's Four Guiding Symbols'. See Figure X.1 in *Kant's Critical Religion*, 322.

[17] While discussing the pleasures of nature and morality in the Analytic of the Sublime, Kant writes, 'if we call the sight of the starry heaven sublime, … we must take it, just as it strikes the eye, as a broad and all-embracing canopy: and it is merely under such a representation that we may posit the sublimity which the pure aesthetic judgement attributes to this object' (third *Critique*, 71). He follows this representation of the starry skies with a similar exaltation of the moral law: 'The object of a pure and unconditioned intellectual delight is the moral law in the might which it exerts in us over all antecedent motives of the mind' (72).

overarching Transcendental Perspective. Palmquist's interpretation has the great merit of making sense of many often-neglected passages in Kant's writings, and yet none of these passages comprises the central theme of a *text*. The closest possible example of such a 'text' is the *Opus Postumum*, and yet it went unpublished by Kant and, as it stands, does not have the hermeneutic signposts necessary to allow us to go beyond conjecture with anything like certainty. Are these notes meant for eventual publication? If so, how close to completion are they in their present form? If not, are they merely musings or something more? How much interpretive licence are we to take with these documents?

Rudolf Otto's work may be illuminatingly, if anachronistically, construed as picking up where Palmquist's interpretation of Kant leaves off. Otto attempts to expound a philosophy of religion that is in accord with, but not explicitly substantiated by, Kant's writings. Although Otto is widely recognized as a Kantian philosopher of religion *par excellence*, he was not a pure Kant exegete. Instead Otto developed and adapted Kant's philosophy for the twin purposes of proposing a new theory of religion and communicating the fundamental truth of the Christian religion in an intellectual climate dominated by the new Darwinian theorists and a renewed interest in the moral explanation of religion. He was an innovator and scholar who sought to situate what he took to be the vibrant reality of Christian faith in the broader context of religion and the phenomenal truth of religious experience in the still broader context of the sciences and the arts. His thought was influenced by philosophers such as Schleiermacher, Fries and DeWette, but most profoundly by Kant. His writings are saturated with language and themes emanating directly from Kant's writings. However, Otto extends the purview of Kantian philosophy, in order to make it relevant to the religious sensitivities of the academic world of the first half of the twentieth century.

The most important feature of Otto's thought for our purposes here is its broad consistency with Kant's philosophy as Palmquist interprets it. Palmquist highlights this consistency in a 1989 article entitled 'Kant's Critique of Mysticism: (2) The Critical Mysticism'. He writes,

> From an explicitly Kantian (*a priori*) standpoint, Rudolf Otto expounds in more detail the implications of [Kant's] view of religious feeling in [*The Idea of the Holy*]. … Otto's claim that deep religious feelings (or mystical experiences) have an essentially mysterious (i.e., nonrational and even nonmoral) factor might seem to be a direct rejection of Kant's emphasis on reason as the source for both natural and moral knowledge. But in fact *they are almost entirely consistent*. Otto's account of Kant's statements regarding the impact of conscience and nature on his philosophical feeling would be something like this. Kant experiences awe when confronted with the moral law and starry skies because he recognizes these as symbols of a transcendent, mysterious source of human existence. … Once the perspectival character of Kant's thinking is taken into account, it becomes clear that *he would have no trouble accepting such an explanation* of his deepest

> experiences. "Reason" is, for Kant, the ultimately unknowable mystery out of which arise all our human capacities for knowledge and goodness.[18]

Since Palmquist more or less endorses Otto's theory as a compatible counterpart to his interpretation of Kant, and since Otto's work directly influenced Tillich, it will benefit our analysis of the transcendental grounds for theology to look at his theory more carefully. Like Palmquist's interpretation of Kant, Otto's understanding of philosophy identifies three standpoints of reason: the scientific, the moral and the aesthetic. Also like Palmquist's interpretation, the most distinctive feature of Otto's theory concerns a fourth employment of reason – the religious perspective (or 'religious outlook' as Otto sometimes writes).

The religious perspective is the key link between the work of Otto and Palmquist. Otto understands the religious perspective not only as the natural fourth step for philosophy, but also a particularly vital aspect of reason's overarching structure. He remarks in a footnote, 'constructing a "humanity" prior to and apart from the most central and potent of human capacities is like nothing so much as the attempt to frame a standard idea of the human body after having previously cut off the head'.[19] Otto disavows all philosophical theories that reduced religious discourse and experience to one of reason's other perspectives. Davidovich recognizes this feature of Otto's interpretation in her *Religion as a Province of Meaning*, but her interpretation admits no fourth aspect. She interprets Otto as linking religion to teleological judgement and contemplation. Her reading, however, appears forced. For Otto, meaning is a product of reason's fourth perspective or the province of religion, not the other way round. An overview of Otto's principal works on religion should be enough to convince us that four different employments of reason are at work in his philosophical account and that the fourth is the most important for religion proper. Providing an overview of these employments as they are found in Otto's writings will prepare the way for understanding Tillich's theological appropriation of Kant.

Otto identifies his three major works on religion as *Naturalism and Religion*, *The Philosophy of Religion* and *The Idea of the Holy*,[20] and we will look at them in this order. In the chapter on 'Mind and Spirit' in *Naturalism and Religion*, Otto maintains that 'In science and art, in morality and religion, the spirit possesses itself'.[21] Each of these 'outlooks' is distinctive and Otto made it a special point in an early section of the book to describe how religion is different from the first two. 'Firstly, everything depends and must depend upon vindicating the validity and

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[18] Stephen R. Palmquist, 'Kant's Critique of Mysticism: (2) The Critical Mysticism', *Philosophy and Theology*, Vol. IV, No. 1, 83. Emphases mine.

[19] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 37, f2.

[20] Otto makes this identification in his 'Foreword by the Author' to *The Idea of the Holy*.

[21] Rudolf Otto, *Naturalism and Religion* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1907), 334.

freedom of the religious view of the world as contrasted with the world-science in general'.[22] Otto would have little sympathy for the current trend of trying to define (or even justify) the religious outlook by referring to current findings in the field of science. Beyond this, Otto continues, 'The second point is even more important. Religion does not hold its theory of the world and its interpretations of the nature and meaning of things in the same way as poetry does its fine spun, airy dreams'.[23] If it be agreed that the religious outlook is something quite different from the scientific one, Otto also wants to make sure the pendulum did not swing over to the imaginative wanderings of the poetic perspective. 'For there is this outstanding difference between religion and all "moods" – all poetic or fanciful views of nature – that it lives by the certainty of its ideas, suffers if they be uncertain, and dies if they be shown to be untenable, however charming or consoling, sublime or simple they may be'.[24] As the book is devoted primarily to the study of naturalism and religion, it is not surprising that Otto focuses solely on distinguishing religion from science and art. Outside the passage quoted above from Otto's final chapter (cited in footnote 21), the outlook of morality does not surface in any significant way in this book.

In *The Philosophy of Religion*, however, morality plays a more important role, but one which is clearly distinguished from the religious dimension of human experience and knowledge. Just as it had for Kant's system, practical reason provides Otto's philosophy with a noumenal point of departure for schematising its ideas. Freedom, immortality (soul) and God (deity), according to Otto, '*come to life* with the great "practical content"'.[25] These now practically animated ideas of the mind are not, however, reducible to the practical employment of reason alone. They 'excite' reason into adopting a new perspective based upon poetic feeling. 'In our experience of the sublime and beautiful', for example, 'we dimly see the eternal and true world of Spirit and Freedom, in Nature's life as well, the world of the highest good, the power and wisdom of the highest good'.[26] From the poetic perspective, the ideas of practical reason become, for Otto, integral parts of a holistic vision of ultimate reality based upon feeling and the highest good.

This obscure poetic outlook of reason provides the means for a final transition, for Otto, to 'the truth which underlies all "mystic" excess and imagination'.[27] Otto introduced this transition from the poetic perspective of reason to the religious perspective in this way:

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22 Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, 6.

23 Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, 10.

24 Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, 10.

25 Rudolf Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion: Based on Kant and Fries* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1931), 93.

26 Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 93.

27 Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 93.

> Only thus is it conceivable that the soul in such experience sometimes almost steps beyond her confines, and on her lips hovers the unspoken word which would reveal the secret of all Being. Here "mystery in religion" comes into play. Religion itself is an experience of mystery; not the sort of mystery which would only exist for the uninitiated, which would be solved for the adept, but the sensible mystery of all existence in Time as a whole – eternal reality breaking through the veil of temporal existence, to the unlocked heart.[28]

This notion of 'sensible mystery' marks the beginning of what Otto would later call 'a science of religion'.[29] Despite the obvious similarities in language between Kaufman's understanding of theology and Otto's philosophy of religion, there is a fundamental divergence between them that is directly attributable to Otto's transition to a fourth perspective of reason. For Kaufman, the poetic formulations of theology approximate the actual mystery of the world with ever evolving and increasingly complex word pictures. His theory involves combining a relatively passive ontology with an active subject. For Otto, however, there is clearly an active ontological dimension peculiar to religion that orchestrates from *without*, from 'the secret of all Being', the scientific formation of religion while simultaneously conforming to reason's unique and distinctive (indeed categorical) religious perspective. His ontological and subjective dimensions are thus both active.

The unity of the phenomena of religious experience with the critique of reason in Otto's scientific study of religion as a whole is articulated at a new level in the 'Conclusion' of *The Philosophy of Religion*. Although they each have a separate starting point, the phenomenal in 'an inward survey and observation of some fully-developed, mature, and vigorous religious life and experience … to secure by induction an empirical conception of the properties, character, and real nature of Religion as a whole' and the critical 'faculties of the reasoning mind … [asking] how reason can claim that her kinds of actual knowledge are right and valid', these two aspects of religion can ultimately be joined in a 'metaphysic of religion'.[30] The ontological dimension of religious experience is pieced together according to the reports of mystical or religious experience by many adherents of the world's religions. It can be described only in phenomenological language and is essentially non-rational. The religious perspective of reason is confirmed and explained by a critical examination of the necessary conditions for the possibility of such experiences. Religious reason defines the rational aspects of religion. The interplay of religious encountering and religious reasoning makes the reality of the Holy One manifest and guides us in the comparative study of religion to a proper science of religion. This interplay of what Otto calls 'the rational and non-rational' in religion is the central feature of Otto's classic work, *The Idea of the Holy*.

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28 Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 93.

29 Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 204.

30 Otto, *The Philosophy of Religion*, 224.

Otto's main purpose in *The Idea of the Holy* is to outline and defend the non-rational dimension of religious experience, but this, he argues, could only be done after a critique of the rational dimension had been completed. Otto delineates this rational dimension under what he called 'the category of the holy'. As a primary feature of religious experience and a unique aspect of reason, the category of the holy constitutes the religious perspective in human experience. Otto makes these points early in the text when he writes that '"Holiness" – "the holy" – is a category of interpretation and valuation peculiar to the sphere of religion. It is, indeed, applied by transference to another sphere – that of Ethics – but is not itself derived from this. … The same thing is true (to take quite a different region of experience) of the category of the beautiful'.[31] By the time he wrote *The Idea of the Holy*, Otto had clearly worked out a philosophy of religion based upon the motif of perspective in four parts (i.e., the scientific, the moral, the aesthetic and the religious). In the second half of the book, the category of the holy is said to be 'a *purely a priori* category', which both constitutes the perspective funding religious discourse and participates in the non-rational or mystical dimension of religious experience.[32] In putting these two features of religion together, Otto's theory, like Palmquist's interpretation of Kant's position, argues for a transcendental kind of critical mysticism based on an ontological perspective of reason.

The importance of Otto's work in defining a religious perspective consonant with Palmquist's interpretation will become clear when we move on to Tillich's theology. For now it is more important to see, as a final evidence of the distinctiveness of religion, that Otto contextualizes his first mention of the category of the holy with a discussion of the practical perspective of reason. 'It is true', wrote Otto, 'that all this moral significance is contained in the word "holy", but it includes in addition – as even we cannot but feel – a clear overplus of meaning, and this it is now our task to isolate'.[33] This isolation is not only important for the purpose of distinguishing the moral and religious perspectives, but also because the word '"holy", or at least the equivalent words in Latin and Greek, in Semitic and other ancient languages, denoted first and foremost *only* this overplus: if the ethical element was present at all'.[34] Seen in this light, *The Idea of the Holy* can be understood as the fourth *Critique* for Kant's philosophy, the implicit purpose of which is to discover the necessary conditions for the possibility of the religious experience or the experience of pure holiness. This final part of Otto's four-fold Kantian project comprised the most mature and influential manifestation of his religious theory and, in accord with Palmquist's interpretation, stands as a helpful elaboration of Kant's *Opus Postumum* and as the work Kant never had the chance to complete for himself.

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31 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 5.

32 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 116.

33 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 5.

34 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 5–6. See also 55, where Otto states that 'Mere morality is not the soil from which grows either the need of "redemption" or deliverance'.

Having taken some effort to demonstrate why Otto believed in the need to make a clear perspectival distinction between moral, aesthetic and religious feeling, we should not go to the other extreme and take this to mean that they have no relationship whatsoever. Each standpoint of reason must 'awaken' the next, sometimes in the definite order that Kant's philosophy uncovered, at other times in an unusual or unforeseen order. Otto used an analogy of the relationship of ideas to explain what this means. Just as ideas give rise to other ideas, so feelings 'arouse', 'excite' and 'pass over' other feelings.[35] 'A feeling, no less than an idea, can arouse its like in the mind; and the presence of the one in my consciousness may be the occasion for my entertaining the other at the same time'.[36] It would be easy to confuse what Otto is really contending with this kind of statement if we take it out of its context. Otto is clearly not arguing for a new kind of transformation in the sense of Ronald Green. Feelings do not change form or 'transmute', they simply make a transition to a different employment of human reason.

> What passes over – undergoes transition – is not the feeling itself. It is not that the actual feeling gradually changes in quality or 'evolves', i.e. transmutes itself into a quite different one, but rather that *I* pass over or make the transition from one feeling to another as my circumstances change, by the gradual decrease of the one and increase of the other.[37]

Here, Otto clearly has in mind a transition taking place in the subject that moves reason from the qualities peculiar to one perspective to qualities peculiar to quite another perspective. Otto confirms this position by emphasizing in the same context that 'what we are concerned with is the *replacement* of the one by the other, and not the *transmutation* of the one into the other'.[38] There is a clear distinction of perspective that betrays itself in any critical understanding of human experience and it is the job of the philosopher of religion to uncover the structure of reason that makes this possible.

This religious perspective is the last ingredient necessary to make plain the similarities between Otto's philosophy of religion and Palmquist's interpretation of Kant. Like Otto's philosophy of religion, Palmquist's interpretation of Kant has four perspectives. Where Otto argues for four distinct perspectives of reason, Palmquist's interpretation of Kant has three distinct standpoints that culminate most importantly in an overarching Transcendental Perspective that grounds and informs our understanding of religious experience. Reason, for Palmquist thus, has one dominant Transcendental Perspective and three supporting standpoints – what I have called the scientific, the moral and poetic. Palmquist's system might best be summarized by the visual image of a dialectical opposition (between theory and

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35 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 43.

36 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 43.

37 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 44.

38 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 45.

practice) and a synthesis (judgement) set within the circle of the transcendental/ religious perspective. Otto, in bringing together insights from Fries, DuPrel and Schleiermacher, de-emphasizes certain aspects of Kant's position and shifts the balance of his thought towards religion. Otto understood all four perspectives of reason as being equally distinct from and significant to each other. There are, of course, functional as well as qualitative differences between the two writers, but their similarities on the essentials far outweigh them and make a comparison with Tillich's theology possible.

To this point in our analysis of Otto's thought, we have focused on the first part of Otto's project, that is, how the religious perspective clearly distinguishes religious experience from all other experiences. Roughly halfway through *The Idea of the Holy*, Otto's analysis shifts to a more robust notion of holiness, and, in so doing, brings into sharp relief his critical understanding of mysticism. This shift is what one would expect in a Kantian critique of religion. Part one, as an analytic of religious reasoning, is primarily a negative critique, telling us what religious experience is not as well as what it has that is different from other experiences. This second part promises to be something of a dialectic, combining what was uncovered in the first part into an account of religion as part of the 'organon' of reason (first *Critique*; A6/ B85). This transition takes place in Chapter XII. Since the analytic distinctions had been clearly delineated, Otto sets out to combine the elements of his critique into a constructive theory of religious reasoning. The idea of holiness, Otto informs us, is from there on to be taken as equivalent to the idea of 'the numinous completely permeated and saturated with elements signifying rationality, purpose, personality, [and] morality'.[39] The idea of the holy thus becomes, for Otto, 'a combined, complex category, the combining elements being its rational and non-rational components'.[40]

The significance of this move can only be fully understood against the backdrop of Kant's philosophical programme. By combining all the rational and non-rational elements of the religious consciousness, Otto is now able to identify the idea of the holy as 'a *purely a priori* category'.[41] For any permanent separation in the rational and the non-rational, either intentionally or unintentionally, inevitably leads to a reduction of religion. The most common forms of reductionism result in what Otto calls 'Sensationalism' or 'Naturalism'. Like the moral perspective, which constitutes the good through the idea of freedom and the categorical imperative (and the poetic perspective, which might be said to constitute pleasure subjectively according to the hope of immortality and the highest good), the religious perspective has its own ideas and constitutive grounds leading to the concept and experience of holiness. The former Otto identified as 'The rational ideas of Absoluteness, Completion, Necessity, and Substantiality', which come from 'an original and underivable capacity in the mind implanted in the "pure reason" independently

39 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 113.

40 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 116.

41 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 116.

of all perception'.[42] The latter Otto believes are 'the non-rational elements of our category of the Holy [which] are referred back to something still deeper than the "pure reason", at least as this is usually understood, namely to that which Mysticism has rightly named the "fundus animae", the "bottom" or "ground of the soul" (*Seelengrund*)'.[43]

The numinous is a manifestation of the non-rational elements of the category of the holy. 'It issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses'.[44] Empirical knowledge or focused immediate experience is the '*means*' through which the numinous can be experienced, but this numinous experience does not '*arise out*' of the empirical. It is the unfocused surplus of immediate experience, the wholly other of the empirical, which, 'becoming gradually purer, it disengages itself from this and takes its stand in absolute contrast to it'.[45] Otto discovers, 'by introspection and a critical examination of reason such as Kant instituted', that the religious perspective on the unfocused surplus of immediate experience 'involved in the numinous experience, [leads to] beliefs and feelings qualitatively different from anything that the "natural" sense-perception is capable of giving us'.[46] These facts point to what Otto calls

> a hidden substantive source, from which the religious ideas and feelings are formed, which lies in the mind independently of sense-experience; a "pure reason" in the profoundest sense, which, because of the surpassingness of its content, must be distinguished from both the pure theoretical and the pure practical reason of Kant, as something yet higher or deeper than they.[47]

In the depths of reason, indeed its 'deep abyss', humans have a hidden 'predisposition' for holiness. Otto calls it 'a seed of potentiality' that *grows* in humanity as a race, that is, in our history, and in individuals as persons, or in the existential present. Once again, it is important to notice that this growth does not involve transformation. The human being, at this deepest and most fundamental level, *is* religious. This can only be properly understood as the by-product of a transition beyond sense perception, moral feeling, or aesthetic feeling. The human being, from this religious perspective, is the seed of being, the potentiality of being, the predisposition of being, or the abyss of being.[48] These are all interpretations and valuations of the religious impulse that defines the nature of our species as a whole.

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42 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 116.
43 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 116
44 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 117.
45 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 117.
46 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 117.
47 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 118.
48 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 119.

Now, if we look back at the analysis of the distinctly religious aspect of our religious experience, the ontological ground or the numinous, we find that the religious perspective schematizes these non-rational elements, positing rational ones in their place. The *mysteriosum*, the *fascinans* and the *tremendum*, words meant not to capture cognitive meaning, but to signify aspects of our experience, become absoluteness, grace and wrath.[49] It is here that Otto most clearly begins to spell out what Critical Mysticism means. True religion, religion that is properly maintained by the religious perspective, has 'deep undertones and heavy shadows of Mysticism'. Religion within these limits is able to maintain the tension between what is *purely reasonable* and *genuinely irrational*, without reducing religion to a perspective less than it is or 'letting it develop into a mere rank growth of mysticality'.[50] The term that Otto uses to define what is to maintain this delicate ontological balance is 'the faculty of *divination'*.[51] Otto uses the final three chapters of *The Idea of the Holy* to spell out exactly what divination means.

Otto is convinced that if there really is a religious perspective of reason, then it must bring together 'the inner revelation from the Spirit … [and] an outward revelation of the divine nature'.[52] A faculty of divination would provide the best explanation for how this synthesis actually takes place. According to Otto, 'Divination consists in the fact that a man encounters an occurrence that is not "natural", in the sense of being inexplicable by the laws of nature. Since it has actually occurred, it must have had a cause; and, since it has no natural cause, it must (so it is said) have a supernatural one. This theory of divination is a genuine, solidly rationalist theory, put together with rigid concepts in a strict demonstrative form and intended as such'.[53] Through the reality of God's holiness (experienced as the irrational ground of Being) and the category of the holy (the rational structure of Being), genuine religious experience is born. Otto goes on to link the faculty of divination to 'the *understanding*, the faculty of reflection in concept and demonstration'.[54] This may remind us of the various ways in which immediate experience can be understood, as was seen with Palmquist's interpretation. Indeed, Otto's purpose here is very much in line with Palmquist's reading of Kant. Otto clarifies the distinction by pointing out that religious feeling is 'a sheer overplus,

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[49] 'By the continual living activity of its non-rational elements a religion is guarded from passing into "rationalism". By being steeped in and saturated with rational elements it is guarded from sinking into fanaticism of mere mysticality, or least from persisting in these, and is qualified to become a religion for all civilized humanity. The degree in which both rational and non-rational elements are jointly present, united in healthy and loving harmony, affords a criterion to measure the relative rank of religions – and one, too, that is specifically religious'. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 146.

[50] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 146.

[51] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 148.

[52] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 147.

[53] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 148–149.

[54] Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 149.

in addition to empirical reality'.[55] Religious feelings 'must certainly be termed *cognitions*, modes of *knowing*, though, of course, not the product of reflection, but the intuitive outcome of feeling'.[56] The faculty of divination, or religious reason, is akin to the faculty of understanding, or the theoretical perspective, but somehow more than it. A critical examination of the faculty of divination must focus on this surplus.

In sum, the faculty of divination 'is not concerned at all with the way in which a phenomenon – be it event, person, or thing – came into existence, but with what it *means*, that is, with its significance as a "sign" of the holy'.[57] He borrows Schleiermacher's term 'contemplation' to describe the feeling of being 'confronted by the vast, living totality and reality of things as it is in nature and history'.[58] For Otto, contemplation involves an argument that the surplus of being impinges upon us and can only be properly understood under a critical assessment of the faculty of divination. This is how distinctly religious judgements are made. This is something more than Davidovich seems to have in mind when she describes the essence of religious contemplation as a reflective hope in the Highest Good. Otto contends that a full account of reason requires *a priori* principles in a completely new faculty together with a thorough account of a completely different kind of experience. Together, these two features – the rational and the irrational – form the deepest and most profound level of experience.

We turn here to the writings of Paul Tillich as a theologian who grounds theology on an interpretation of Kant similar to, if not identical with, the interpretations expressed in the work of Palmquist and Otto. This said, it should be noted that the usual way of approaching Tillich's theology is to relate it to the philosophy of Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling. It is common knowledge, for instance, that Tillich attributed his theological awakening to his first encounter with the writings of Schelling in a bookstore as a university student and that Schelling's work served as the catalyst for many of Tillich's most influential insights. Further, Tillich wrote two Ph.D. dissertations on Schelling's philosophy and applied many of Schelling's ideas in his subsequent writings.[59] Nevertheless, Schelling was not

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55 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 150.

56 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 151.

57 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 149.

58 Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 150.

59 The first of Tillich's two doctoral dissertations on Schelling was presented for the degree of philosophy at the University of Breslau and the second was presented for the degree of theology at Halle. Paul Tillich, *Mysticism and Guilt Consciousness in Schelling's Philosophical Development*, (trans.) Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1974); and Paul Tillich, *The Construction of the History of Religion in Schelling's Positive Philosophy: Its Presuppositions and Principles*, (trans.) Victor Nuovo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1974). These works will henceforth be referred to as *Schelling's Philosophical Development* and *Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, respectively.

the only important influence on Tillich's writings. Arguably the most important of these other influences was Kant's philosophy. 'In my student years', Tillich wrote, 'there was a slogan often repeated: Understanding Kant means transcending Kant. We all try to do this'.[60] Even in his earliest work on Schelling, the influence of Kant's philosophy is clear. Victor Nuovo, in summing up this influence, writes, 'Tillich's [Ph.D.] dissertations may be viewed as attempts, through Schellingian concepts, to overcome the Kantian antithesis of historical faith and moral religion, and to provide a metaphysical basis for Kant's doctrine of radical evil and the self-estrangement of the autonomous moral will'.[61]

Tillich's encounter with Kant's philosophy came in two parts. The first part is similar with the 'moral' interpretation of Kant that Tillich learned as a university student and often attributed in a pronounced form to the Neo-Kantians at the beginning of the twentieth century.[62] Under this reading, Kant's philosophy is a transcendental system with theoretical and practical realms that develops into an inconclusive series of efforts at overcoming the gap between nature and freedom. Tillich's writings show clear signs of being dissatisfied with the moral interpretation and his theology surmounts it at almost every point. The second part of Tillich's encounter with Kant is through the work of Otto. Tillich had great respect for Otto's thought and in many ways his system can be viewed as a theological response to it. Tillich's positive adaptation of Otto's thought runs parallel to his dissatisfaction with the moral interpretation of Kant. Tillich's theology transcends Palmquist's and Otto's interpretation of Kant less frequently than it does the moral interpretation and it remains the task of this section to identify where this second transcending took place. We will begin our analysis by exploring the relationship between these two interpretations of Kant's philosophy in Tillich's writings, and, in order to better understand Tillich's theological response to Kant, we will conclude our analysis by examining Tillich's final position on the relationship between philosophy and theology.

Tillich's first encounter with Kant's philosophy can be understood as a combination of the Neo-Kantian school's and his own exegetical insights. Like the Neo-Kantians, he focused on the metaphysical underpinnings of Kant's philosophy, conceived of as a two-realm system of theory and practice. Religion, in this view, is essentially a moral enterprise. Against this view, however, the thing-in-itself quickly became the focus of his attention. Tillich called the thing-in-itself

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60 Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, (ed.) Carl E. Braaten (London: SCM Press, 1967), 70.

61 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 13.

62 '[T]he attempt to reduce philosophy to epistemology and ethics … was the goal of the Neo-Kantian and related schools in the nineteenth century'. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 23. In order to get a good cross-sectional view of Kant's philosophy in Tillich's writing, we will focus on two principal sources: his Ph.D. dissertations on Schelling's philosophy and his *Systematic Theology* (esp., Vol. I).

'the irrational hypostatised'.[63] According to Tillich, 'There is no absolute, perfect synthesis, but only particular acts of the synthesizing consciousness'.[64] For Tillich, and this is the creative aspect of his interpretation, the essential insight in Kant's philosophy is that 'Truth is identity through synthesis'.[65] In other words, Kant's 'island of truth' is properly thought of, for Tillich, as the subjective consciousness itself or the place where intuitions and concepts unite in synthesis. Instead of trying to work out the profound implications of this insight, Kant used the thing-in-itself as a 'counter thrust against the principle of identity'.[66] Instead of understanding it as the essential insight of transcendental reflection on reason and reality, Kant made it 'a boundary concept … [which] limits the identity of subject and object, of unity and manifoldness'.[67] In this way, Kant was able to make a philosophical analysis of strictly delimited reason, but not reason in its actuality and totality. Although this procedure bore great fruit in the field of epistemology, its drawbacks only became apparent as Kant's philosophy moved toward the discipline of theology.

Since Kant declared the thing-in-itself radically unknowable in the first *Critique*, according to Tillich, he consciously cut his philosophy off from being-itself. This not only made the question of human identity difficult to answer in any satisfactory way, but also made the question of God equally difficult. As Tillich put it, 'even perfect being must ask itself the question: "Whence then am I?"'[68] According to Tillich,

> This is "for human reason the veritable abyss." It is the pure fact that precedes reason: that anything whatever exists remains irrational. Existence has no necessity. The question: Why is there anything at all, why not nothing? remains unanswerable. Necessity belongs only to reason. If reason ascends from the conditioned to the unconditioned, it ends up by itself. If, however, it wants to ascend from the contingency of existence to what exists necessarily, it falls into the abyss and is compelled to abandon itself. … Reason cannot escape itself to actual existence.[69]

Kant's arguments against the proofs for God's existence are themselves proof that reason in his system always ends up back at itself.[70] For Tillich, this is symptomatic not of an inherent flaw in Kant's system, but of Kant's intention, at every step, to

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63 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 34.

64 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 34.

65 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 34.

66 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 34.

67 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 34.

68 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 36.

69 Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 36.

70 'The critique of the proofs [for God's existence in the first *Critique*] leaves reason only with the absolute idea, in which reason is by itself.' Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 37.

limit his critical inquiries to reason alone. Given Kant's position on the thing-in-itself, according to Tillich, there are two possible ways of looking at the subsequent development of his system: it became either a stagnant and bifurcated system of philosophy in which religion is explained according to finite reason (as with the Neo-Kantians) or a dynamic and unfolding system leading to a concept of theology in which religion itself is understood to ground human nature. Tillich believed the most promising of these developments to be the latter.

The first step in Kant's movement toward the principle of identity is found in his second *Critique*. The arguments of this text release our understanding of human consciousness from the bonds of cause and effect, giving it a foothold in the noumenal realm of will.[71] The third *Critique*, for Tillich, provides further proof that Kant's system is in dialectical motion. 'What before Kant, was substance in repose, becomes for him and those following him, active ego'.[72] If the idea of freedom in the second *Critique* is understood as the antithesis of nature, then the principle of identity could provide the way forward through synthesis. Despite the fundamental inadequacies of the third *Critique* as a whole, according to Tillich's understanding, within its pages 'the principle of identity wins an unexpected victory'.[73]

The third *Critique*, in Tillich's view, can be looked at as a two-fold attempt to link the principle of identity to the concepts of necessity and freedom from his earlier *Critiques*. The principle of identity, when applied to necessity, yields teleological judgement. When the synthetic process of identity works itself out through empirical events, one understands purpose as a kind of 'supersensible substrate' that guides nature. The principle of identity, when applied to freedom, yields aesthetic judgement. When the synthetic process of identity works itself out through human activity, one is prone to feel in judgements of beauty that life has a purpose that cannot be fully explained. 'In these formulations the principle of identity has found its most effective objective and historical expression. Yet with Kant it lies hidden within a schematic and, in many cases, hypothetical mode of explication'.[74] The third *Critique* certifies the need for the principle of identity, but it fails to make a compelling or complete case. Tillich's reading of Kant parallels Palmquist's closely, but where Palmquist's interpretation of Kant looks to the *Opus Postumum* to supplement this synthesis, Tillich looks for the supplement in theology. These are not conflicting concepts, but two different way of approaching the same question.[75]

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[71] Tillich put it this way: 'Freedom … is the expression of the independence of reason from material motives that lie outside of its self-determination'. Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 38.

[72] Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 129 (endnote 17).

[73] Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 42.

[74] Tillich, *Schelling's Philosophical Development*, 43.

[75] In Palmquist's introductory text on philosophy, he cites Tillich's work far more than any other theologian. See the Stephen R. Palmquist, *The Tree of Philosophy*, second

Tillich's second dissertation shows he held a very definite position on how philosophy of religion could be neatly categorized within the Kantian framework and the great stock he put into Kant's philosophy as a result.[76] In apparent agreement with Schelling, Tillich wrote that 'the three potencies, the theoretical, the practical, and the aesthetic, correspond exactly to the three Kantian *Critiques*, and designate three general classes of rational acts, under which all others must be subsumed'.[77] Experience that is distinctly religious may be described under any or all of these classes, but it is always something more than any one or the aggregate of these descriptions. Religion is the highest dimension of rationality. According to Tillich, if religion is not recognized as part of a unique dimension of experience, it is automatically subsumed under one or another of the finite perspectives of reason. This is the Kantian pitfall that is exemplified in the work of the Neo-Kantians. Even those who try to overcome Kant on this point tend to ground religion in one of reason's previously prescribed perspectives.[78] In his dissertations, Tillich gets beyond these Kantian problems by synthesizing and advancing what he took to be the most promising features of Kant and Schelling. This foundation prepared him for his reading of Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* a few years later.

Otto's philosophy of religion provided Tillich with a concrete example of Kantian thought that resonated with his own theological position. He recalled the importance of Otto's writings for giving expression to his Christian upbringing and providing a point of departure for his theology in his 'Autobiographical Reflections'. In writing about 'the effect which the early life in a parish house had upon [him]', Tillich confesses his intellectual and spiritual indebtedness to Otto.

> It is the experience of the "holy" that was given me at that time as an indestructible good and as the foundation of all my religious and theological work. When I first read Rudolf Otto's *Idea of the Holy*, I understood it immediately in the light of these early experiences, and took it into my thinking as a constitutive element. It determined my method in the philosophy of religion, wherein I started with

edition, (Hong Kong: Philopyschy Press, 2001).

[76] In one sense, this dissertation becomes less important for our purposes because Tillich's understanding of Kant was not there his own. Tillich, *Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, 159 (f1).

[77] Tillich, *Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, 119.

[78] 'As the history of idealism has clearly shown, the formal critical method allows only three possibilities for a definition of religion, which correspond to the three Kantian Critiques. The first … is the possibility of joining morality and religion [(Kant and Fichte)]. The second possibility is … religion [based] upon the aesthetic principle [(Schleiermacher)]. … The third possibility … is speculative [(Hegel)].' Tillich, *Schelling's Positive Philosophy*, 166 (f1).

> the experiences of the holy and advanced to the idea of God and not the reverse way.[79]

References to Otto can be found in various locations throughout Tillich's writings. Tillich studied Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* at least as early as 1923 when he wrote a positive review of it.[80] The theme of 'the holy' returns in various forms throughout Tillich's career. We find it, for instance, as the topic of one of his early sermons, entitled 'The Experience of the Holy'.[81] In volume one of Tillich's three-volume *Systematic Theology*, which is where we will focus our attention, he characterises Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* as a classic endeavour at providing a 'phenomenological description of the holy'.[82] Tillich is clearly sympathetic to Otto's thought, but sure that Otto's work needs further elaboration. 'When he describes the mystery of the holy as *tremendum* and *fascinosum*', Tillich explained, 'he expresses the experience of "the ultimate" in the double sense of that which is the abyss and that which is the ground of man's being. This is not directly asserted … However, it is implicit in his analysis, and it should be made explicit beyond Otto's own intention'.[83]

Examining Tillich's writings closely, an interconnected movement is discernible in his thinking as he turns his analysis from Kant's philosophy to Otto's philosophy of religion and, then again, from Otto's philosophy of religion to his own theological system. While Tillich's use of purely Kantian concepts is usually reserved for the more philosophical context of a critical discussion of finite and ontological reason, his use of Otto's concepts is most often found in the more theological context of ontological reason alone.[84] Of Kant, he writes,

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[79] Paul Tillich, 'Autobiographical Reflections', *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, (eds) Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1952), 6.

[80] Paul Tillich, 'Die Kategorie des "Heiligen" bei Rudolf Otto', *Theologische Blätter* 4 (1923). He returned to Otto's philosophy in 1925, when he wrote a short essay entitled, 'Denker der Zeit. Der Religionsphilosoph Rudolf Otto', *Vossische Zeitung* 308 (July 2, 1925). English translations of these essays are included in the Appendices to this book.

[81] Paul Tillich, *The Shaking of the Foundations* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1949), 89–91.

[82] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 239.

[83] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 239.

[84] According to Tillich's course lectures, Kant's writings reflect the protest of a troubled Protestant who sought to find some way of criticizing the religious establishment while maintaining a secure position within the confines of reason. Kant understood true religion as empirical morality, according to Tillich's lectures, while false religion was ecclesiastical heteronomy. The third *Critique* is unique and deserving of special attention, because it enlarges and beautifies the confines of reason. Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, 67–69. 'From the perspective of Kant's prison of finitude you can say only "as if," but if at several points you can break through this prison, then you might be able to say what nature really is like. This was the watershed between

> It is unfortunate that Kant often is interpreted only as an epistemological idealist and an ethical formalist – and consequently rejected. Kant is more than this. His doctrine of the categories is a doctrine of human finitude. His doctrine of the categorical imperative is a doctrine of the unconditional element in the depth of practical reason. His doctrine of the teleological principle in art and nature enlarges the concept of reason beyond its cognitive-technical sense towards what we have called "ontological reason".[85]

For Tillich, the third *Critique* and its faculty of judgement are the keys to understanding the importance of Kant's philosophy. Kant's philosophy both establishes the bounds of reason's finitude and points the way forward to a more theologically sensitive understanding of reason.[86] According to Tillich, 'The structure of finitude is described in the most profound and comprehensive way in Kant's "Critiques." The categories of experience are categories of finitude. They do not enable human reason to grasp reality in-itself; but they do enable man to grasp his world, the totality of phenomena which appear to his experience and constitute his actions'.[87] Tillich's name for these finite categories of reason, when they are understood as from within Kant's tripartite structure, was 'technical reason'. Technical reason, for Tillich, is reason whenever it is understood critically in any of its three finite employments.

Ontological reason, however, is reason in its infinity. 'Ontological reason can be defined as the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to shape reality'.[88] Exactly what Tillich meant by this definition can be difficult to comprehend and a number of books have been written exploring this question.[89] Nevertheless, what is obvious is that, as in Otto's work, this amendment to Kant's philosophy entails a fourth perspective that is more important than the others (or, as Palmquist puts it, raises the level of the other three standpoints to the heights of a single overarching one). Tillich's ontological reason is the point of contact between reason and reality just as if it were Otto's faculty of divination or religious

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critical philosophy and later ontological philosophy'. *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, 70.

[85] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 91 (f1).

[86] One of the most important indications of Tillich's subtle movements toward the religious interpretation is found in his consistently transcendental approach. He writes, 'The conditions of experience are a priori. If these conditions change – and with them the structure of experience – another set of conditions must make it possible to have experience. This situation will persist as long as it is meaningful to speak of experience at all'. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 185.

[87] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 91.

[88] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 83.

[89] See, for example, R. Allen Killen, *The Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich* (J. H. Kok and N. V. Kampen, 1956) and Adrian Thatcher, *The Ontology of Paul Tillich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

perspective. In Otto's account of divination, irrational surplus of experience meets the rational structures of the human mind. When operative, this faculty yields an experience of the holy by providing a sense of meaning out of the religious experience, which by itself can only be expressed as *mysteriosum*, *fascinans* and *tremendum*. This leads to the schematization into more commonplace theological terms. Placed side by side, it is not hard to see the influence of Otto at this key point. For Tillich, 'Neither structures, Gestalt processes, values, nor meanings can be grasped without ontological reason. Technical reason can reduce them to something less than their true reality'.[90] Technical reason can give a limited description of religion, but ontological reason enables us to grasp its true essence. As such, it serves as the primary link between philosophy and theology in Tillich's thought. Without a proper understanding of ontological reason, technical reason is corrupted, religion is reduced and humanity is ultimately dehumanized.[91]

The question of human identity is the focal point for the correlation of Otto's philosophy of religion and Tillich's theology, and, importantly, it is on this fundamental point that there appears to be near identification of their positions. It becomes evident as we turn to Tillich's anthropology that the question of human identity is answered according to an understanding of philosophical theology assumed prior to the ontological question being raised. Tillich responds to the question 'What is man?' by referring specifically to the human being. 'Man is the question that he asks about himself before any question has been formulated'.[92] Tillich does not actually tell us what this question is and why he believes that man is this question, but it appears from this Kantian analysis of his system that man is the question of human identity in as much as this question is prior to or the summation of all other ontological questions. As Tillich put it, 'Man occupies a pre-eminent position in ontology, not as an outstanding object among other objects, but as that being who asks the ontological question and in whose self-awareness the ontological answer can be found'.[93]

Internal to Tillich's understanding of ontology is a definite position on the relationship between philosophy and theology. Like Palmquist's interpretation of Kant, it too has an hourglass-shaped structure. This hourglass integrates three principal aspects of reality: God (being-itself), man and world. As noted earlier, Kant repeats over and again a similar three-fold structure in *Opus Postumum* as if he were proleptically groping his way toward Tillich. If we say, with Kant, that philosophy fundamentally works from the perspective of reason (*logos*) and the man-world relationship and theology fundamentally works from the perspective

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90 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 81.

91 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 81. For Tillich, philosophy may sometimes function as though technical reason and ontological reason are not divided, but they are so divisible and theology itself must reject the confusion of this division. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol.1, 82.

92 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 69.

93 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 187.

of faith in revelation (*Logos*, the Word of God) and the God-man relationship, then a kind of pre-cognitional understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology funds Tillich's ontology.

As in Otto's account of the faculty of divination, Tillich's philosophical theology is constituted by an idea and a constitutive principle, namely, the idea of God as being-itself and the principle of identity. It is comparable to the technical perspectives of Kant's system, but rises above them in that it introduces existence into Kant's philosophical format. Man stands between the ground of being and the ground of this world in Tillich's system. Even though ontology provides the chief source for his systematic exposition of the relationship of philosophy and theology, his doctrine of man funds his ontology as the midway point between being-itself and the world we experience. Tillich personifies the Kantian concept of reason such that 'The cognitive structures through which we experience being *are us* – "They are he himself." This sets up a dialectic of being which makes the ontological expression of the subject-object structure possible'.[94] As being-itself comes to consciousness of itself through the cognitive structures of man, man develops both subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, we are conscious of ourselves as beings whose potential is infinity. Objectively, we become conscious of other things as finite manifestations of what is essentially infinite. Yet, the 'self is aware that it belongs to that which it looks', but is somehow separate at the same time (identity in difference). The structure of the world as a whole is 'objective reason'. The structure of the self as centeredness is 'subjective reason'.[95] 'Reason makes the self a self, namely, a centred structure; and reason makes the world a world, namely a structured whole. Without reason, without the *logos* of being, being would be chaos, that is, it would not be being but only the possibility of it (*më on*)'.[96]

On one side then of the hourglass-shaped structure of Tillich's system, man is the self-conscious manifestation of being-itself. On the other side, 'man has a world'. This world is not being-itself in its depth, but the surface of being that is opposite man as the self-conscious manifestation of being-itself. This is why Tillich is quick to define the world opposite man as 'a structure or unity of manifoldness'.[97] This way of articulating the relation of man and world as emanating from being-itself is the only way to understand the continuity between being-itself and world that man maintains in the centre. Tillich identifies as man's position at the centre 'perspective'. 'The whole opposite man is one at least in this respect, that it is related to us perspectivally, however discontinuous it may be in itself'.[98] The proof for Tillich that man occupies this discernible centre between being-itself and the whole world is language. Language is 'the power of universals'

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94 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 187.

95 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 190.

96 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 190.

97 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 189.

98 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 189.

and 'the expression of man's transcending his environment'. It provides proof that we not only have knowledge (both epistemological and ontological respectively) of being-itself and the world as a whole, but also that we are the gateway between being and world and the focal points of faith and courage in the human struggle for being over and against non-being.

Tillich warns, however, that 'Theology always must remember that in speaking of God it makes an object of that which precedes the subject-object structure and that, therefore, it must include in this speaking of God the acknowledgement that it cannot make God an object'.[99] The only creative way out of this predicament is the mystical way of 'overcom[ing] the objectifying scheme by an ecstatic union of man and God, analogous to the erotic relation in which there is a drive toward a moment in which the difference between lover and beloved is extinguished'.[100] The inherent feature of this mystical solution is that it 'transcends all realms of being and value and their divine representatives, in favor of the divine ground and abyss from which they came and in which they disappear'.[101] For Tillich, however, mysticism's necessity tends to overcompensate for theology's tendency to objectify God. The concrete is lost in the process. There must always be maintained a dialectical balance between the absolute (concrete) of theology and the relative (abstract) of philosophy. This balance leans toward philosophical mysticism in that the concrete always points our being toward ontological union with the ground of being.

The existential necessity of the concrete as a gateway to the divine is a good image for understanding what Tillich has in mind. Theology is not the keeper of the gate, guarding its entrance and requiring duty for passage across its threshold; neither is it the creator of the gate, creatively constructing a point of entry from the mass of human experience and interest; instead theology is more like the guide to the gate. The theologian highlights ways *to* being that are already present in our ways *of* being. These exhortations to go and do in certain ways encourage us without coercion. They involve risk and always demand that we have courage to embrace the testimony of the really real despite the immediate adversity of the seemingly real. The concrete is necessary to give our experience of ultimacy, afforded by mysticism, the kind of resiliency necessary to maintain its shape. Man's knowledge always begins in the self-world encounter. Man is at the centre, there is God as the ground of being and ultimacy, there is a world of the concrete whole, and there is mystery.

Theology, for Tillich, enables us to stand between God and the world confident in our role as a kind of mediator between the two. The key to the link between God and man lies in the abyss of being, but this abyss is only accessible through the self-world encounter. Man would be but an empty vessel without the world. In this encounter, consciousness is born, and in this consciousness, knowledge of

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99 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 191.

100 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 191.

101 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 250.

the God-man relationship takes root. We are human beings, the world is, and God is being-itself. Tillich's system may appear pantheistic on this point, but there is a difference: God and world are clearly separate in man. In the depth of the human being, the ground of being is felt, and on the surface of the human being, the world as a whole is experienced. This is the identity and difference model that Tillich's system depends upon. This hourglass-shaped picture of the logic inherent in the relationship of philosophy and theology highlights the identification of the distinction between philosophy and theology.

Tillich highlights this hourglass structure in his description of man as the 'perspective-centre'.[102] Man participates in being-itself when, through revelation, he becomes conscious of himself as a being who chooses being over and against non-being; man also 'has a world' because in living each moment he experiences all things as a 'structured whole'. The self-world relationship, being both immediate and vivid, pervades our conscious existence and provides the well from which we draw symbols and participate in being. '[Man] becomes a particle of what is centred in him, a particle of the universe. This structure enables man to encounter himself. Without its world the self would be an empty form'.[103] We come to know ourselves in our encounter with the world as it is captured perspectivally inside ourselves. The God-self relationship is the source of our experience and our final destiny. God as the Ground of Being and the world as the unified object of perception are united in man and it is this union which defines who we are. We are the ontological and perspectival centre of all. Man is 'that being in whom all levels of being are united and approachable'. God is the Ground of Being, and the world is the manifestation of being, but man is the identity of and the difference between the two.

In sum, what we thus learn from Palmquist, Otto and Tillich is that to understand Kant's philosophy means to transcend it in a way that brings theological insight to bear on the fundamental questions of philosophy, particularly the question of human identity. For Palmquist, this means taking a closer look at the *Opus Postumum* and Kant's writings before and after 1781. Although not, properly speaking, texts within the critical philosophy, the *Opus Postumum* and 'Dreams of a Spirit-Seer' suggest that Kant desired to find a way to complete his philosophical trilogy by culminating the transcendental examination of reason with a mystical finale. Otto, in a sense, fulfils this insight by assuming that the faculty of divination forms the properly critical vantage point for completing and, perhaps, transcending Kant's work. Even though this faculty may remain inoperative in many humans, it is the universal aspect of reason governing any genuine encounter with God. Otto's work, as we have seen, forms the intellectual basis for Tillich's theology. For both thinkers, the irrational/rational dialectic must be accounted for if reason is to be excavated in ways that matter to the universal phenomena of religious experience. For Otto, the faculty of divination provided this account. Otto's work awakened

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102 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 189.

103 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 189.

Tillich and prepared the way for the correlation of philosophy and theology that we find in Tillich's work. Otto provided Tillich with a Kantian foundation for Christian theology, and Tillich's theology therefore provides a third way of grounding theology in the philosophy of Kant.

Chapter Seven
Rational Religious Faith and Kantian Theology

Thus far, we have outlined the development of the transcendental grounds for theology throughout Kant's critical philosophy via an assessment of current interpretations of Kant and corresponding theological appropriations of Kant. Our study began with an examination of leading interpretations of Kant's theoretical philosophy. We saw that P. F. Strawson believes readers of Kant must accept the principle of significance as expressed in Strawson's early work on Kant or embrace a harder-to-articulate transcendental idealism along the lines of Henry E. Allison. The former entails the death of metaphysics, for, as Strawson explains, 'the curtain of sense cuts us empirical beings irrevocably off from *knowledge* of things as they are in themselves'.[1] Nothing metaphysically positive can come from purely empirical considerations and theology is thus shut down before it ever gets off the ground. Strawson's considered opinion, however, is that the *Critique of Pure Reason*, although clearly positivistic in its portrayal of empirical knowledge, appears on close inspection to be incomplete both in terms of exposition and extension. As Strawson puts it, 'the curtain is not, according to Kant, in every respect impenetrable. From behind it reality, as it were, speaks'.[2] There is an incompleteness or fuzziness to Kant's theoretical philosophy that requires further examination of and elaboration on its transcendental features. The ongoing debate between Strawson and Allison forces us to choose: either accept the rendition of Kant as the all-destroyer of metaphysics or travel the tougher road of exploring Kant's understanding of transcendental theology.[3] We concluded that, since the first *Critique* is not an end-all, complete system, interpreters of Kant should accept the challenge of closely inspecting his philosophy for possible grounds for theology.

Although Strawson's challenge to go further in the examination of Kant's transcendental idealism is less pessimistic than his earlier reading with respect to the prospects for post-Kantian theology, we still found ourselves facing the difficult question of how Kant can establish grounds for theology in the face of his self-imposed strictures on knowledge of God. If we do not and cannot have knowledge of noumenal 'things', what licence do we have for speaking and thinking about

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1 P. F. Strawson, *Entity and Identity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 251.

2 Strawson, *Entity and Identity*, 251.

3 The most recent published interchange between Allison and interpreters indebted to Strawson (i.e., Allen Wood and Paul Guyer) is found in Kantian Review, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2007), 1–39.

God? Here, understanding Kant's use of cognition becomes vitally important. We found that Kant distinguishes between cognition (*Erkenntnis*) and knowledge (*Wissen*) and, within the former, between pure cognition and empirical cognition. Pure cognition concerns itself with ideas that have 'objective validity' or with objects that might actually obtain in the whole of reality. Objects of pure cognition may or may not have possible intuitions associated with them. We are justified in holding to these cognitions with conviction of their truth or as objects of 'rational faith', even if their intuitional status is empty, provided there are sufficient rational grounds – be they theoretical, practical, judicial, or religious – for holding them. The objective validity of pure cognition contrasts with (but does not clash with) what Kant terms 'objective reality'. Objective reality is a term associated with empirical cognition. Where objective validity has to do with cognitions that might be real but for which we have no direct or immediate confirmation through the senses, objective reality has to do with objects whose representation to us involves a synthesis of intuitions and concepts.

Having articulated this basic distinction as a Kantian premise for rational faith, we raised the question of what theology must look like on such terms. In what sense is rational faith more than just opinion, wishful thinking, or a product of the mind alone? If rational faith really is something more than these, what is the precise nature of this faith? Can such a generic rational faith rise to the level of rational 'religious' faith? In addressing these questions, we turned first to the work of Allen Wood and C. Stephen Evans, arguing that Kant's notion of faith in God is linked to the basic rationalistic conception of God as the *ens realissimum*. This theoretical conception furnishes reason with its object for rational faith – God is the all-reality and necessary idea for the thoroughgoing determination of things in the world. With this understanding of God in hand, we then turned to three significant Kant interpreters (and three corresponding post-Kantian theologians) in order to examine ways of developing this ground for theology further on Kant's terms. We analysed three closely-aligned pairs of philosophers and theologians, namely, Ronald Green and John Hick, Adina Davidovich and Gordon Kaufman, and Stephen Palmquist and Paul Tillich. Each of these pairs revealed three perspectives from which we may do theology on legitimate Kantian grounds: the moral perspective, the poetic perspective and the ontological perspective.

We found that, from the vantage point of Kant's writings, each foundation within this tripartite collection has both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths provide confirmation of the legitimacy of doing more robust forms of post-Kantian theology by using Kant's own resources – that is, we are, in fact, able to go through Kant. We also found, however, that none of these grounds, taken on its own, accounts fully or adequately for all of Kant's resources for theology. Each interpretation and employment of Kant's transcendental grounds for theology, though coherent and plausible on its own terms, is open to significant criticism. For example, Green cannot give an adequate account of Kant's philosophy of religion, specifically in reference to human depravity and divine redemption; Davidovich inverts the critical priority of the teleological and aesthetic dimensions of Kant's

third *Critique* in order to substantiate and define her theological method; and Palmquist brings into sharp relief the Transcendental Perspective as grounds for Kantian theology, but in a way that goes appreciably beyond Kant's presentation, arguably resonating more with the published writings of Otto and Tillich than with Kant's own. Despite the potential shortcomings of the three positions considered in the previous chapters, my goal has not been to undermine these perspectives. Rather, my goal has been to demonstrate (1) that each of these positions has a legitimate basis in Kant and (2) that none can claim an exclusive or exhaustive standing as *the* way of doing Kantian theology.

Because these positions have a legitimate basis in Kant, they present valuable resources available to those seeking to go through Kant in order to stake rational claims about God and God's relationship to the world. For instance, per Green and Hick, we must have some distinctly 'religious' access to God's activity or appearance in the world (i.e., by some written scripture or personal encounter) in order to choose the moral over the prudential and begin to make sense of the variety of religious beliefs in the world. Similarly, per Davidovich and Kaufman, we can legitimately speak about God and reflect on God's nature in ways that progressively increase our understanding of God's serendipitous, creative and mysterious interaction with the world. We can also expand on the *ens realissimum* understanding of God, per Palmquist and Tillich, to say that God is Being-itself, and thus embrace symbols as a means through which we experience God and grasp God's relationship to ourselves and the world. These resources and others provide legitimate Kantian grounds for doing theology. None of these positions, as noted, is exhaustive in its interpretation and appropriation of Kant and likewise none has exclusive rights to determine the best Kantian grounds for theology. Instead, they testify to the fact that more needs to be done by way of advance and consolidation to understand better the theological promise of alternative understandings of Kant's philosophy.

Even with these positive indications and remaining challenges, which give reason to hope that a robust and realist theology might yet be forged by going through Kant, we are still left with a pressing question: What sort of theology is it? More specifically, is an essentially *Christian* theology still possible when going *through* Kant's philosophy, or does Kant leave us with, at best, only generic religion and talk of God generally? Even if the sort of burgeoning resources mentioned above are valid (from a Kantian perspective) and suggestive (from a Christian perspective), are they or can they ever be sufficient for a robustly Christian theology? Clearly, in one very important sense, we still have good reason to be sceptical. The above catalogue of resources, if exhaustive, implies only generic realist theology. If merely our talk of God *qua* God is realist but the specifics of theology – its history, symbols and texts – are only symbolic and pragmatic, then no historically orthodox Christian can be satisfied with these resources. Christian theology is, after all, far more than just belief in God, immortality and future judgement. Christian orthodoxy, be it Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox, stands on claims regarding the human condition, Christ and incarnation, redemption and

hope, and the Triune God. Do we have any hope, when going through Kant, of moving beyond philosophical moralism and realist theology generally to these more specific Christian claims?

If the answer to this question is No, Kant is and will remain a non-starter for Christian thinkers. Christian thinkers live and die on the claims and creeds of Christian theology, and, to whatever extent Kant's philosophy requires the systematic demise of these essential elements of the faith, Kant's philosophy must be kept at arm's distance and looked at with suspicion. I remain confident, however, that we have reason to believe that important avenues (not just side roads or scenic routes) exist in Kant's philosophy and philosophy of religion for moving, not only beyond generic theology, but well beyond it to a more robust and Christian form of theology grounded on rational religious faith.

The first consideration that offers reason for such optimism is the burgeoning trends in Kant-studies briefly outlined in the Introduction. I will not rehash these trends in detail, nor will I here catalogue all such trends – that I do elsewhere.[4] Instead, I will highlight a few of the motifs that emerge out of these interpretive trends in Kant-studies, which give reason to think that Kant himself allowed for the possibility that a careful analysis of the transcendental boundaries of reason might move us beyond generic theology to doctrines more exacting and robust, and thereby more amenable to Christian theology. Two such motifs, arising out of renewed interest in the first three Books of Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, are of particular relevance to our purposes here.

First, Kant's philosophy, it is often supposed, is fundamentally Pelagian. What this means is that interpreters understand Kant's philosophy of religion to be centred on the autonomous individual and the intrinsic power of his or her personal moral resources.[5] Kant, on this reading, celebrates the Stoic quest to live a good life, while harbouring a naïve hope that in so doing we can, despite the problem of radical evil outlined in Book One of *Religion*, hope to be found well-pleasing to God. Numerous articles have emerged in recent years presenting an impressive catalogue of evidence and argumentation pointing out the weakness of this position. Interpreters such as Philip Rossi, Jacqueline Mariña and Frederick Beiser identify the 'Augustinian' character of Kant's notion of grace, which bids us to see grace as required for the 'general orientation of the human will prior to

[4] I offer a catalogue of some of the main motifs that emerge out of recent, theologically affirmative research on Kant in 'What Can Christian Theologians Learn from Kant?' *Philosophia Christi* 9:1 (2007), 7–20; and, in a more substantial way, in 'Rational Religious Faith and Kant's Transcendental Boundaries', in *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology: Reason, Meaning and Experience*, Kevin Vanhoozer and Martin Warner, (eds.) (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 77–90.

[5] Cf. Pelagius, 'To Demetrias', in *The Letters of Pelagius and His Followers*, B.R. Rees (trans. and ed.), (New York: The Boydell Press, 1991).

making any specific choice'.[6] John Hare's assessment is that Kant is driven to such a view of grace due to his overtly high understanding of the demands of the moral law in his deontological ethic and the inevitable conclusion in such a light that humanity is fundamentally depraved: '[Kant] raises the problem of the moral gap vividly, because he places the moral demand on us very high and recognizes that we are born with a natural propensity not to follow it'.[7] Such a motif moves Kant markedly closer to a broadly Christian view of the human condition and bids readers of Kant to consider the possibility that what Kant intends is not the clean dismissal of religion but a critical rationale for it, moving religion away from dogma and speculation and into the transcendental recesses of reason.

The second motif is what might be characterized as a burgeoning 'Kantian Christology' relating to Book Two of *Religion*.[8] Theologians exposed to only a traditional understanding of Kant's philosophy and philosophy of religion may be surprised to learn that a robust transcendental Christology resides at the heart of Kant's philosophy of religion. For many theologically affirmative interpreters of Kant, Kant's Christological turn in Book Two of *Religion* stands, with the doctrine of human depravity in Book One, as arguably the most curious and theologically significant development of Kant's entire critical corpus. Formerly, this development in Kant's thinking was thought to be something of an afterthought or appendage to Kant's critical philosophy. More recently, however, interpreters are looking at Book Two in a more favourable light. In the theoretical and practical philosophy, Kant labours to establish space and time and the twelve categories as the transcendental conditions of knowledge and freedom and the moral law as the transcendental constituents of right action. However, the bridge between theory and practice constructed in *The Critique of Judgement*, as Palmquist points out, 'is not nearly as strong and secure as might be desired'.[9] The nagging question

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[6] Philip J. Rossi, 'Reading Kant through Theological Spectacles', in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, Chris L. Firestone and Stephen R. Palmquist, (eds.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 114. See also Jacqueline Mariña, 'Kant on Grace: A Reply to His Critics', *Religious Studies* 33:4 (1997), 379–400, and Frederick C. Beiser, 'Moral Faith and the Highest Good', in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*, Paul Guyer, (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 588–629.

[7] John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 7.

[8] Using the word 'Christology' to describe Kant's position in Book Two of *Religion* can be slightly misleading. Although a number of interpreters, including John Hare, Gordon Michalson, and Bernard Reardon, believe Kant to be translating Christian doctrine into philosophical language, Jacobs and I argue that Kant's notion of a divine-human prototype finds its roots in Plato's writings rather than the Bible. Understood in this way, the prototype serves as transcendental grounds for belief in Jesus rather than a philosophical version of Jesus himself. See Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), Chapter 6.

[9] Stephen R. Palmquist, *Kant's System of Perspectives: An Architectonic Interpretation of the Critical Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 310.

of moral hope leads Kant to consider critically the nature of the human moral disposition, which was an underdeveloped concept in his earlier philosophy.

After drawing out, in Book One of *Religion*, humanity's natural propensity to deviate from the moral law and, through a series of complex arguments, declaring humanity's moral disposition to be 'evil by nature', Kant provides his solution to this doctrine of human depravity in Book Two by bringing together divine grace and a divine-human figure he calls 'Humanity … in its full moral perfection' or 'the prototype of perfect humanity'. Nathan Jacobs aptly terms this feature of *Religion* 'Kant's Prototypical Theology'.[10] At the apex of Kant's philosophy of religion stands this Christ-like figure in whom we must believe if we are to have moral hope. Only by believing in the divine-human prototype of humanity can we hope to overcome the depravity understood to be inherent in human nature. When Kant's philosophy of religion is understood in this way, *Religion* constitutes Kant's transcendental examination of the conditions for moral hope in the face of our moral inadequacies and lays bare the elements of any truly rational religious faith. At minimum, humans must believe they bear an innate, freely-chosen and corrupt disposition and, through an act of personal moral conversion, can adopt the disposition of humanity's divine prototype and thereby gain legitimate, rational moral hope.

The twin doctrines of human depravity and prototypical redemption give reason to think Kant wants more than a merely generic theology grounded on very slim implications of the moral philosophy. Rather, Kant's mature work bids a very specific view of the human condition and an equally specific, and strikingly Christian, means of moral hope in the face of that condition. Moreover, a careful reading of Kant's *Religion* indicates that Kant not only takes belief in human depravity and prototypical hope to be affirmed by practical reason but understands such doctrines to be required of any historical faith that is to present itself as a rational religion.

In our co-authored essay, 'Kant on the Christian Religion',[11] Jacobs and I argue that Kant, unlike many of his followers, harbours no naïve religious pluralism. His views have far more nuance. Kant certainly thinks that any historical faith can be made a vehicle for rational religion, and such a historical-faith vehicle may even be necessary in light of the sort of rational needs Green draws out (see chapter four above). But a faith is only a vehicle for rational religion *if* it contains and upholds as central the pure moral doctrines, which, for Kant, include not only the moral

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[10] Nathan Jacobs, 'Kant's Prototypical Theology: Transcendental Incarnation as a Rational Foundation for God-Talk', in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*. See also Nathan Jacobs, 'Kant's *Apologia*: A Look at the Usefulness of Kantian Insights for Christian Thought', *Philosophia Christi* 9:1 (2007), 39–62, esp. 45–55.

[11] Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, 'Kant on the Christian Religion', *Philosophia Christi* 9:1 (2007), 71.

insights of the second *Critique* and *Groundwork*, but also the theological doctrines of human depravity and prototypical redemption in *Religion*.[12]

Important to note is that, on such a reading, Kant is not merely translating Christianity into moral terms in *Religion*; he is mining the resources of practical reason in answer to the question What may I hope? Thus, Kant's prototypical theology is not 'Christology' in the proper sense (i.e., a theological exposition of the person and work of Jesus Christ). It is more accurate to call Kant's view – following Jacobs – a 'prototypical theology'. Prototypical theology is based, not on the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, but on the question of moral hope and Kant's subsequent transcendental re-evaluation of Plato's Ideas. What makes this insight of unique importance is its ramifications for rational religious faith and the relationship between rational faith and historical faiths like Christianity. Christianity may not claim exclusive rights to prototypical theology since prototypical theology is born out of the needs of practical reason. But original Christianity, by Kant's lights, was indeed the historical catalyst that awakened and hastened human reason to this supremely rational truth. As Jacobs and I argue, according to Kant, 'New Testament Christianity uniquely encapsulates the necessary truths of rational religion; and until Christianity unveiled these truths in the gospel, the true nature of human depravity and the basis for rational, moral hope were scarcely understood'.[13]

The above account of Kant's philosophy of religion is brought into sharpest relief in Jacobs' and my volume *In Defense of Kant's* Religion. Capitalizing on theologically affirmative resources emerging out of recent discussions of Kant, we offer a complete exposition and interpretation of Kant's *Religion* that addresses the plethora of challenges presented in recent years to the coherence of the text.[14] In our exposition, it becomes apparent that the coherence of Kant's philosophy of religion requires Kant to affirm that humanity has a unified moral nature, which is, in fact, corrupt; that moral hope requires belief in the divine-human prototype, not as mere symbol, but as a transcendental being proceeding from the very being of God, and that moral faith is rooted in the hope of our union with this prototype if we are to be pleasing to God. Moreover, Kant develops these doctrines into a full-blown ecclesiology that presumes the necessity of moral communities in the form of a church.[15] These conclusions, far from being mere abstractions from an empirical/historical faith (viz., the Christian faith), are ultimately what Kant holds up as the essential doctrines of any faith that is to be considered truly rational. For

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[12] See Firestone and Jacobs, 'Kant on the Christian Religion', 64–9.

[13] Firestone and Jacobs, 'Kant on the Christian Religion', 71.

[14] Our inclination to think that our reading of *Religion* adequately addresses the conundrums often pointed out by Kant's critics is affirmed by one of the main contemporary critics of Kant's philosophy of religion, Nicholas Wolterstorff. See Nicholas Wolterstorff, 'Foreword', in Firestone and Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion.

[15] Our exposition of Books One, Two, Three, and Four of *Religion* can be found in Firestone and Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, Chapters 5–8.

this reason, Kant concludes, 'the fact still clearly enough shine[s] forth from its founding … Christianity's true first purpose was none other than the introduction of a pure religious faith, over which there can be no dissension of opinions' (6:131). This is not, of course, to say that Kant offers a Christian apologetic in *Religion*, but only that Kant's own understanding of where his philosophy leads points more decisively toward Christianity than it does toward any other historical faith.[16]

With this burgeoning research on human depravity, divine grace and prototypical theology in Kant, in combination with Kant's conclusion that the Christian faith is the example *par excellence* of rational religion, we certainly have reason to be optimistic that we can move beyond generic realist theology when going through Kant. Yet, are such glimmers of light adequate to sustain hope in this regard? Kant may give us glimpses of a doctrine of human depravity and even the need for grace (in some Kantian form) in the light of this depravity; Kant may affirm that we must believe in a divine-human Christ-like figure and even affirm that, for such reasons, New Testament Christianity was more rational than other pre-Christian religions. But what of the more specific content and claims of Christianity? Depravity, Christology and grace are key aspects of orthodox Christian theology, and Kant apparently holds that such doctrines are central to rational religion and, as such, constitute the true centre of Christianity. But is Kant's assessment of what constitutes the true centre of Christianity accurate? Historically-minded Christians would likely be pleased with these recent developments in our understanding of Kant, but they would also remain dissatisfied with the way Kant (implicitly and sometimes explicitly) reduces Christianity to this small handful of doctrines. What of Christianity's other doctrines – the Trinity and the resurrection of the dead, for example – that are affirmed in its historical creeds?

Here we face what is likely the biggest stumbling block for Christian thinkers who want to take Kant seriously. Kant seems to defend rational faith in a divine-human moral exemplar and may well affirm as rational a type of atonement by the prototype on behalf of moral converts,[17] but can Kant also rationally embrace this moral exemplar and human prototype as the second member of the Trinity? Can we believe *rationally* that the prototype died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven? Similarly, can Kant rationally embrace Christian doctrines surrounding the final destiny of humanity? Kant clearly thinks that he has established the rationality of belief in immortality and a future life, but how essential is the resurrection of the body to this belief? And what happens, on Kantian principles, to the sacraments? Are the sacraments and other sacred, Christian practices mere enthusiasm? Such

[16] See Firestone and Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, Chapters 7 and 8. See also Firestone and Jacobs, 'Kant on the Christian Religion', esp. 69–72. My ongoing reference to 'New Testament' Christianity is important, given that Kant maintains that Christianity, as it developed, became corrupted and is no longer a purely rational religion. See Firestone and Jacobs, 'Kant on the Christian Religion', 71–2.

[17] See Firestone and Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, Chapter 6; and Jacobs, 'Kant's *Apologia*', 54–5.

doctrines, many would argue, are the real content of Christianity. If Kant leaves no room for these doctrines, then his system leaves no room for the Christian faith; and if Kant cannot affirm such doctrines, Kant remains a non-starter – no historically orthodox Christian can go through Kant if this means doctrines such as the Trinity, resurrection and sacraments must be shelved or tentatively held as mere peripherals.

Keith Yandell draws out this very specific kind of attack on Kant's usefulness to Christians in his essay 'Who is the True Kant?'[18] Yandell focuses in on Kant's distaste for three classical Christian doctrines – namely, the hypostatic union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection based on Jesus being the first fruits from among the dead, and the essential, not merely modal, unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the Trinity. Yandell argues that Kant's philosophy, despite whatever positive features may be drawn out of it by the theologically affirmative camp (or 'new wavers', as he dubs those in this camp), is not amenable to orthodox Christianity because it plainly denies these essential doctrines. Yandell points to Kant's final publication, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, as his principal evidence. In 7:39 (see also 7:28 and 7:40), for example, Kant summarily dismisses these three tenets of orthodox Christianity on practical grounds:

> The doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, has no practical relevance at all ... Whether we are to worship three or ten persons in the Deity makes no difference ... On the other hand, if we read a moral meaning into this article of faith (as I have tried to do in *Religion within the Boundaries* etc.), it would no longer contain an inconsequential belief but an intelligible one that refers to our moral vocation. The same holds true of the doctrine that one person of the Godhead became human. For if we think of this God-man, not as the Idea of humanity in its full moral perfection, present in God from eternity and beloved by him (cf. *Religion*, p.73 ff), but as the Deity "dwelling incarnate" in a real human being and working as a second nature in him, then we can draw nothing practical from this mystery; since we cannot require ourselves to rival a God, we cannot take him as an example. And I shall not insist on the further difficulty – why, if such a union is possible in one case, God has not let all human beings participate in it, so that everyone would necessarily be pleasing to him. Similar considerations can be raised about the stories of the resurrection and ascension of this God-man.

Yandell zeros in on Kant's position on these three doctrines in order to show that Kant's philosophy of religion, even in its most affirmative forms, has no room for certain essential Christian beliefs.

Speaking of Kant's view of the incarnation, Yandell offers the following interpretation: 'we have the doctrine of the Incarnation replaced by the idea that God has in mind the idea of a perfect moral agent and what the symbol of God

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[18] Keith Yandell, 'Who is the True Kant?' *Philosophia Christi* 9:1 (2007), 81–97.

incarnate literally amounts to is the idea of a morally perfect being. The story told about the life of Jesus is a story of a human life lived in accord with that ideal'.[19] Similarly, Yandell makes short work of Kant's view of the resurrection: '[Kant's] view of the body is vastly more Platonic than Christian, and fits ill with the Judeo-Christian notion of creation, of the resurrection of Christ, and of the final resurrection. For Kant, believers in the resurrection are materialists'.[20] Perhaps most alarming to Yandell is Kant's dismissal of the doctrine of the Triune God. If any revealed doctrine were to be chosen as central to *Christian* faith, it would have to be the doctrine of the Trinity. Kant's plain intent, thinks Yandell, is to gut Christianity by removing this essential feature. Yandell avers, 'the doctrine of the Trinity is said to be utterly beyond our concepts, not merely beyond the range of their application…. The "doctrine", then, is meaningless – not because it applies categories beyond the range of all possible objects of sensory experience, but because it does not manage to do even that'.[21] Yandell does not mince words. If Kant's position on Christian theology in the above passages from *Conflict* is the whole story, Kant's position could not be considered properly Christian at all.

In the face of such data, we are left with but two options. First, we may presume Yandell's assessment is not only accurate, but also inevitable. Such conclusions, we might say, are inherent to Kant's philosophy, and we cannot expect different results for theology no matter how we choose to go through Kant's philosophy. In this option, we simply have to expect Kant's legacy to yield nothing but a truncated and ultimately heretical version of Christianity. Kant's philosophy at its best commends only certain Christian doctrines or certain transcendental analogues of Christian doctrines, such as radical evil, prototypical redemption, grace and ecclesiology. In other words, the new wave of Kant interpreters may be right as interpreters of Kant – the de-secularised, theologically affirmative Kant is the true Kant – but wrong if they settle for Kant's account of the rational grounds for religious faith; the true Kant is not orthodox in his Christian commitments and to that extent is fundamentally insufficient and inadequate as a basis for Christian theology. Kant's account of religious faith within the limits of reason could never move with the force of rational conviction to affirm the incarnation, resurrection and Trinity. Such an outlook on Kant's impact bids us to affirm 'Wolterstorff's fork' and embrace the strategy of Alston, Plantinga, Wolterstorff and Yandell, namely, to reject Kant's philosophy altogether as unsuitable grounding for the Christian faith.

A second option is available, however, and constitutes the remaining focus of my arguments in this book. With this option, it is important to recognize not only that Kant takes a negative stance on certain orthodox theological claims, but also that Kant is only antithetical to these claims because no sufficient rationale for their inclusion into the doctrines of rational religious faith had yet been presented

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19 Yandell, 'Who is the True Kant?', 93.

20 Yandell, 'Who is the True Kant?', 95.

21 Yandell, 'Who is the True Kant?', 97.

to him. Put differently, after acknowledging that Kant himself saw little value in the doctrine of the Trinity and other doctrines, one could latch on to the fact that Kant does not present his philosophy as a closed system. As Jacobs points out,

> Kant's perspective on rational religion leaves room for expansion. Should one find that the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, has some value for practical reason, then there is room for one to submit this doctrine as an important feature of rational religion. Simply because Kant did not recognize the practical use of a certain Christian doctrine does not mean that doctrine has no value. Kant's rational religion is not meant to be an end in itself. To the contrary, Kant's vision is one of a continued dialogue (and even conflict) within the academy between theology and philosophy. Philosophers must continue to dialogue with and chasten theologians, and theologians must continue to dialogue with and chasten philosophers in the hope that the outer boundaries of human reason may be awakened to further truth. Such a conflict, Kant tells us, is necessary to the search for truly rational religion.[22]

In his talk of mutual chastening between the disciplines of philosophy and theology, Jacobs touches on a theme in Kant's work that I have drawn out elsewhere, namely, the motif of conflict.[23] According to Kant's own vision, philosophy (even and most especially his own) is not meant to be an end in itself; it is, instead, fundamentally situated by its own assumptions of and commitment to human reason and freedom. Kant guards against an idolatrous use of philosophy, wherein philosophy moves into a tyrannical position of ruling over theology, as if it had the normative perspective on all of reality, by keeping a strict distinction between the philosophical and theological disciplines. These two disciplines must remain distinct according to Kant for the betterment of human understanding and for the sake of truth. To ensure a proper relationship in this regard, Kant argues in *Conflict* that these disciplines must always speak from distinct vantage points – philosophy from the standpoint of reason and freedom, and theology from the standpoint of Word and Spirit. Yandell's concerns over the discontinuity between orthodox Christianity and Kantian philosophy, as Kant himself lays them out in *Conflict*, are not, on this understanding of Kant's program, properly understood to be final pronouncements on the truth – thus ending the dialogue between the higher and lower faculties over these issues. To make them out to be final in this way would be to end the very conflict that the book was written to defend and promote. They are, instead, best understood as challenges to theology from a philosophical vantage

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[22] Jacobs, 'Kant's *Apologia*', 62.

[23] See Chris L. Firestone, 'Kant and Religion: Conflict or Compromise?' *Religious Studies* 35 (June 1999), 151–171, 'Kant's Two Perspectives on the Theological Task', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 2/1 (March 2000), 63–78, and 'Making Sense out of Tradition: Theology and Conflict in Kant's Philosophy of Religion', *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 141–156.

point. They amount to a philosophical call for active and vibrant dialogue over the real value of Christianity's central contentions.

In Kant's vision of conflict, philosophers ought not step across disciplinary lines and tell theologians how, at the end of the day, to understand the proclamations of Word and Spirit. Kant makes this abundantly clear in reference to his lectures and course texts in the Preface to *Conflict* (7:7): 'I have always censured and warned against the mistake of straying beyond the boundaries of the science at hand and mixing one science with another, this is the least fault I could be reproached with'. Later in *Conflict*, Kant calls this kind of mixing a 'trespass' of one discipline into the realm of the other. If philosophers trespass in this way, they transgress their own boundaries and actually morph into being practitioners of a foreign discipline. Be this as it may, philosophy and theology, according to Kant, have overlapping aims and concerns, and it is right and sometimes even necessary, Kant believes, for both philosophers and theologians to 'borrow' concepts across disciplinary lines. Kant clearly borrows in this way in the writing of *Religion*, for example. However, this borrowing ought never to become a trespass, wherein the critical philosopher puts on the biblical theologian's hat and begins doing theology, as it were, *incognito*, and the same role reversal should be avoided by the theologian. Instead this borrowing must remain critical and perspectival, with each side maintaining respect for and awareness of the other. So long as the pronouncements of the philosopher do not interfere with the discipline of theology and likewise the pronouncements of the theologian do not interfere with the discipline of philosophy (except for the required mutual chastening and encouraging that *Conflict* is meant to promote), Kant believes the two sides will continue to progress and home in on truth.

Just as a philosophy based on the assumption of reason and freedom must, on this account, listen to and interact with purely theological claims, the perspective of faith in God's Word and Spirit that comprises theology, according to Kant, must also be rational. No theology can merely hide behind its claim to revelation, ignoring the questions, claims, insights and arguments of the philosopher. This virtual truism is something that should not be foreign to most Christians. Just as few Christians would be comfortable allowing a method of strict theological fideism to ground the claims of adherents from other historical faiths, few transcendental philosophers would accept as rational a theological method or position formulated outside of the chastening influence of this perspectival conflict. Instead, the disciplines of philosophy and theology, Kant claims, must be in unceasing open rational dialogue and debate, and, for this reason, Kant does not see philosophy, not even his own, as a closed enterprise. Such a position would be to identify good philosophy with a stagnant acceptance of the very tutelage that the Enlightenment itself was meant to cast off.[24] Human understanding, in its individual, communal and universal forms, must continue to develop and deepen in this way, or eventually be forced to abort the quest for truth and wisdom.

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[24] See Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?', 8:33–42.

A perceptive reader may well wonder, however, whether this motif of conflict indicates any real hope of theological development. After all, even if Kant allows the theological faculty to remain an important contributor to human understanding via dialogue and debate, his vision of conflict appears to be a one-way street – the theologian must play ball on the philosopher's home turf (free rational discourse), but the philosopher is never really required to play ball on the theologian's home turf (faithful commitment to God's Word and Spirit). When we consider Kant's epistemic categories of knowledge, belief and opinion, we find that the philosopher deals in knowledge and belief. The theologian, on the other hand, is 'permitted' by Kant to remain within the 'university of learning', but must speak from a vantage point that amounts to an admixture of faith and opinion. To whatever extent the theologian speaks of anything outside of a rationally permissible faith (viz., what the philosopher permits others to hold rationally), the theologian speaks mere opinion. Neither the philosopher nor the proverbial 'man on the street' has any obligation to heed the theologian's words, but the theologian has every obligation to take seriously the claims of the philosopher. In such light, does conflict really open the door for mutual chastening between philosopher and theologian, or does it merely bid the theologian to take the philosopher with the utmost seriousness and determine which doctrines are theologically necessary by way of the philosopher's input?

To address such a take on Kant's conflict motif, I think it imperative that we consider some distinctions Kant makes at the opening of Book Four of *Religion*. Kant's philosophy can be easily misunderstood as a kind of totalitarian regime if one does not carefully consider Kant's position on the actual relationship between human reason and divine revelation. In the opening of Book Four, Kant lays out a series of distinctions, identifying what he calls the naturalist, the rationalist, the pure rationalist and the supernaturalist. Just a cursory look at Kant-studies over the past few decades reveals this set of distinctions to be a perennial matter of dispute. Where among these four options do Kant's loyalties lie? The majority of interpreters agree that Kant explicitly rejects the naturalist, given that the naturalist denies the very possibility of revelation. Similarly, many have agreed that Kant also rejects the supernaturalist. The supernaturalist, it has been thought, is best defined as one who relies solely on revelation for the discernment of truth in matters of religion and as such is outside the realm of rationalism in general and Kant's program in particular. Thus, interpreters such as Hare, Despland, Wood et al. have spent a good deal of time disputing whether Kant is an affirmer of the only two remaining options – rationalism or pure rationalism. Pessimistic readers, such as the later Wood, opt for the former, while optimistic readers, such as Hare and Despland, argue for the latter.

In Chapter Eight of *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, Jacobs and I argue, on both grammatical and historical grounds and contrary to the traditional approach to these distinctions, that these divisions are best understood in a quite different manner. Kant's initial distinction is not between the rationalist versus pure rationalist and naturalist versus supernaturalist (wherein he explicitly rejects the latter pair), but

between the naturalist, who denies the possibility of revelation, and the rationalist, who cannot deny its possibility. Kant rejects explicitly the naturalist category and embraces the rationalist one, but, within the rationalist category, Kant then identifies two forms of rationalist: the pure rationalist and the supernaturalist.

I will forego a lengthy exposition of the historical background of these two forms of rationalism; Jacobs and I undertake this exposition in *In Defense of Kant's* Religion. Suffice it to say that these two forms of rationalism emerge out of a dispute, sparked by G. E. Lessing, regarding the rational nature of the Christian faith. Lessing argued that Christianity was indeed built on rational premises and, for this reason, he oscillated between two possible implications of this claim: (1) Christianity could have emerged without the historical events that marked its inauguration, but it would not have emerged as quickly or fully; and (2) Christianity, while rooted in truths of reason, required its historical events in order to awaken reason, lest such truths continually lie dormant in reason.[25] The former position Kant calls the position of the pure rationalist – revelation offers a hastening of rational insights – while the latter is that of the supernaturalist – revelation is a *necessary* catalyst for the awakening of reason. This dispute, as we point out in our exposition, Kant cannot adjudicate. But at the end of the day, it is this dispute regarding the issue of revelation that Kant thinks is the dichotomy reason is left with when abandoning the position of the naturalist.

The importance of this nuance should not be missed or underestimated, for it highlights the significance of both the ongoing pursuit of theology and the conflict between philosophy and theology. First, Kant is quite plain that he cannot deny the very possibility of revelation. Wood and Hare acknowledge Kant's consistency on this point; Kant clearly rejects the claim that we can deny the possibility of revelation as the misguided position of the naturalist in *Religion* (see 6:155). As Wood notes, 'though divine revelation itself is not impossible, it is impossible for any man to know through experience that God has in any instance actually revealed himself'.[26] This point is important because it is two-sided: Just as Kant cannot affirm with certainty that a purported revelation actually is revelation, so he cannot disconfirm the status of a purported revelation with anything like confidence without critical evaluation of its claims and merits in open rational dialogue. And should such a dismissal occur, it would only be a dismissal of the theological position in question as rationally *necessary*. Kant cannot sanction the practice of ignoring a purported revelation simply by virtue of being 'purported revelation'. For Kant, purported revelation may, in fact, be revelation – it cannot be dismissed out of hand – and therefore philosophy must consider its claims as possible candidates for inclusion in rational religious faith.

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[25] See G. E. Lessing, *The Education of the Human Race*, in *Lessing's Theological Writings*, (trans.) Henry Chadwick (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), §§4 and 77.See Firestone and Jacobs, *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, 211–220.

[26] Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 204.

A second important consideration, and closely connected with Kant's acceptance of the possibility of revelation previously established, is the distinction between the disciplines of philosophy and theology, or more accurately, the distinct disciplinary assumptions or vantage points of the philosopher and the theologian. For Kant, the philosopher must always speak from the vantage point of reason and freedom; the philosopher's quest for truth begins with the authority of this assumed vantage point. By contrast, the theologian begins from Word and Spirit. That is, the theologian begins with a purported revelation and pursues truth from this quite different set of assumptions and faith commitments, namely, assumptions and commitments derived from a primary trust in the Word and Spirit of God.[27] But notice that for both the theologian and the philosopher, the aim is the same – establishing reliable truth claims and convictions about the world as a whole, albeit from two different angles. Each may begin from a different vantage point, but they converge toward the same target, namely, understanding God, world and humanity in a 'system of thought' (borrowing a term from Kant's posthumous writings; 21:26). When their disparate starting points bring them to that understanding with distinct claims and convictions, a conflict inevitably ensues.

While one may expect that the philosopher always has the upper hand in this conflict, given that the philosopher always stands on the precepts of reason, this is not necessarily the case in Kant's estimation. The philosopher will have the upper hand if the theological perspective is fundamentally flawed – perhaps the theologian's chosen source of revelation is something less than genuine revelation or perhaps the theologian is, for whatever reason, at some remove from God's Spirit and thus prone to skewing the meaning of God's Word. Yet, the theologian who is genuinely led by Word and Spirit is by no means at a disadvantage. It is entirely possible, in Kant's estimate, that the theologian is much like a student coming to a test with the answer sheet already in hand. And given that, in Kant's scheme, the philosopher cannot be sure that the theologian is not beginning with a genuine revelation, the philosopher must remain open to the importance of theological truth claims. Yes, the theologian is required to offer a rational defence of the 'answers', but this does not mean the theologian must come to his or her position utilizing a ground-up, hard-rationalist, Cartesian-like approach. The theologian is expected to have desired conclusions that the philosopher does not share – their distinct starting points ensure (and in many ways require) this state of affairs. But if the theologian's desired conclusions are truly revealed, Kant is convinced the theologian can find a legitimate transcendental rationale for these conclusions and in so doing awaken the philosopher to the need for sharing them.[28]

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[27] See Firestone, 'Making Sense out of Tradition', 144–5.

[28] Another good example of Kant's point on perspective is a visit to the doctor. When we visit the doctor, we fully expect the doctor to diagnose the ailment and prescribe an appropriate solution. The enlightened patient will ask questions, and may even seek a second opinion, but few would doubt the veracity of the vocation as a whole. See *Conflict*,

Given his epistemic strictures, Kant cannot help but see the theologian as a potential wellspring of insight that promises to chasten and hasten the philosopher's understanding of rational faith. The only question for Kant is whether, when this happens, the awakened philosopher could have come to these conclusions without the aid of revelation or whether the conflict with theology was the only possible means for awakening the philosopher. On this question, Kant remains agnostic: 'The point of dispute can therefore concern only the reciprocal claims of the pure rationalist and the supernaturalist in matters of faith, or what either accepts as necessary and sufficient, or only as accidental, to the one and only true religion' (6:155). In Kant's way of looking at things, resolving this dispute is neither possible nor does it really matter. Being in the truth, either through knowledge or rational religious faith, is of paramount importance and, to the extent that the discipline of theology makes this possible, Kant is decidedly in favour of its pronouncements. Such pronouncements are, for Kant, the proper objects of rational religious faith, provided they awaken reason to previously unseen truths that fulfil a need of practical reason. What needs to be noticed and indeed revered, thinks Kant, is not the stagnant acceptance of truth from either discipline as it is presented to us through some sort of passive education or tutelage, but the rational engagement of self and God in the passionate and dignified interface of ideas that comprises (or, at least, should comprise) the university.

As we have seen, Kant both denies and affirms some of Christianity's central tenets. It is beyond the parameters of this book to develop in any thorough way a defence of the central tenets of the Christian faith consistent with the above understanding of Kant's philosophy and its relationship to theology. Given that I stand predominantly on the philosophical side of the disciplinary lines between philosophy and theology, it also may be inadvisable for *me* to do so. Be this as it may, let us consider Jacobs' suggestion provisionally, and, for the sake of advancing the discussion, examine more closely a specific doctrine that we know to be disputed by Kant, namely, the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Trinity is a doctrine that has undergone a renaissance in recent years in both Protestant and Catholic circles, and, I believe, shows much promise as a model for moving forward in our understanding of the interface of Kantian philosophy and Christian theology. Thomas Thompson, in his essay 'Trinitarianism Today: Doctrinal Renaissance, Ethical Relevance, Social Redolence', surveys this renaissance on the backdrop of Kant's criticisms of the doctrine.[29] As Thompson puts it,

> Though present trinitarians would not (indeed, could not) abide by all of Kant's strictures on theoretical knowledge (*pace* his intentions, Kant did not quite make

Part Three on 'The Conflict of the Philosophy Faculty with the Faculty of Medicine' (7:97–116).

[29] Thomas R. Thompson, 'Trinitarianism Today: Doctrinal Renaissance, Ethical Relevance, and Social Redolence', *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (1997), 9–42.

> enough room for faith), his pragmatic challenge is still being welcomed: The question of the relevance of the Trinity looms large in the present retrieval, and that without begging the issue of truth.[30]

Thompson's point is that the doctrine of Trinity, though historically marginalized for both theological and philosophical reasons, is currently the centrepiece of a vast movement to explore its practical significance for Christian theology.

According to Thompson, 'modern questions about the Trinity are giving way to postmodern queries. Within a recent wave of reconsideration of this doctrine many are reclaiming the Trinity in its practical and ethical importance for the life of the church and society at large'.[31] He traces this resurgence back to the theology of Karl Rahner. According to Thompson, many Christian thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries pointed out the inadequacies of the doctrine of the Trinity, declaring it 'so recondite as to be of little relevance',[32] but few attempted to resolve these inadequacies in terms that would maintain its ongoing relevance. As Rahner points out, 'Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere "monotheists". We must be willing to admit that, should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged'.[33] Rahner attempts to meet this challenge head on by demonstrating that the doctrine of Trinity has practical value. He asks, 'How can the contemplation of any reality, even the loftiest reality, beatify us if intrinsically it is absolutely *unrelated* to us in any way?'[34] The impracticalities of the doctrine and its apparent lack of clarity are to be combated, argues Rahner, by abandoning the confessional distinction between who God is *ad intra* and who God is *ad extra*. Parting ways with complex metaphysical language about the nuances of being and logical versus real distinctions that is characteristic of much of the historical literature on the doctrine throughout most of the millennia, Rahner argues that '*The "economic" Trinity is the "immanent" Trinity and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity*'.[35] Thus, Rahner commends the belief that who-God-is-in-history is identical with who-God-is-in-essence or who-God-is-in-God's-self.

Catherine LaCugna picks up Rahner's claims in earnest, attempting to show that the Trinity is a supremely practical doctrine, and her advance on Rahner's insight will concern us here. Following Rahner's denial of the economic–immanent distinction, LaCugna argues that the Trinity doctrine provides a glimpse into the true nature of personhood and community. The doctrine, in her view, retains a significant practical value that should commend it to theologians and thereby

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30 Thompson, 'Trinitarianism Today', 14.

31 Thompson, 'Trinitarianism Today', 10.

32 Thompson, 'Trinitarianism Today', 9.

33 Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 10–11.

34 Rahner, *The Trinity*, 15.

35 Rahner, *The Trinity*, 22.

chasten philosophical understandings of personhood and community. Trinitarian theology, when played out in liturgy, worship, prayer and the life of the people of God, demonstrates a practical content that lies at the very heart of Christian theology. The first two sentences of LaCugna's *God For Us* provides a precise understanding of her contention: 'The doctrine of the Trinity is ultimately a practical doctrine with radical consequences for Christian life. That is the thesis of this book'.[36] Building on this thesis, LaCugna avers, 'We can make true statements about God … only on the basis of the economy'.[37] That is, rather than constructing a 'theological' Trinity, which seeks to make plain the nature of the Trinitarian God *ad intra*, as contrasted with God for us in salvation history, LaCugna argues God's self-revelation is the sole source for meaningful theological talk, and such theological talk is ultimately not ivory tower theology, but practical, soteriologically driven theology that ought to shape our intimate partaking of the divine nature in Christian faith and practice.

Prior to examining LaCugna's project, I should preface my comments with the following clarification. I am not here advocating the theological soundness of LaCugna's conclusions, nor am I endorsing the accuracy of the historiography on which she builds her case.[38] To do so would take me outside my areas of expertise and vocational concerns, and for that reason would be unwise. Instead, the importance of LaCugna, for our purposes here, is the nature of her project. That is, in attempting to show the Trinity to be a supremely practical doctrine, LaCugna, with Rahner, takes up the Kantian gauntlet, addressing head-on the charge of the doctrine's practical irrelevance. Whether or not the end result is desirable is another matter entirely.

In building her case, LaCugna spends Part One painting a picture of the history of Trinitarian doctrine, which on LaCunga's reading, displays an ever widening gap between, what has come to be known as, the immanent and the economic Trinity – that is, between God as he is in himself and God as he is in history. LaCugna argues that pre-Nicea Christian thinkers (e.g., Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen) retained no serious division between the immanent and the economic Trinity. There exists a subordination of the Son to the Father among such thinkers, but this pre-Nicea subordinationism was functional (the Father sends the Son) not ontological (the

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[36] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 1.

[37] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 2–3.

[38] I have been warned that LaCugna's historical scholarship is, in fact, flawed at several points. For example, as we will see, LaCugna argues in Chapter 2 of *God for Us* that the Cappadocians held that the Father begets the Son via involuntary emanation. Yet, in Gregory of Nazianzen, *Orations on the Son*, XXIX, 2 and Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, II, 2, both Gregorys deny that the Father generates the Son by involuntary emanation. I will forego identifying other flawed aspects of LaCugna's narrative since, as already stated, these are not my concern here.

Father is ontologically distinct from the Son). Yet, with the rise of Arian theology, the need to distinguish between *theologia* and *oikonomia* gained significance. As LaCugna sees it, Arian theology was driven largely by the problem raised by the suffering of the impassible God. Since it was taken as axiomatic that God is immutable, and this implied impassible, Arius felt the need, argues LaCugna, for a mutable, sub-deity. Thus, the subordinationism of the economy was transformed into an ontological subordinationism, wherein Christ is a created, mutable god. As LaCugna sees it, the orthodox response was to divide *theologia* and *oikonomia* in order to construct a non-subordinationist understanding of God *ad intra* that contrasts with the apparent subordinationism *ad extra* in history.[39]

This early response to the Arian heresy created a rift between the economic and immanent understanding of the Trinity, argues LaCugna. This rift, on LaCugna's account, quickly became entrenched in both Eastern and Western Christian thought. In the East, the Cappadocians created distinctions between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. For complex theological and historical reasons, these distinctions yielded a further distinction between divine persons based on their casual relations. According to LaCugna, the Cappadocians rejected the idea that the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit were rooted in will, but rather were involuntary emanations. Ultimately, this internal ontic network is inaccessible to humanity – per the unknowable essence of God – and creates a division between the economic and immanent Trinity.[40]

In the West, LaCugna understands the theology of Augustine to be dominant. Augustine's Trinitarian theology, argues LaCugna, is decisively NeoPlatonic in its soteriological aims. That is, Augustine's goal in *De Trinitate* is to reach the psychological Trinity (memory, understanding and love), which is meant to demonstrate that embedded within the human soul is the image of its source; and thus, by contemplating itself, the soul comes to contemplate its source, God, to which it must return. LaCugna reads Augustine's distinction among persons to be ultimately relational, but these relations are purely *ad intra*. Essential relations in God, therefore, are not those displayed in the economy; God as Creator and God as redeemer ultimately become unessential to God's nature. Therefore, LaCugna understands this culmination of *ad intra* Trinitarianism, as in the East, to lead to an unbridgeable division between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity.[41]

With this bifurcated understanding of Trinitarian theology firmly established in the history of Christendom, LaCunga is able to make her case for why the doctrine of the Trinity falls on hard times in a post-Kant intellectual climate. If the theological doctrine of God does not recognize the actual or empirical working out of the Trinity to correlate with the essential or immanent understanding of the Trinity, in what sense is the doctrine of rational or practical value? Further, if the Trinity is of little or no rational/practical value, then, by Kant's lights, why should

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39 See LaCugna, *God for Us*, Chapter 1.

40 See LaCugna, *God for Us*, Chapter 2.

41 See LaCugna, *God for Us*, Chapter 3.

anyone hold the Trinity to be anything more than a peripheral element of faith? Surely, this state of affairs reveals a deep rift that threatens the meaningfulness of theology for everyday life. Kant's philosophy, as has already been shown, views human depravity and prototypical redemption (in certain transcendental forms) as well as divine revelation (either supernatural or purely rational) to be of value and grounded in reason as proper objects of rational religious faith. However, the Trinity appears to Kant to have 'no practical relevance at all ... Whether we are to worship three or ten persons in the Deity makes no difference' (7:39).

LaCugna's account of the history of the Trinity offers one possible explanation of why this would be the case for Kant. According to LaCugna's narrative, the Trinity has been bifurcated into two Trinities – what Kantian theologians might call the 'phenomenal' and 'noumenal' Trinity – and, by LaCugna's lights, too often only the noumenal Trinity has mattered to Christian theology. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that LaCugna is right, the implication runs as follows. The noumenal Trinity is by definition of no practical value to philosophy, for it is the Trinity considered in purely metaphysical terms. When the Christian theologian forwards the doctrine in this form, a problem of practical relevance emerges. The perspective of Word and Spirit commends the doctrine, but the perspective of reason and freedom is at a loss as to its significance or rational ground. LaCugna's argument is that historic Christian theology has underestimated the negative consequences of this position. This situation has made the doctrine less relevant to proponents of rational religious faith than it should be. According to LaCugna, no good theological reasons exist for such practical marginalization of the doctrine. She thus proposes that theologians take seriously Rahner's call to revisit, and indeed reformulate, the economic-immanent distinction. Regardless of whether LaCugna's narrative is fair – historically speaking – her call for a practical revisiting of this central doctrine is pertinent in light of the Kantian concerns in view here.

We find LaCugna's own effort at this new formulation in Part 2 of *God for Us*. There she seeks to press Christian theology decisively toward economic Trinitarianism by affirming Rahner's claim that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity. In this scheme, what God communicates to humanity and gives in and through Christ and the Holy Spirit is what God is from all eternity. According to LaCugna's understanding of the history, pre-Nicene Christianity, for the most part, got this aspect of the doctrine right: 'At the heart of the Christian doctrine of God were two affiliations: God has given Godself to us in Jesus Christ and the Spirit, and this self-revelation or self-communication is nothing less than what God is as God'.[42] The Council of Nicea set off a theological chain reaction in both the East and West which, by LaCugna's lights, divided the Trinity into economic and immanent forms. In terms of revitalizing this doctrine, LaCugna acknowledges that we may retain a distinction between the economic and immanent Trinity conceptually, but ultimately we cannot allow a conceptual distinction of

[42] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 209

God in himself to become an ontic distinction between immanent and economic. Revelation of the *Logos*, if true self-communication, must tell us something about the *Logos as Logos*. LaCugna, therefore, opposes the idea that divine relations *ad intra* define the persons *if* these *ad intra* relations are taken to be different from the distinctions found in the economy. LaCugna maintains that the *ad intra* relations must be inextricably linked with the economic work of the Trinity, so as to avoid an immanent–economic division. For, the economy is ultimately the basis from which theological talk must proceed.

LaCugna's affirmation of Rahner's doctrine is far from a naïve or reactionary acceptance and appropriation of the practical dimension of the Trinity doctrine, however. She acknowledges that this formula has its limitations. For example, if we conflate the economic and the immanent to the point that they are chronologically and temporally identical, then we must suggest that the Son proceeds from the Spirit, per the incarnation. This conclusion is contrary to the biblical witness and would be a queer theological result. Such queerness, and sense of novelty, LaCugna wants to avoid and so she affirms Rahner's willingness to still speak of the immanent Trinity. The key element to LaCugna's account is that this talk must be down-up. The economic Trinity is the starting point and basis for all knowledge of God; God's being and God's being-for-us are not distinct; we cannot possibly speculate about God not in relationship since we know only God for us. This emphasis on God for us, that is, God in relation to us, as the only true knowledge of God is the basis for LaCugna's practical application of the Trinity and the point at which her theological perspective becomes one possible response to Kant's philosophy.

Although LaCugna is in general quite critical of the history of Trinitarian theology, she returns to the Cappadocians to mine out a key feature of her practical account of the Trinity. She praises the Cappadocian emphasis on relation. LaCugna understands *hypostasis* as a relational distinction, and this relational distinction, believes LaCugna, is a proper way of thinking of personhood. LaCugna criticizes the contemporary picture of personhood as Cartesian, individualistic centres of consciousness, and, with John Macmurray, moves toward a relational definition: '*A person is a heterocentric, inclusive, free, relational agent*'.[43] Taking her cues from Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, LaCugna suggests that this type of relationality was the thrust of Cappadocian personhood; in this light, all that is originates from personhood and is defined by personhood as relation. She finds such an understanding of personhood superior to the efforts of Barth and Rahner, both of whom move toward a 'modes-of-being' divine personhood. LaCugna instead emphasizes the *perichoresis* of the divine persons, defended by the Cappadocians, suggesting that such relations are ultimately the picture of personhood from which all things come and by which humanity must be defined. Such an understanding of relationality yields life, and is to be contrasted with inward egoism, which yields death. Movement into Christian life and community is ultimately meant to display

[43] LaCugna, *God for Us*, 250.

this same perichoretic relationality, as Christians partake fully in the free love of God poured out to the world, and in that same way freely love one another. This picture of divine life and personhood in which we are to participate should ultimately permeate Christian doxology, sacramental life, prayer and worship, as the most practical picture of new life in Christian community.

For anyone familiar with Kant's philosophy of religion, the question that likely lingers through the foregoing exposition of LaCugna is this: How can a turn to the economic side of Trinitarian theology offer aid in overcoming Kant's concerns with the Trinity? This question arises because Kant's philosophy does not allow a turn to revelation without a rational commendation of the content of said revelation. Jacobs makes this point clear in his response to Jeffrey Privette. In his essay 'Must Theology Re-Kant?', Privette argues that Incarnation can overcome the Kantian problem of theology when we see noumenal and phenomenal as two sides of the same coin. Privette writes, 'In the Incarnation, God is conditioned by time and space. . . . This means that Jesus Christ . . . [as] God become man, is an example *par excellence* of noumenal become phenomenal'.[44] But as Jacobs points out,

> An overview of Kant's writings reveals that Privette is partially right. Kant thinks God could provide an empirical revelation (*Offenbarung*) of theological truths, and even of God's own nature. … For Kant, the difficulty is whether it is ever possible for a person to know that any particular appearance was actually an appearance of God.… [F]or Kant, God is infinite in being and thus in predication. . . . Such a definition … places God beyond all possible experience, as it demands a type of empirical infinity that Kant thinks is impossible. . . . [N]o finite appearance … is adequate to the idea of God, given this infinite definition.[45]

Turning from Incarnation to Trinity, the situation is unchanged. LaCugna and Rahner can talk all they want about God revealing himself as Trinity, but insofar as this talk is rooted solely in God's self-revelation in history (as opposed to the needs of reason), they offer no resources by which the Kantian may proceed. This does not mean Kant would silence the theologian on this matter, for from the perspective of Word and Spirit, appeal to such revelation is fitting. But if the doctrine is presented to the philosopher on purely historical/revelatory grounds, little can be gained in open rational discourse. The question we are then left with is the same as the one we began with: Does the doctrine of the Trinity have any rational resources – be they practical or otherwise – by which to commend itself?

To this question, the communal application of Trinitarian theology that sits at the heart of LaCugna's efforts offer a potential way forward. As discussed, LaCugna advocates a thoroughly practical Trinitarian theology, tied directly to

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[44] Jeffrey S. Privette, 'Must Theology Re-Kant?', *Heythrop Journal* (1999) 40: 173-4.

[45] Jacobs, 'Kant's Prototypical Theology', 128.

Christian practices. As LaCugna puts it, 'The immediate import of trinitarian ontology is not speculative but practical: Who is God? Who are we? How are we to live and relate to others so as to be most God-like?'[46] LaCugna sums up her understanding of the doctrine as follows:

> The living God is the God who is alive in relationship, alive in communion with the creature, alive with desire for union with every creature. God is so thoroughly involved in every last detail of creation that if we could grasp this it would altogether change how we approach each moment of our lives.[47]

LaCugna spends the latter part of her book laying out the alternatives for what this might mean in more precise theological terms and I will leave it to theologians to decide which alternative best represents the testimony of Word and Spirit. The fundamental consideration for our purposes is that theology, per LaCugna, et al., has concluded that doing theology in a post-Kantian climate requires theologians to go beyond mere metaphysical minutia. LaCugna's concern is to avoid a philosophical abstraction of the Trinity that guts it of practical significance, and instead view this most central doctrine of Christian orthodoxy through the lens of orthopraxy. As for the exact contact with orthopraxy, LaCugna's conception of Trinity, following Zizioulas, is defined principally by relationality – the persons of the Trinity display the ideal of loving community and push us to see the ontology of personhood as fundamentally relational. The community of faith is meant to take its cues from and mirror this divine ideal. This communal theme brings to mind a key feature of Kant's rational religion laid bare in Book Three of *Religion.* Focusing there, we may find rational resources by which to defend this doctrine in open rational discourse.

Assuming the reading Jacobs and I defend in *In Defense of Kant's* Religion, the movement from Book One to Two (briefly outlined) runs as follows. In Book One of *Religion,* Kant considers what it means for humanity to have a moral nature. Kant's scrutiny of the terms *moral* and *nature* leads him to conclude that, per the term *moral*, the moral disposition must be a freely chosen maxim concerning the moral law in general. Considering the term *nature,* the implication is that this freely chosen maxim is innate in the human person as part of the common nature, *human*. Put crudely, Kant's transcendental anthropology in Book One proves to be an examination, not of human individuals corporately considered, but of the human species in a way akin to Aristotle's secondary substance. Kant's uniqueness emerges insofar as his examination of the species assigns to it the power of choice. Prior to the empirical activity of any primary substance (or human individual), the secondary substance must generate a supreme maxim regarding the moral law in general. Given the fact that humans frequently diverge from the moral law, this

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46 LaCugna, *God for Us*, 249.

47 LaCugna, *God for Us*, 304.

supreme maxim must be of such a kind that it subordinates the moral law to other non-moral incentives.

In Book Two, we find Kant's prototypical theology. Kant describes the prototype as humanity in its full moral perfection, echoing language he uses in *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*. There, Kant suggests that, for Plato, the idea of a human being in the mind of God 'would be the most perfect idea of the most perfect human being' who exists in God from all eternity (28:1058-9). Kant's answer to radical evil employs this prototype of moral perfection. What we find is that Kant draws a distinction between created humanity and the idea of the perfect human in God from all eternity. The former constitutes a created species that ought to model itself after its prototype but has not, while the prototype is a divine-human ideal that proceeds from God's own being from all eternity. In answer to the question of moral hope, Kant argues that this prototype is presented to us as moral exemplar, and by a radical moral conversion we can hope to be united with the prototype, laying hold of his ideal disposition and thus become pleasing to God.

Turning now to Book Three of *Religion*, we find here the practical outworking of moral conversion. The prototype has made available to us a perfect disposition, but the ever-present influence of the evil disposition within humanity remains a threat to moral progress and thus to moral hope. The moral convert bears the responsibility of undoing this inner evil, but how can she fulfill this duty? Kant's solution points toward the need for a supportive ethical community. But Kant has already concluded in Book One that all individuals prior to conversion bear a corrupt disposition as innate. Moral stifling and even regress is therefore the inevitable result of the moral convert being a part of humanity in association with humanity. Such contextual moral stymieing requires the establishment of 'an enduring and ever expanding society, solely designed for the preservation of morality by counteracting evil with united forces' (6:94). In other words, in order to combat moral degeneration and persevere in the good, the moral convert must unite with other moral converts. Without such communal effort, the convert will be ill equipped to persevere in the good.

Returning with this vision to LaCugna, a weakness in Kant's program becomes immediately apparent – a weakness that LaCugna's Trinitarian theology promises to address. We have already seen that Kant's prototypical theology offers a moral ideal for emulation, and the emulation of this ideal is integral to moral conversion and moral hope. This is a key facet of rational religion and integral to the needs of practical reason. As we have also seen, while the prototypical theology offers a solution to the problem of radical evil, Kant introduces the practical concern that moral converts are not able to persevere in the good unless surrounding by a community of moral converts. Yet, Kant's call to an ethical community offers no ideal after which to model such communities; he provides only the end after which they must strive. If the moral ideal cannot be attained outside of community, then it seems that the cognized ideal of the prototype, if left in isolation, is an inadequate exemplar. Converts need not only a cognized moral ideal but a cognized ideal of

moral community, for moral converts are called to be communal moral converts. Without a cognition of ideal moral community, ethical communities (and moral converts therein) are left to stumble blindly in the dark.

LaCugna's conception of Trinity sees the Triune God as defined principally by relationality; and the relationality of the community of faith must strive to mirror this divine ideal. The doctrine reveals to humans the ideal of what it means to be relational beings in loving relationship and community. Such a Trinitarian concept fills a void left by Kant's *Religion.* The moral convert has before him a cognized ideal to emulate in conversion and a call to community, but as converts search for a practical ideal after which to model this ethical community, they are left wanting – by Kant. This need is precisely the need LaCugna argues that Trinitarian theology fills. Considering this void in Book Three of *Religion,* and the potential solution offered by LaCugna, we must ask: Might the questions 'What may I hope?' and 'What is man?' be impossible to answer adequately without the concepts of community and relationality presented in the doctrine of the Trinity? When Christian theology enters open rational discourse with such a question in hand, it achieves a chastening tone with philosophy without polemical intent – a tone nestled in the deepest parts of its doctrinal wellsprings.

Whether the Christian theologian can manage to preserve all Christian essentials in like manner remains to be seen, and thus so does the question of whether we can ultimately go *through* Kant to the satisfaction of Christian theology. What we have seen in this volume, however, is that there are positive resources for doing theology throughout Kant's philosophy. These resources present theology as a permanent member and head of the higher faculties of the university and open it to the challenge to live up to this high position. If Wood's early call for moral theism and faith in a living God is accurate and if the understanding of Kant presented above is accurate, we have good reason to believe that, as philosophy and theology engage one another in conflict, the transcendental recesses of reason are not stagnant but may reveal fresh insights in answer to the questions of moral hope and human identity. While the foregoing does not establish the actual content of an acceptably Christian theology under the rubric of Kant, it does offer a glimpse of the philosophical resources available for developing such a theology, and how Christian theologians might constructively engage Kant, resisting the temptation to dismiss this seminal figure of Western thought.

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Chapter Eight
Concluding Comments

We have found that theology in the wake of Kant can no longer proceed with 'business as usual'. Kant's philosophy and its interpreters not only have made atheism and agnosticism intellectually respectable, but have shaken the ivory towers of classical Christian thought. Gone is the easy reliance on classical proofs for God's existence; gone is the trouble-free partnership of natural and revealed theology; and gone is the palpable supremacy of metaphysical realism over alternative understandings of religious faith. Were this a complete account of the legacy of Kant, the situation would be dire for the average adherent to a realist form of Christianity, one which confesses the type of historical and theological beliefs laid out in the various creeds of the Christian church.

Although theology post-Kant cannot proceed with business as usual, we have seen that theology can proceed in a critically satisfying manner by establishing its grounds in the transcendental boundaries of reason. We have also found that grounding theology in Kant's philosophy is not necessarily opposed to the beliefs of historical Christianity. Theology participates in interdisciplinary dialogue with philosophy and shows in open rational discourse the practical, aesthetic and religious significance of its claims. In the midst of this conflict, individuals must 'render a verdict', to use Kant's terminology, regarding the beliefs that emerge, and stake a claim, in the light of reason, regarding where to stand in faith. In short, Kantian theology is not an idle or dogmatic enterprise but a seeking after God and a better understanding of God's relationship to humanity and the world through the chastening conflict between philosophy and theology and by way of a living faith focused intently on what is rationally essential and morally sure.

If this is an accurate portrait of what Kant has in mind, then he has not really decimated the tried and true categories of natural and revealed theology after all. Rather, these fields of inquiry have been reformulated and put into transcendental terms that are only now becoming familiar to a wide spectrum of Christian theologians. So when the Apostle Paul writes, 'since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse' (Rom 1:20), we now know that Kant would have to agree, so long as 'from what has been made' is taken to include not only the objective world on the outside, but also subjective world within – that is, to include also a robust understanding of human reason and critically grounded cognitions. Where classical theologians relied primarily on standard proofs for God's existence, theologians who choose to go through Kant must reassess the value of these tried and true pillars of Christian belief in the light of the transcendental tenets of rational religious faith.

From the theoretical vantage point, we find sufficient warrant to believe in God as the *ens realissimum*, the all-reality and being of all beings. God is the wellspring out of which all that is determined and determinable originates. To move from here directly to arguments that purport to prove the existence and nature of God based on cause and effect, according to Kant, is going too far too fast. Such a procedure threatens to take us quickly beyond the reach of human reason and leaves faith in a rationally weak form. The seed of theism, the *ens realissimum*, must be nurtured and developed through the critical exploration of the transcendental boundaries of reason. The whole process is driven by the need to answer the most fundamental questions that perennially confront human beings. For those who still wonder about our place in this majestic and mysterious universe, the transcendental method, by Kant lights, does not get us to *knowledge* of God *per se*, but does allow for answers in the form of a critically satisfying and transcendentally rational *faith* in God. This rational religious faith, as Kant understands it, is not some idle form of theism tantamount to any standard form of deism, but faith in a 'living God' that is grounded in the moral, poetic and ontological dimensions of experience.

From each of these dimensions or perspectives we discover in faith something more about God than knowledge, in the Kantian sense, could ever teach us. From the moral standpoint, we learn that God is indeed the author of the moral law or, as Wolterstorff puts it, the author of rights and obligations. Without belief in God and immortality, morality becomes unstable and inevitably succumbs to the conflict between impartial and prudential reasoning. From the judicial standpoint, we learn that belief in God and immortality are closely associated with feelings of beauty and sublimity. Like these feelings, belief in God and immortality gives us a sense of purposiveness, which, on closer inspection, also leaves us perplexed by what this purposiveness actually entails. We have reflective positions on rational religious faith, but we do not necessarily have an ontologically robust set of religious convictions. From the ontological perspective, we learn that to understand Kant's philosophy is to transcend it. Ontological reason demands a verdict regarding the human place in relation to God and world – whether, along the lines of what Kant claims in *Religion*, we are corrupt moral beings, who may hope to become well-pleasing to God through the moral redemption of rational religious faith or the 'perspective-centre' of reality standing in faith between the depth of being (i.e., God) and the surface of being (i.e., world), or indeed something else altogether.

Be this as it may, there is a strong current in philosophy since Kant to understand Kant's position on faith, particularly the Christian faith, in strongly non-realist terms. Ludwig Feuerbach, for example, understood the turn to faith in Kant's thinking and yet pioneered a non-realist understanding of it – God is merely an imaginative projection of human hopes and ambitions onto the backdrop of the human mind. Whether this backdrop is thought of in transcendental terms or materialist terms makes no difference to Feuerbach. In either case, the question of ontology for Feuerbach is always and only, in Kant's terminology, a theoretical matter – truth is purely empirical, while faith is wishful human thinking in the face of nature and death. For Feuerbach, religious adherents of whatever shape

or size must recognize that reality is mediated through the senses and human understanding and therefore the world is always prior to any thoughts about God. When faith concerns matters which, by their very nature, are beyond or subsequent to the senses, the content of faith must be assumed to be ontologically tainted – it contains nothing more than anthropomorphisms or human projections.

Were this position thought to be a rendition of Kant's transcendental approach to metaphysics, it would surely be a misunderstanding.[1] Non-realism of the Feuerbachian variety is tantamount to the knowledge claim that God does not exist – the very position that Kant's critical philosophy, from beginning to end, is poised to prevent. The transcendental boundaries are not a receptacle for phantasms and mere opinions, but the home of synthetic *a priori* knowledge and the proper place for rational religious faith to emerge. In other words, projection (which might be loosely associated with, what Kant calls, 'pure cognition') by itself does not entail the falsity or unreality of belief. A good understanding of Kant's theoretical philosophy, as we saw in the opening chapters of this book, is not an ontologically robust one, where two worlds are said to coexist – one world (the noumenal realm) is downplayed or cancelled out because of ignorance or incoherence while the other world (the phenomenal realm) is played up as the realm of truth. If this rendition of Kant were accurate, transcendental philosophy where it concerns reason and religious faith would be a closed system and only some brand of logical positivism could win the day. This seems the inevitable result of beginning the task of ontology in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, before a full excavation of reason has taken place; from the vantage point of theoretical reason alone, theology is stagnant and still-born. If, however, Kant's philosophy is understood perspectivally – the noumenal and phenomenal are not two worlds but two ways of considering the same thing – and the ontological task as it pertains to freedom, immortality and God is delayed until reason unfolds fully into rational religious faith, then theology can find substantial grounds within the transcendental recesses of reason in which to grow and flourish.

For Kant, the imagination can be filled with ideas about God, world and humanity, each of which carries with it a definitive truth value in relation to the whole of reality. But the determination of these truth values, if they be determinable at all, requires critical evaluation and rational faith. To believe in the reality of something that cannot be immediately experienced is warranted only if that something is 'objectively valid', that is, only if it is coherent, could possibly obtain and possesses robust transcendental reasons in support of its adherence. Kant admits that, due to human weakness, it helps tremendously to think of these beliefs as being supported empirically or historically, but this is not, strictly speaking, required. Good transcendental reasons for faith must be, at their

[1] See Chris L. Firestone, 'The Illegitimate Son: Kant and Theological Non-Realism' in *God and the Enlightenment: Retrieving the Sacred in Modern Thought*, Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs (eds.) (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, forthcoming 2010).

core, moral, aesthetic or religious in nature. These distinct perspectives of reason, though closely related, correspond to distinct human experiences and provide us with reasons to believe in God; they excite each other and spur on reason in its quest to flesh out the nature of human beliefs about God, the world and ourselves. Such a procedure is viable because no final conclusions regarding the nature of ultimate reality can ever be made via reason alone. Nevertheless, as Kant explains, reason demands a verdict concerning God, the world and humanity and, in this sense, commends religious belief.

What this understanding of Kant's philosophy of religion does is free the human conscience to embrace, in the innermost reaches of the heart, the truth of God's transcendental self-disclosure while courageously withholding assent to the many superfluous revelations that present themselves to us from without but do not resonate with this truth. Reason cannot, and indeed must not, be the primary lens through which theologians read Scripture and determine the meaning of God's words. When God speaks, humans do well to listen and listen on God's terms rather than our own. Nevertheless, reason must always be on its transcendental guard, for the sake of the heart, so that our convictions, when they come to us, can be embraced in a critically satisfying manner and with the kind of passionate inwardness that conforms one's essence to God's and shapes one's eternal destiny.

The position outlined in this book not only constitutes a clear step forward, but also a mere beginning. Questions regarding specific Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity, the bodily resurrection of the dead and the importance of the Sacraments, linger and have not been fully specified in this work. What we have been able to specify are the resources within Kant's philosophy that rationally ground and promote religious faith – namely, the cognition of God as the *ens realissimum*, the moral, poetic and religious perspectives for critically developing this seed of cognition into rational religious faith and the conflict of the faculties as the *modus operandi* which spurs the process forward. Recent research suggests that this is precisely what Kant is doing in *Religion* and what he is challenging theologians to do in response to his critical philosophy. Surely the jury is still out on whether or not Kantian theology can ever satisfy Christian orthodoxy, but, more than ever before, theologically-minded readers of Kant are becoming aware of the new possibilities and the immense prospects that are only now beginning to come to light.

Appendix A
The Category of the 'Holy' in Rudolf Otto[1]

By Paul Tillich
Translated by Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs

The tenth edition of Rudolf Otto's *The Holy* has recently appeared. Actually, this announcement must suffice concerning Otto's book. One does not need to speak of it because it has spoken for itself; it is, according to the firm conviction of this reviewer, the breakthrough book in the field of philosophy of religion, but not only a breakthrough, it has also been the guide for philosophy of religion to this day. For those who, like the reviewer, are among the first working in the area, and those whose ideas have been influenced by this impression, it is a duty to give thanks and testify to the book's beauty and power.

This work was a breakthrough indeed. Not only the church-related, but also the philosophical-idealist consciousness of the last decades had carried with it rational congealment and encumbrance, but now this book has stirred the ancient fire of the living and those layers of hardened earth[2] have started to tremble and to crack. The effect of these vibrations are everywhere in the literature on philosophy of religion. Nobody who has written on these things since then could have or may have avoided the impression that here new ways become visible. The freeing and elevating effect of Otto's 'Divination of the Nouminous' is penetrating, in many places, all the way through to the sphere of personal devoutness.

But the purpose of these lines is not to say all this, but to give thanks. The question that should be asked, then, is at which points of Otto's book must we take up this great work, and how should we build on Otto's achievement.

Otto gave his book the subtitle, *On the Non-Rational in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*. Now, it seems to me as if the first half of this title is realized in a nearly complete way, while, in the second half, a series of unsolved problems remains, which requires us to do further work. One cannot entirely get rid of the impression that what Otto calls the rational joins to the non-rational as

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[1] Paul Tillich's 'Die Kategorie des „Heiligen" bei Rudolf Otto' originally appeared in *Theologische Blätter* (vol. 2, 1923, Spalten 11–12). It can also be found in GW XII, *Begegnungen: Paul Tillich über sich und andere* (ed.) Renate Albrecht, (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1971), pp. 184–186. The current translation is based solely on the original document in *Theologische Blätter*. See Figure A, page 178, for image of original document.

[2] *Verhärtung*.

an exterior. Otto himself feels this and designates it as a non-rationality that clings to the religious, but it does not exhibit the same natural relationship[3] that exists between the mystery and the rational form.

This is grounded initially in his method. Otto points clearly to the power, but also to the boundary of phenomenology. It is impossible along the phenomenological way to penetrate into the sphere of values.[4] For this, you need a critical element, in the Kantian sense. The methodological ideal is not one of pure-intuition, but a method of critical-intuition. Otto himself heads in this direction when he speaks of the religious disposition and makes the Holy into an *a priori* category. A religious *a priori*, however, cannot suddenly stand beside the rest of the *a prioris*,[5] not even if its content is the 'wholly other'. It must be shown in which natural relation[6] this 'wholly other' stands to the rest of the forms of consciousness. For if it stood nowhere, or even only in an additional relation, then the unity of consciousness would burst, and that which experienced the Holy would not be 'we'.

Now, one concept is given, however, that brings to expression the original, natural relationship of the Holy and the other values, namely, the concept of the unconditional. It is not proper that Otto declares this concept to be only quantitatively distinct from the conditioned; rather, it contains in itself the entire force of the qualitatively 'other', the 'unfamiliar'. On the contrary, the concept of the 'wholly other' is not enough to characterize the Holy, for it does not concern just any 'other' but such a one, which, for me, is so important that I cannot avoid it under any circumstances, i.e. the unconditioned one. Thus, the concept of the unconditioned is not, as Otto states, a pattern of rationalization, but an element[7] of the Holy itself. As soon as this is recognized, the connection between the natural relationship and the sphere of rational values will become evident. The unconditioned is not only *a posteriori* by schematization, but also *a priori* by natural relationship, which is the foundational element of all value consciousness,[8] of all spirit reality.[9] The Holy is, in terms of being, not only the 'mystery of the Being',[10] but also the 'mystery of the Light', because Being comes to itself in the Light. The unconditioned substance and the unconditioned form essentially belong together.

This is above all important for one's personal position to the Holy. If the Holy is essentially only the wholly 'other', in the sense of the *Mysterium tremendum*

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3 *Wesensbeziehung*.

4 *Geltungsphäre*.

5 We have here preserved Tillich's style in rendering the plural of '*a priori*' as '*a prioris*'. Properly declined, however, this would be *'a prioribus*'.

6 *Wesensverhältnis*.

7 *Wesenselement*.

8 *Wertbewußtseins*.

9 *Geistwirklichkeit*.

10 *Grundes*.

et fascinosum,[11] then an aesthetic attitude toward him is possible, by which it is put into the service of the subjective arousal of one's feelings. Only if its natural understanding[12] already penetrates beneath the unconditioned-ness of values is the danger of the aestheticizing mystic overcome.

Furthermore, a new view of the relationship between religion and culture follows from the designation of the Holy as the unconditioned. It is denied that any one cultural appearance[13] stands *par excellence* outside the sphere of the Holy, for as soon as it is a cultural appearance, i.e., spiritually formed, she carries in herself the recognition of the Holy as unconditioned value; and even if the rational system of form forgets the ecstatic element that is stuck in the unconditioned-ness of value, in truth all rational life proceeds from it. And vice versa, the Holy cannot be grasped differently in any moment other than in forms that have the value consciousness[14] in them. Man is human, not only through religious 'thought', but also through the 'body' of the cultural form, and he is neither without the other. However, this remains indisputable: In the narrow sense, the 'religious' is, to a degree, a consciousness, as the mystery presses against the barriers of form and again and again breaks through them and compels them to manifest themselves in a higher ecstatic form. For the form itself is not the Holy, but the unconditioned. The unconditioned pours itself out in the form, while at the same time bursting every form that it has given itself. The rational forms are not only rational, but in each of them (and, all the more, the further they are from formalism) the mystery of 'Being', on which all reality[15] rests, is contained. Every form is, on the one hand, superficial and, on the other hand, an expression of Being, from which it grows and in which it sinks and loses itself. This accounts for every individual form, as for the totality of every form.

From this view, a uniform analysis of every religious and cultural form of expression arises by which the fateful arrangement of religion and culture, of the non-rational and the rational, of the holy and the profane vanishes; and the Holy, as the unconditioned, becomes the foundation and, at the same time, the consuming fire of all culture. Only in such a future-oriented divination would the breakthrough, which Otto's analysis of the Holy signifies, come to its full effect.

Paul Tillich
Berlin, Friedenau

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[11] This same title appears in Tillich's 'Thinkers of Today: Rudolf Otto – Philosopher of Religion,' translated in this same volume.

[12] *Wesenserfassung*.

[13] *Kulturerscheinung*.

[14] *Geltungsbewußtsein*.

[15] *alles Wirkliche*.

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Appendix B
Thinkers of Today
Rudolf Otto—Philosopher of Religion[1]

By Paul Tillich
Translated by Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs

It was an unforgettable event for me, when, in the fall of 1917, Rudolf Otto's book on 'The Holy'—a marvelous early draft, sent from a dear woman who had died early—came to me at the camp 'Rote Erde'[2] at the 'Hochberg' in Champagne.[3] I was taken aback for a moment by several oddities in the writing style and the completely unknown publisher. But then an amazement began, an internal thrill, a passionate approval, in a way one is no longer used to with theological books. One recalls that, as a student, one had heard friends praise the great book of the author on 'naturalistic and religious worldviews'. But as followers of Fichte and Hegel, one was far away from such problems. The first studies of Kant and Fichte in the last year of Gymnasium left only a smile remaining for the philosophical naiveté of Haeckel's world-mysteries.[4] An argument with the problem-sphere[5] seemed superfluous. How greatly it corresponded with the reality of the spirit of the situation showed in the great success of the book appearing in 1904, which experienced a second edition in 1909. And this success was justified. Yet, a reviewer wrote in a major newspaper that one can obtain the best insight into the state of Darwinian problems from a theologian, namely, from Rudolf Otto;

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[1] This article, originally titled 'Denker der Zeit: Der Religionsphilosoph Rudolf Otto', was first published in *Vossische Zeitung*, 1925, Nr. 308. It can now be found in GW XII, *Begegnungen: Paul Tillich über sich und andere*, (ed.) Renate Albrecht, (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1971), pp. 179–183. The current translation is based solely on the original version in *Vossische Zeitung*, although comparison with GW is made throughout. See Figure B, page 179, for image of original document.

[2] Literally: 'Red Earth.'

[3] Champagne is, of course, a region in northeastern France, but as far as the translators have been able to find, there is no town there with the name 'Hochberg', translated literally would be: 'a high mountain'. Whether Tillich is referring to a particular place or merely an unnamed high mountain is ambiguous.

[4] *Häckels Welträtseln*. This is most likely a reference to Ernst Haeckel (cf. GW: 179, which renders *Häckels* as *Haeckels*).

[5] *Problemsphäre*.

and, last fall, during his trip to America, the author had the satisfaction of finding his book being used in various colleges as an imported German workbook. Here, already a trend became apparent, which has become of crucial importance for the whole of Otto's thinking: the sense for the originality of the religious sphere and its forms of thought and outlook.

In this line also lies the publication of Schleiermacher's *Speeches on Religion*, which took place in 1899[6] and had such success that a third edition would be necessary by 1900.[7] Otto had excluded a protest against the rationalization and moralization of religion, which here is raised so emphatically by Schleiermacher, until his last publications, where it trickled through with ever-increasing power. No rejection of the scientific[8] work of his time was thereby connected, which showed in his 1902 book on *The Life and Work of Jesus according to Historical-Critical Method*. It would be published four times by 1905; however, it had no essential effect on the development of critical New Testament research. Otto's significance does not lie in the area of historical detail-work, about which he often expresses the suspicion that it misses the life that is to be grasped intuitively, and therefore, in spite of every correct, isolated observation, it becomes, in the end, unsubstantial.

The important role that mysticism was to play in Otto's life made itself apparent[9] in his first work, *The View of the Holy Spirit in Luther*. For in this subject lies the problem of if and how there are mystical elements present in the origins of Protestantism and therefore the longstanding,[10] widespread, and anti-mystical interpretation of Luther and of Protestantism, which is again being forcefully asserted, is wrong.

One event that signified a decisive advancement for Otto was his becoming acquainted with the philosophy of the Kantian, Fries.[11] Leonhard Nelson in Göttingen rediscovered the [Kantian] contemporaries of the great idealist philosophers (Otto was a visiting lecturer in Göttingen since 1899). The rediscovery of these philosophers, who for some time had been nearly forgotten, proved itself to be successful in very contradictory directions. The one view, represented by Nelson and his students, used Fries' doctrine of internal certainty, in order to help rationalism, unencumbered by a theory of knowledge, to victory in the sciences and more still in ethics and politics. The intuitive element, which Fries more so than Kant would draw out, would be used to capture the immediate and unshakeable certainty of the principles of reason.[12] If this is granted, then only the principles of

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6 This date is miscited in the original MS as 1899; Schleiermacher's *Speeches* were published in 1799. GW retains this error (see GW: 180).

7 The third edition of Schleiermacher's *Speeches* was published in 1821.

8 *wissenschaftlichen*.

9 *kündigt sich*.

10 *seit langer Zeit*.

11 Jakob Friedrich Fries.

12 *Vernunftprinzipien*.

reason have a say (hence,[13] the tribute which is here paid to Nelson). Yet, the effect of Fries' doctrine of intuition[14] was completely different on Otto. In his book *The Philosophy of Religion of Kant and Fries*, he indicates alignment with Fries and these efforts are supported by the metaphysic of the later Friesian position of Apelt. The intuition, by which Nelson had delivered the basis for a complete rationalism, led to an irrational founding in philosophy of religion in Otto; and, while Nelson's rationalism in the end lost itself in abstraction, Otto's irrationalism would be fertile soil for the reception of an abundance of living, historical-religious views.

Otto did not win them primarily by study of historical-religious literature, but through personal experience from several trips, which led him to the realms of Greco–Russian and also Muslim piety, and found their climax in a journey to India. (Still, after the war came a trip to America as a supplement.) An unusual linguistic talent, which enabled him to control, not only almost every western European language, but to also feel at home in Sanskrit and to read Russian, made exceptional penetration into the spirit of Religion easier for him. Fruit of this linguistic knowledge was *Texts of the Indian Divine Mystic*, a part of *Siddanta of Ramanuja* (J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen) that appeared later,[15] and above all *Vishnu-Narajanah* (Diederichs, Jena),[16] both with excellent introductions. Thereby was the groundwork given for his main work *The Holy* (Irewendt and Granier, Breslau), as well as the supplement, *Essays concerning the Numinous* (Perthes, Gotha). This book justifies Otto's actual purpose for the history of Protestant theology. At the same time, it establishes his international reputation that had drawn numerous foreigners, particularly East-Asians, to his lectern in Marburg.

The Holy, according to Otto, is to determine all reality, even when compared with the moral, as the 'wholly other'. A consciousness that something plainly strange, non-deducible,[17] unclassifiable[18] is meant, which accompanies every religious act. Only with negative expressions can one speak thereof, in holy ancient words[19] must one stammer thereof. And yet, it is nothing negative; rather, it is the most positive,[20] the *Numinous* (from the Latin *numen* = divinity), which is beheld in religion and becomes the object of 'divination'. Which criteria are now that which signify the *Numinous*? Otto emphasizes three: The *Numinous* is first the *mysterium*,[21] veiled

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13 *ogl*.

14 *Intuitionslehre*.

15 Otto's *Texte zur indischen Gottesmystik* is part 3 of *Siddhānta des Rāmānuja* (Jena: Diederichs, 1917).

16 *Vischnu-Nārāyana. Texte zur indischen Gottesmystik* (Jena: Diederichs, 1917).

17 *Unableitbares*.

18 *Nichteinzuordnendes*.

19 *Urworten*.

20 *Allerpositivste*.

21 Note that *Mysterium* is 'mystery' in both Latin and German. Unlike the other Latin terms Tillich draws from Otto, however, this instance of *Mysterium* is not in quotes in the original MS, thus making it appear that the word is German. However, this is certainly an

by nature and inevitably remains veiled, and through no conceptual work[22] can this character be lost. Secondly, it is the *tremendum*—that which turns out to one's terror and horror, wherever it appears, the eerie, the dreadful, the wrath or the consuming fire before which one passes away. And it is thirdly the *fascinosum*,[23] the attractive, that which causes bliss, that which one desires to be at one with, and without which one remains in chaos and emptiness. *Mysterium tremendum et fascinosum*, this is the Holy, the *Numinous*. As such, it proves itself in the whole of religious history, including Christianity and Protestantism; it is disclosed as such in numerous, extreme examples of myth and dogma, in religious worship[24] and liturgy, in the form of the Indian Durga, as in Luther's merciful God, in the ecstasy drink[25] of Brahman, as in the silent service of the Quaker. Thereby the object of religion is to prove and disprove, but also to extract the moral will and work. It is there or it is not there; it breaks through or it does not break through, but it can neither be cognized nor forced to act. It is a primal condition,[26] which lies beyond the rational sphere. And yet, it cannot remain without establishing a relationship to it. This relationship Otto interprets in such a way that it must necessarily establish the rational concepts and deeds in science and breakthroughs by the system of rationality in the philosophy of religion. The task of a new version of morality is to distribute 'ideograms' to stand for The Holy.[27] By ideograms, he understands terms that mean something other than what they immediately express, which are also able to be a clue from the wholly-other, from the Numinous. Now it does happen in the course of religious history that these terms and deeds lose more and more of their original irrationality, which the myth is schematized,[28] the religious worship is ethicized.[29] This development is in itself essential and has reached its climax in Christianity. At the same time, however, they hold in themselves the danger that the numinous substratum and sense of all these terms and deeds may

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error, as Otto insists that all three terms, *Mysterium*, *Tremendum*, and *Fascinosum*, must be rendered in Latin, so as to avoid attachment to any particular living language. See Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 25–26. Note that this reading accords with GW, which italicizes *Mysterium*, despite the lack of quotation marks in the original MS. See GW: 181.

22 *Begriffsarbeit*.

23 Latin: *fascino* = to bewitch; *sum* = be, exist

24 *Kultus*.

25 *Rauschtrank*.

26 *Urgegebenheit*.

27 This and the previous sentence are corrupt in GW. Sixteen words are missing from the text, which results in these two sentences being combined into one sentence. Between *Wissenschaft* and *Sittlichkeit*, the following is missing: *und Durchbruchstellen durch das System der Vernunft, an denen die Religionsphilosophie notwendig einsetzen muß. Eine Neuausgabe*.

28 *logisiert*.

29 *ethisiert*.

get lost from them and be taken no more as ideograms but as actual. Thereby they become pulled into the rational sphere and lose their genuine religious sense, their life—and persuasiveness. Then a new breakthrough of the numinous ground is necessary.

With this last remark, the intellectual[30] significance of Otto's thoughts is now touched on. They have become for theology a complete breakthrough of the wholly-other. They have saved the work on theology and philosophy of religion from the difficulties of the rational problem, from the corruption of logic and ethics. They have created a new foundation on which to build, and on which many of Otto's rivals also build, with or without his knowledge. But who, like the author of these lines, has experienced the liberation that the book on The Holy has given him; he too can go there, where he believes he must proceed to, like for example in the determination of the relationship of the rational and irrational, of otherworldliness and this-worldliness of the Numinous, in order to not forget the first breakthrough.—One has, in good intent, designated Otto's book a religious-psychological analysis. From nothing is it further removed. It is a look at the Being of The Holy in the best spirit of historically fertile phenomenology.

Herewith may one impression of Otto's scholarly significance be given. If our execution leads those, who do not know him yet, to the decision to at least reach for his main work (which is relatively short and exquisitely written), then our brief suggestions have not been useless. However, Otto's significance is not thereby exhausted. Anyone who knows him and is thankful for his acquaintance—and that includes many people from all over the world—may talk of his personality, the unique blend of the dry humor of the Hannoverian with the depth and seriousness of the mystical power of display and experience.

He has also employed his general candor and receptiveness in the practical arena. As a politician, he belonged to the Prussian State from 1913–1918 in the Democratic Party. The problems of socialism and the religious influence on the workers' movement occupied him deeply. The 'religious human alliance', which is meant to facilitate a mutual understanding of the larger cultural religions based on personal relationships, is his work. Out of devotion to the capturing of the Numinous, he devoted work to practical and theoretical Protestant religious reform.—But what is decisive and makes him one of the most important figures in contemporary theology, is his book on The Holy; for that an entire generation owes him thanks.

Paul Tillich, Professor at the University of Marburg

[30] *geistesgeschichtliche*.

Die Kategorie des „Heiligen" bei Rudolf Otto.

Vor kurzem ist die zehnte Auflage von Rudolf Otto „Das Heilige" erschienen. An und für sich müßte einem Buch wie dem Otto'schen gegenüber diese Mitteilung genügen. Man braucht nicht davon zu sprechen; denn es hat für sich selber gesprochen; es ist nach des Rezensenten fester Ueberzeugung das Buch des Durchbruchs auf religionsphilosophischem Gebiet und nicht nur des Durchbruchs, sondern auch der Führung bis auf den heutigen Tag. Wer, wie der Rezensent, im Felde den ersten machtvollen Eindruck der Otto'schen Analyse des Heiligen erlebt hat, wer wie er, in seinen eigenen Konzeptionen dauernd mitbestimmt ist durch diesen Eindruck, für den ist es zunächst einmal eine Dankespflicht, von der Schönheit und Kraft des Buches zu zeugen.

Ein Durchbruch war es in der Tat, als unter all den rationalen Erstarrungen und Belastungen, die nicht nur das kirchliche, sondern auch das philosophisch-idealistische Bewußtsein der letzten Jahrzehnte mit sich trug, das Urfeuer des Lebendigen sich regte und jene Schichten der Verhärtung zu zittern und zu zerreißen begannen. Die Wirkung dieser Erschütterungen zeigt sich allenthalben in der religions-philosophischen Literatur. Niemand, der über diese Dinge seitdem geschrieben hat, konnte und durfte sich dem Eindruck entziehen, daß hier neue Wege sichtbar wurden; und bis in die Sphäre der persönlichen Frömmigkeit hinein drangen an vielen Stellen die befreienden und erhebenden Wirkungen der Otto'schen „Divination des Numinösen".

Aber nicht dieses alles zu sagen, diesen Dank abzustatten ist der Zweck dieser Zeilen. Vielmehr soll die Frage gestellt werden, an welchem Punkte des Otto'schen Buches die Weiterarbeit anknüpfen muß, wie wir auf der Otto'schen Leistung aufzubauen haben.

Otto gibt seinem Buch den Untertitel „Ueber das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen". Es scheint mir nun, als ob die erste Hälfte dieser Ueberschrift in fast vollkommener Weise verwirklicht ist, während bei der zweiten eine Reihe ungelöster Probleme bleiben, die zur Weiterarbeit zwingen. Man kommt nicht ganz von dem Eindruck los, als ob das, was Otto das Rationale nennt, zu dem Irrationalen als ein Aeußerliches hinzukommt. Otto selbst fühlt das und betrachtet es als eine Irrationalität, die dem Religiösen anhaftet, aber er weist nicht die Wesensbeziehung auf, die zwischen dem Mysterium und der rationalen Form besteht.

Das ist zunächst in seiner Methode begründet. Otto zeigt deutlich die Kraft, aber auch die Grenze der Phänomenologie. Es ist nämlich nicht möglich, auf phänomenologischem Wege in die Geltungssphäre einzudringen. Hierfür kann ein kritisches Element im Kantischen Sinne nicht entbehrt werden. Nicht eine reinintuitive, sondern eine kritisch-intuitive Methode ist das methodische Ideal. Otto selbst geht ja in dieser Richtung, wenn er von der religiösen Disposition spricht und das Heilige zu einer Kategorie a priori macht. Ein religiöses Apriori aber kann nicht unvermittelt neben den übrigen Aprioris stehen, auch dann nicht, wenn sein Inhalt das „ganz Andere" ist. Es muß gezeigt werden, in welchem Wesensverhältnis dieses „ganz Andere" zu den übrigen Formen des Bewußtseins steht. Denn stände es in keinem, oder auch nur in einem nachträglichen Verhältnis, so wäre die Einheit des Bewußtseins zersprengt, und nicht „wir" wären es, die das Heilige erlebten.

Es gibt nun aber einen Begriff, der diese ursprüngliche Wesensbeziehung vom Heiligen und den sonstigen Werten zum Ausdruck bringt, den Begriff des Unbedingten. Es ist nicht richtig, wenn Otto meint, daß dieser Begriff sich bloß quantitativ von dem des Bedingten unterscheidet, vielmehr enthält er die ganze Gewalt des qualitativ „Anderen", „Fremden" in sich. Umgekehrt ist der Begriff des „ganz Anderen" nicht ausreichend zur Charakterisierung des Heiligen, da es sich ja nicht um ein beliebiges Anderes handelt, sondern um ein solches, das für mich von entscheidender Bedeutung ist, dem ich mich unter keinen Umständen entziehen kann, d. h. eben: ein Unbedingtes. Der Begriff des Unbedingten ist also nicht, wie Otto meint, ein Schema der Rationalisierung, sondern ein Wesenselement des Heiligen selber. Sobald das erkannt ist, ergibt sich auch die Wesensbeziehung zu der Sphäre der rationalen Werte. Das Unbedingte ist nicht nur a posteriori durch eine Schematisierung, sondern a priori durch Wesensbeziehung das fundierende Element alles Wertbewußtseins, aller Geistwirklichkeit. Das Heilige ist wesensmäßig nicht nur das „Mysterium des Grundes", sondern auch das „Mysterium des Lichtes", denn der Grund kommt im Licht zu sich selbst. Das Unbedingte des Gehaltes und das Unbedingte der Form gehören wesenhaft zusammen.

Das ist vor allem wichtig für die persönliche Stellung zum Heiligen. Ist das Heilige wesenhaft nur das ganz Andere im Sinn des „Mysterium tremendum et fascinosum", so ist eine ästhetische Haltung ihm gegenüber möglich, durch die es in den Dienst der subjektiven Gefühlsbewegtheit gestellt wird. Nur wenn schon seine Wesenserfassung unter der Unbedingtheit des Geltens steht, ist die Gefahr der ästhetisierenden Mystik überwunden.

Ferner folgt aus der Bestimmung des Heiligen als des Unbedingten eine neue Auffassung des Verhältnisses von Religion und Kultur. Es wird bestritten, daß irgend eine Kulturerscheinung schlechthin außerhalb der heiligen Sphäre steht, denn sobald es eine Kulturerscheinung, d. h. geistig geformt ist, trägt sie in sich die Anerkennung des Heiligen als unbedingt Geltendem. Und mag ein rationales Formsystem noch so sehr das ekstatische Element vergessen, das in der Unbedingtheit des Geltens steckt, in Wahrheit lebt alle Ratio doch davon. Und umgekehrt kann das Heilige in keinem Augenblick anders gefaßt werden als in Formen, die das Geltungsbewußtsein in sich tragen. Mag die Weltauffassung der Primitiven vom Standpunkt unserer technischen Rationalisierung aus noch so „roh" erscheinen, sie ist Weltanschauung und ist Lebensform, und trägt in jedem religiösen Akt das gesamte kulturelle Geltungsbewußtsein in sich. Denn der Mensch ist Mensch, nicht nur durch den „Kopf" des Religiösen, sondern auch durch den „Leib" der Kultur-Form, und er ist eins nicht ohne das Andere. Das aber bleibt unzweifelhaft: Im engeren Sinne „religiös" ist ein Bewußtsein in dem Maße, als das Mysterium an die Schranken der Form stößt und sie wieder und wieder durchstößt und sie zwingt, sich in einer höheren ekstatischeren Form zu verwirklichen. Denn nicht die Form als solche ist das Heilige, sondern das Unbedingte, das sich in die Form ergießt und zugleich jede Form sprengt, die es sich gegeben hat. Die rationalen Formen sind eben nicht nur rational, sondern in jeder von ihnen (und umsomehr, je weiter sie vom Formalismus entfernt sind) ist das Mysterium des „Grundes" enthalten, auf dem alles Wirkliche ruht. Jede Form ist einerseits Oberfläche und andererseits Ausdruck des Grundes, aus dem sie hervorwächst und in dem sie versinkt. Das gilt für jede einzelne Form, wie für die Totalität aller Formen.

Aus solcher Auffassung kann eine einheitliche Analyse sämtlicher religiöser und kultureller Ausdrucksformen hervorgehen, durch welche die verhängnisvolle Nebenordnung von Religion und Kultur, von Irrationalem und Rationalem, von Heiligem und Profanem aufgehoben ist, und das Heilige als das Unbedingte zu dem tragenden und zugleich verzehrenden Feuer aller Kultur wird. Erst in einer solchen zukunftsgerichteten Divination würde der Durchbruch, den Ottos Analyse des Heiligen bedeutet, zu voller Auswirkung kommen.

Berlin-Friedenau. Paul Tillich.

Figure A Tillich's 'Die Kategorie des "Heiligen" bei Rudolf Otto'

Denker der Zeit.

Der Religionsphilosoph Rudolf Otto.

Es war ein unvergeßliches Ereignis für mich, als im Herbste 1917 — gesandt von der Hand einer lieben Frühvollendeten — das Buch von Rudolf Otto über „Das Heilige" im Lager „Rote Erde" am Hochberg in der Champagne bei mir eintraf. Einige Merkwürdigkeiten der Schreibart, ein völlig unbekannter Verlag machten einen Augenblick stutzig. Dann aber begann ein Staunen, ein inneres Gepacktsein, eine leidenschaftliche Zustimmung, wie man sie bei theologischen Büchern nicht mehr gewohnt war. Man erinnerte sich, daß man als Student von Freunden das erste große Buch des Verfassers über „Naturalistische und religiöse Weltansicht" hatte rühmen hören. Aber man selbst war als Anhänger von Fichte und Hegel weit entfernt von solchen Problemen. Die ersten Kant- und Fichte-Studien in der Prima ließen für die philosophische Naivität von Häckels Welträtseln nur ein Lächeln übrig. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit dieser Problemsphäre erschien überflüssig. Wie sehr sie in Wirklichkeit der allgemeinen Geisteslage entsprach, zeigte der große Erfolg des 1904 erschienenen Buches, das 1909 eine zweite Auflage erlebte. Und dieser Erfolg war begründet. Schrieb doch der Rezensent einer großen Zeitung, daß man die beste Einsicht in den Stand der darwinistischen Probleme bei — einem Theologen gewinnen könne, eben bei Rudolf Otto; und im letzten Herbst hatte der Verfasser die Genugtuung, bei seiner Amerikareise in verschiedenen Colleges sein Buch als eingeführtes deutsches Uebungsbuch wiederzufinden. Schon hier machte sich ein Zug bemerkbar, der für das ganze Ottosche Denken von entscheidender Bedeutung geworden ist: der Sinn für die Originalität der religiösen Sphäre und ihrer Denk- und Anschauungsformen.

In dieser Linie liegt auch die Herausgabe von Schleiermachers „Reden über die Religion", die 1899 geschah und den Erfolg hatte, daß 1920 eine dritte Auflage nötig wurde. Den Protest gegen die Rationalisierung und Moralisierung des Religiösen, den Schleiermacher hier so nachdrücklich erhebt, hat Otto aufgenommen und bis zu seinen letzten Veröffentlichungen mit wachsender Kraft durchgeführt. Daß damit keine Ablehnung der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit verbunden war, zeigte sein Buch über „Leben und Wirken Jesu nach historisch-kritischer Auffassung", 1902. Es wurde bis 1905 viermal aufgelegt, hat aber auf die Entwicklung der kritisch-neutestamentlichen Forschung keine wesentliche Wirkung gehabt. Ottos Bedeutung liegt nicht auf dem Gebiet der historischen Kleinarbeit, der gegenüber er oft den Verdacht aussprach, daß sie an dem Intuitiv zu erfassenden Leben vorbeigehe und dadurch trotz aller richtigen Einzelbeobachtungen schließlich unwirklich werde.

Die wichtige Rolle, die die Mystik in Ottos Leben und Arbeiten spielen sollte, kündigt sich in seiner Erstlingsarbeit über „Die Anschauung vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther" an. Denn in diesem Thema liegt das Problem, ob und wie in den Ursprüngen des Protestantismus mystische Elemente vorhanden sind und darum die seit langer Zeit übliche und gegenwärtig wieder mächtig vordringende antimystische Deutung Luthers und des Protestantismus im Unrecht ist.

Einen entscheidenden Fortschritt bedeutete für Otto sein Bekanntwerden mit der Philosophie des Kantianers Fries. Die Wiederentdeckung dieses lange Zeit fast vergessenen Zeitgenossen der großen Idealistischen Philosophen durch Leonhard Nelson in Göttingen — Otto war seit 1899 Göttinger Privatdozent — erwies sich in sehr widersprechenden Richtungen als erfolgreich. Die eine Auffassung, vertreten durch Nelson und seine Schüler, benutzte Fries' Lehre von der inneren Gewißheit, um einem durch Erkenntnistheorie unbelasteten Rationalismus in der Wissenschaft und mehr noch in Ethik und Politik zum Siege zu verhelfen. Das intuitive Element, das Fries über Kant hinausführt, wird zur Erfassung der unmittelbaren und unerschütterlichen Gewißheit der Vernunftprinzipien verwendet. Ist diese sicher gestellt, so haben die Vernunftprinzipien allein das Wort (vgl. die Würdigung Nelsons, die hier gegeben wurde). Ganz anders war die Wirkung der Friesschen Intuitionslehre auf Otto. In seinem Buche „Die Kant-Friesche Religionsphilosophie" zeigte er im Anschluß an Fries die der Metaphysik des alten Friesianers Apelt unterschobene Verstiegenheiten. Die Intuition, die bei Nelson die Grundlage eines vollendeten Rationalismus abgegeben hatte, führte bei Otto zu einer irrationalistischen Neubegründung der Religionsphilosophie; und während Nelsons Rationalismus sich schließlich im Abstrakten verlor, wurde Ottos Irrationalismus zum fruchtbaren Boden für die Aufnahme einer Fülle lebendiger religionsgeschichtlicher Anschauungen.

Otto gewann sie nicht in erster Linie durch Studium der religionsgeschichtlichen Literatur, sondern durch persönliche Anschauung auf mehreren Reisen, die ihn ebenso in den Bereich der griechisch-russischen wie der mohammedanischen Frömmigkeit führten und in einer Indienfahrt ihren Höhepunkt fanden. (Nach dem Kriege kam eine Amerikareise als Ergänzung hinzu.) Eine außergewöhnliche Sprachbegabung, die es ihm ermöglicht, nicht nur fast alle westeuropäischen Sprachen zu beherrschen, sondern auch im Sanskrit zu Hause zu sein, Russisch zu lesen usw., erleichterte ihm das Eindringen in den Geist der Religionen, außerordentlich. Eine Frucht dieser Sprachkenntnisse sind die zum Teil später erschienenen „Texte zur indischen Gottesmystik": „Siddanta des Ramanuja" (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen) und vor allem „Vischnu-Narajana" (Diederichs, Jena) mit vorzüglichen Einleitungen. Damit waren die Grundlagen gegeben für sein Hauptwerk „Das Heilige" (Erwendt u. Granier, Breslau), dazu als Ergänzung „Aufsätze, das Numinose betreffend" (Perthes, Gotha). Dieses Buch begründet die eigentliche Bedeutung Ottos für die Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie. Es begründete zugleich seinen Weltruf, der zahlreiche Ausländer, namentlich Ostasiaten, unter sein Marburger Katheder gezogen hat.

Das Heilige ist nach Otto aller Wirklichkeit, auch dem Sittlichen gegenüber, als das „Ganz Andere" zu bestimmen. Ein Bewußtsein, daß etwas schlechthin Fremdes, Unbekleidbares, Nichteinzuordnendes gemeint ist, begleitet jeden religiösen Akt. Nur mit negativen Ausdrücken kann man davon reden, in heiligen Urworten muß man davon stammeln. Und doch ist es nichts Negatives, vielmehr das Allerpositivste, das „Numinose" (von dem lateinischen numen = Gottheit), was in der Religion angeschaut und zum Gegenstand der „Divination" wird. Welches sind nun die Merkmale, die das Numinose kennzeichnen? Otto hebt ein Dreifaches hervor: Das Numinose ist erstens das Mysterium, das Geheimnis, das wesensmäßig und notwendig Geheimnis bleibt und durch keine Begriffsarbeit diesen [illegible] verlieren kann. Zweitens ist es das „Tremendum", [illegible] vor dem man in Schrecken und Grauen gerät, wo immer es auftritt, das Unheimliche, das Furchtbare, der Zorn oder das verzehrende Feuer, vor dem man vergeht. Und es ist drittens das „Fascinosum", das Anziehende, Beseligende, das, mit dem man sich einen möchte, und ohne das man in Unruhe und Leere bleibt. „Mysterium tremendum et fascinosum", das ist das Heilige, das Numinose. Als solches erweist es sich in der gesamten Religionsgeschichte einschließlich Christentum und Protestantismus, als solches wird es aufgezeigt an zahlreichen, höchst anschaulichen Beispielen in Mythos und Dogma, in Kultus und Liturgie, in der Gestalt der indischen Durga wie in Luthers gnädigem Gott, in dem Rauschtrank der Brahmanen wie in dem schweigenden Dienst der Quäker. Damit ist der Gegenstand der Religion dem Beweisen und Widerlegen, aber auch dem sittlichen Wollen und Arbeiten entzogen. Er ist da oder er ist nicht da; er bricht durch oder er bricht nicht durch, aber er kann weder erkennend noch handelnd erzwungen werden. Er ist eine Urgegebenheit, die jenseits der rationalen Sphäre liegt. Und doch kann er nicht ohne Beziehung zu ihr bleiben. Diese Beziehung deutet Otto so, daß er den rationalen Begriffen und Handlungen im Wissenschaft und Durchbruchstellen durch das System der Vernunft, an denen die Religionsphilosophie notwendig einsetzen muß. Eine Neuausgabe Sittlichkeit die Aufgabe zuerteilt, „Idiogramme" für das Heilige zu sein. Unter Idiogrammen versteht er Begriffe, die etwas anderes meinen, als sie unmittelbar ausdrücken, die also geeignet sind, ein Hinweis auf das Ganz-Andere, auf das Numinose, zu sein. Nun geschieht es im Ablauf der Religionsgeschichte, daß diese Begriffe und Handlungen immer mehr ihre ursprüngliche Irrationalität verlieren, daß der Mythos logisiert, der Kultus

Figure B ‘Denker der Zeit: Der Religionsphilosoph Rudolf Otto’

echiffiert wird. Diese Entwicklung ist an sich notwendig und hat im Christentum ihren Höhepunkt erreicht. Zugleich aber liegt sie die Gefahr in sich, daß der numinose Untergrund und Sinn all dieser Begriffe und Handlungen verloren geht und sie nicht mehr als Idolgramme, sondern eigentlich genommen werden. Dadurch werden sie in die rationale Sphäre hereingezogen und verlieren mit ihrem echten religiösen Sinn ihre Lebens- und Ueberzeugungskraft. Dann ist ein neues Aufbrechen des numinosen Grundes notwendig.

Mit diesen letzten Bemerkungen ist nun die geistesgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Ottoschen Gedanken selbst berührt. Sie sind für die Theologie ein solches Durchbrechen des Ganz-Anderen geworden. Sie haben die theologische und religionsphilosophische Arbeit aus den Schlingen der rationalen Probleme, aus dem Verfall an Logik und Ethik gerettet. Sie haben eine neue Grundlage geschaffen, auf der aufgebaut werden konnte und auf der auch mancher Gegner Ottos mit oder ohne sein Wissen baut. Wer aber, wie der Verfasser dieser Zeilen, die Befreiung erlebt hat, die das Buch vom Heiligen ihm gab, der kann auch da, wo er glaubt, weitergehen zu müssen, wie z. B. in der Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Rationalem und Irrationalem, von Jenseitigkeit und Diesseitigkeit des Numinosen, den ersten Durchbruch nicht vergessen. — Man hat in guter Absicht Ottos Buch eine religionspsychologische Untersuchung genannt. Von nichts ist sie weiter entfernt. Sie ist eine Wesenslehre des Heiligen im besten Geiste historisch befruchteter Phänomenologie.

Damit mag ein Eindruck von der wissenschaftlichen Bedeutung Ottos gegeben sein. Wenn unsere Ausführung bei denen, die ihn noch nicht kennen, zu dem Entschluß führen würde, wenigstens zu seinem Hauptwerk zu greifen (das verhältnismäßig kurz ist und vorzüglich geschrieben), so wären diese knappen Andeutungen nicht zwecklos gewesen. Doch ist die Bedeutung Ottos damit nicht erschöpft. Von seiner Persönlichkeit, der eigentümlichen Verbindung trockenen Humors des geborenen Hannoveraners mit der Tiefe und dem Ernst mystischer Schau- und Erlebniskraft, kann jeder reden, der ihn kennt und für den Umgang mit ihm dankbar ist — und dazu gehört vielerlei Volks aus aller Welt.

Auch auf praktischem Gebiet hat er mit seiner allseitigen Offenheit und Eindrucksfähigkeit gewirkt. Als Politiker gehörte er dem Preußischen Landtag von 1913—1918 in der demokratischen Fraktion an. Die Probleme des Sozialismus und der religiösen Beeinflussung der Arbeiterbewegung beschäftigen ihn tief. Der „religiöse Menschheitsbund", der einem gegenseitigen Verstehen der großen Kulturreligionen auf Grund persönlicher Beziehungen dienen soll, ist sein Werk. Von der Erfassung des Numinosen aus widmet er praktisch und theoretisch der protestantischen Kultreform hingebende Arbeit. — Aber das, was entscheidend ist und ihn zu einer der wichtigsten Gestalten der gegenwärtigen Theologie macht, ist sein Buch über das Heilige, für das ihm eine ganze Generation Dank schuldet.

Paul Tillich, Professor an der Universität Marburg.

Das diesjährige Bachfest. Die Neue Bachgesellschaft, Leipzig, veranstaltet unter Mitwirkung der Stadt Essen in der Zeit vom 11. bis 13. Juli das 13. deutsche Bachfest in Essen. Das Programm enthält u. a.: am Sonntag, dem 12. Juli, abends, ein a capella-Konzert des Thomanerchors aus Leipzig, das unter Mitwirkung von Günther Ramin unter Leitung von Karl Straube in der Kreuzeskirche in Essen aufgeführt wird. Am Montag abend wird die Johannes-Passion mit einer Reihe hervorragender Solisten aufgeführt.

Vom Braunschweigischen Landestheater. Uns wird aus Braunschweig berichtet: Mit Beginn der nächsten Spielzeit übernimmt der jetzige Intendant von Rostock, Dr. Neubeck, die Leitung des Braunschweigischen Landestheaters. Er hat Walter von Molo als ständigen Mitarbeiter für das Dramaturgische Büro verpflichtet. Molo, Herbert Eulenberg, Hans Franck sollen in ihnen gewidmeten Morgenfeiern sprechen. Aus Anlaß der Uraufführung von Kauns neuestem Werke „Menandra" ist ein dreiteiliges Kaun-Fest beabsichtigt. Aehnliche Veranstaltungen sollen Professor Graener und Dr. Max von Schillings gewidmet werden. Eine Strauß-Woche ist für Anfang September in Aussicht genommen. Die Intendanz hat ferner für die nächste Spielzeit folgende Werke zur Uraufführung erworben: „Die Stunde" von Karl Lafite, Dichtung von Leo Feld, „Admet" von Händel, in der Bearbeitung von Dr. Bülschke.

Parade in Tokio.

Von

Maria Gerd.

Als jener Jesuitenpater des 16. Jahrhunderts, dem es gelungen war, nach Japan vorzudringen, zum ersten Male einen buddhistischen Tempel betrat, glaubte er, ein Blendwerk der Hölle zu sehen. Da war Kwannon, die Gnadenreiche, Blumen und Lichter, Musik und Weihrauch, der Priester amtierte am Hochaltar, und fromme Mönche knieten. Alles anders und doch so ähnlich, der Missionar flehte den Himmel um Beistand an gegen den Teufelsspuk.

So ging es uns, als wir die Kaiser-Geburtstags-Parade in Japan sahen. Auch der Mikado genießt den Vorzug von Hohenzollernwetter, und dies will in einem Lande etwas bedeuten, denn was ist unser fürchterlichster Landregen gegen die Dauergüsse, die das Inselreich schier aufzuweichen drohen? Also es regnete ausnahmsweise nicht, und das war doppelt angenehm, weil es in Japan nicht für schicklich gilt, bei feierlichen Anlässen einen Mantel zu tragen. Durch endlose Straßen läuft der Riksch'a, dort, wo man die Durchfahrt des Kaisers erwartet, gehen Polizisten in die Häuser und achten darauf, daß niemand im Oberstock bleibt — denn keiner darf höher stehen, als der Kaiser. Nur selten verläßt der Mikado seinen Palast, fährt er einmal durch die Straßen seiner Hauptstadt, senkt der getreue Untertan die Augen. Denn göttlich ist der Kaiser, das Auge des gewöhnlichen Sterblichen nicht wert, ihn zu schauen. Selbst sein Bild wird durch einen Vorhang vor dem direkten Anblick geschützt, sogar der Händler legt wenigstens Seidenpapier über die Photographie seines Mon-archen. Der Europäer, nicht durch Pietät gebunden, sucht sich auf dem großen Aonama-Platz vor dem Zelt seines Landes einen möglichst günstigen Standort. Bald sieht er einen etwas veralteten Galawagen, von Läufern umgeben, die Respektlosesten zücken das Opernglas, um den Mikado im Glanz der ordensstarrenden Uniform mit hohem Federstutz am Czako recht genau zu sehen, es soll sogar Menschen geben, die zu knipsen wagen. In seinem Zelt verschwindet der Kaiser, die höchsten Würdenträger gehen hinein. Militärattachés aller Länder, Marine, Landheer, Tropenarmee, alles ist vertreten.

Dann beginnt die Parade, Infanterie, Artillerie, Kavallerie — alles feldgrau. Der Aonama-Platz wird zum Tempelhofer Feld. Und — wir glauben an Sinnestäuschung, wie sie dem Priester widerfuhr — die Militärkapelle spielt: „Ich bin ein Preuße".

Nun ja, mit Daimios und Samurais führt man keinen modernen Krieg, die japanische Armee hatte deutsche Instruktoren und übernahm das preußische Exerzierreglement. Und damit auch unsere Militärmärsche; das Lied vom fallenden Regentropfen mit Koto und Shamisen-Begleitung wird für militärische Zwecke nicht brauchbar gewesen sein. So kommt die Militärkapelle zu ihrer unhaltbaren Behauptung.

Es ist, wie mit vielen anderen Dingen auch in dieser Zeit des Ueberganges: Die reichen Schätze der eigenen alten Kultur sind nicht geeignet, die praktisch-technischen Forderungen der so plötzlich hereingebrochenen neuen Zeit zu erfüllen. So greift man zur Importware. Vielleicht nicht lange mehr.

Wechsel in der Leitung der Staatsbibliothek. Wie wir erfahren, tritt der Generaldirektor der Preußischen Staatsbibliothek, Geh. Regierungsrat Dr. Fritz Milkau, am 1. Oktober d. J. in den Ruhestand. Milkau, der bei seinen Kollegen den Ruf eines hervorragend befähigten Fachmannes genießt, ist 1859 zu Lötzen (Ostpr.) geboren, studierte 1878 bis 1882 in Königsberg klassische und deutsche Philologie und vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft und war nach Ablegung der Lehramtsprüfung einige Zeit im höheren Schuldienst tätig. 1888 promovierte er in Königsberg mit einer Studie über die Sprache des Vellejus Paterculus und trat kurz danach als Hilfsarbeiter bei der dortigen Universitätsbibliothek ein. Nach mehrjähriger

Figure B continued

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