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HUMA 6233 3.0

FAITH, REASON, ATHEISM: EUROPEAN THOUGHT AND THE IRREDUCIBLY OTHER

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Course Description

In this course we examine the relationships among the European discourses of faith, reason, and atheism in order to assess the thesis that their disparate approaches to conceiving not only the individual but also relations among individuals are connected by their commitment to a standard or principle – God, the categorical imperative, the Übermensch… – that, in being irreducibly other, renders each individual other than her- or himself. Central to the course are the following questions. If each of faith, reason, and atheism is founded on bringing the self into relationship with that which is irreducibly other, how are we to understand the relationships among their proponents? What, in other words, are we to make of Kant invoking the authority of Jesus as support for his claim that the origin of the divine lies in reason; of Kierkegaard showing, despite his own rhetoric, that faith is critique; of the claim on the part of Nietzsche, after announcing the death of God, that he begins and ends with faith? Overall, the course addresses itself to the question of whether a focus on faith, reason, and atheism as founded on a conception of the human being as constituted by the irreducibly other provides a hermeneutical basis for thinking about the interconnections – for working through the multiple and often conflictual relationships – among these apparently disparate discourses in European thought. Key texts of ancient Greek philosophy and central books of the Bible will be read in order to provide the background, at once historical, ethical, and ontological, that is essential for exploring the relationships among faith, reason, and atheism in modernity.

Course grading

The final course grade will be based on a written assignment of twenty to twenty five pages.

Readings (the following texts have been placed on order at the York bookstore)

Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Ellington, Hackett Publishing Company, 1981, ISBN: 0-87220-166-X

Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, translated by Hong and Hong, Princeton University Press, 1983, ISBN: 0-691-02026-4

Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, translated by Kaufmann and Hollingdale, Vintage Books, 1969, ISBN: 0-679-72462-1

Plato, *Republic*, translated by Grube, revised by Reeve, Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1992, ISBN: 0-87220-136-8

In addition to the above we will read selections from the Bible. Should you not already have a copy of one of the many editions of the text, the Revised Standard Version can be found at the following website: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/browse.html.

Other texts of interest

Erich Auerbach, "Odysseus' Scar," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western*

Literature, translated by W. R. Trask, Princeton University Press, 1983

"Odysseus' Scar" is a "comparison" of Homeric and biblical narrative. Auerbach argues that "Homer can be analyzed..., but he cannot be interpreted." The complete text can be found at http://www.westmont.edu/~fisk/Articles/OdysseusScar.html.

James P. Carse, *Death and Existence: A Conceptual History of Human Mortality*, New York: Wiley, 1980

Oscar Cullmann, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?", in *Immortality and Resurrection: Death in the Western World: Two Conflicting Currents of Thought*, ed K. Stendahl, Bison paper, pp. 9-53

Cullmann compares the deaths of Socrates and Jesus. The complete article can be found at: http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=1115

Tom F. Driver, *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearian Drama*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1960

The second and third chapters of Driver's book provide an overview of the distinction between the concepts of historical consciousness to be found in the ancient Greek and biblical worlds. Driver opens his second chapter with the claim that "The first thing to remember about the Greek historical consciousness is that it is, in essence, unhistorical" (19).

Martin Foss, *The Idea of Perfection in the Western World*, University of Nebraska Press, 1946

M. B. Foster, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science," *Mind*, Vol. 43, 1934

René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, translated by Yvonne Freccaro, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986
—, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, translated by Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer, Stanford University Press, 1987

Denis de Rougement, *Love in the Western World*, tr. M. Belgion, revised and augmented with new postscript, Princeton University Press, 1983

H. N. Schneidau, *Sacred Discontent: The Bible and Western Tradition*, Louisiana State University Press, 1976

Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Tr. Janet Lloyd, New York: Zone Books, 1990

In discussing Plato and Aristotle, Vernant insists on the absence in ancient Greek thought of modern concepts of freedom, agency, will, responsibility, duty, and obligation. On Aristotle, for example, he writes that "Neither in his work nor in the language of his times can one find any word to refer to what we call free will. The idea of a free power of decision remains alien to his thought.... This lacuna is an indication of the distance that separates the ancient

> Greeks' concept of the agent from the modern one. There are other 'gaps' that are characteristic of the morality of the ancient world: no word that corresponds to our concept of duty, the tenuous place in the system of values held by the notion of responsibility, the vague and indecisive nature of the idea of obligation. Taken all together, they underline the different orientation of Greek ethics and contemporary moral consciousness. Also, however, and even more profoundly, they reflect the absence, on a psychological level, of an elaborated category of the will..." (59-60).

Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, Basic Book, Inc., 1985

In addition to the above, it is worth considering the way in which the modern European philosophical enterprise involves distinguishing ever more rigorously between the ethico-hermeneutical principles of the ancient Greek world and those of the biblical world.

Descartes (from *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Cambridge University Press)

"I hope too that the truths I set forth will not be any less well received for their not being derived from Aristotle or Plato..." ("The Search for Truth by Means of the Natural Light," p. 401).

"And so at this point I would have explained briefly what all the knowledge which we now possess consists in and the levels of wisdom that have so far been attained. The first level contains only notions which are so clear in themselves that they can be acquired without meditation. The second comprises everything we are acquainted with through sensory experience. The third comprises what we learn by conversing with other people. And one may add a fourth category, namely what is learned by reading books – not all books, but those which have been written by people who are capable of instructing us well; for in such cases we hold a kind of conversation with the authors. I think that all the wisdom which we generally possess is acquired in these four ways. I am not including divine revelation in the list, because it does not lead us on by degrees but raises us at a stroke to infallible faith. Now in all ages there have been great men who have tried to find a fifth way of reaching wisdom – a way which is incomparably more elevated and more sure than the other four. This consists in the search for the first causes and the true principles which enable us to deduce the reasons for everything we are capable of knowing; and it is above all those who have labored to this end who have been called philosophers. I am not sure, however, that there has been anyone up till now who has succeeded in this project. The first and most important of those whose writings have come down to us are Plato and Aristotle. The only difference between these two is that the former, following the footsteps of his master Socrates, ingenuously confessed that he had never yet been able to discover anything certain. He was content instead to write what seemed to him to be probable, and accordingly he used his imagination to devise various principles by means of which he tried to account for other things. Aristotle, by contrast, was less candid. Although he had been Plato's disciple for twenty years, and possessed no principles apart from those of Plato, he completely changed the method of stating them and put them forward as true and certain, though it seems most unlikely that he in fact considered them to be so. Now these two men had a great deal of intelligence and much wisdom of the kind that is acquired in the four ways mentioned above, and this gave them such great authority that those who came after were content to follow their opinions rather than look for something better" (*Principles of Philosophy*, 181).

Spinoza (from *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Hackett Publishing)

"Furthermore, if they [i.e. religious authorities who confuse religion with superstition] did indeed possess some divine light, this would surely be manifested in their teaching. I grant that they have expressed boundless wonder at Scripture's profound mysteries, yet I do not see that they have taught anything more than the speculations of Aristotelians or Platonists, and have made Scripture conform to these. It was not enough for them to share in the delusions of the Greeks: they have sought to represent the prophets as sharing in these same delusions.... For if you enquire as to the nature of the mysteries which they see lurking in Scripture, you will certainly find nothing but the notions of an Aristotle or a Plato or the like, which often seem to suggest the fantasies of any uneducated person rather than the findings of an accomplished biblical scholar" (*Theological-Political Treatise*, 5, 153).

Kant (from The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant)

"Now general logic, as a putative organon, is called **dialectic**. As different as the significance of the employment of this designation of a science or art among the ancients may have been, one can still infer from their actual use of it that among them it was nothing other than the **logic of illusion** – a sophistical art for giving to its ignorance, indeed even to its intentional tricks, the air of truth, by imitating the method of thoroughness... and using its topics for the embellishment of every empty pretension." (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A61, B85-86).

"The light dove in free flight cutting through the air the resistance of which it feels, could get the idea that it could do even better in airless space. Likewise, Plato abandoned the world of the senses because it set such narrow limits for the understanding, and dared to go beyond it on the wings of the ideas, in the empty space of pure understanding. He did not notice that he made no headway by his efforts, for he had no resistance, no support, as it were, by which he could stiffen himself, and to which he could apply his powers in order to put his understanding into motion" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A5, B9).

"[P]ractical reason of itself, without any collusion with speculative reason, furnishes reality to a supersensible object of the category of causality, namely to *freedom*..." (*Critique of Practical Reason*, 5:6).

Hegel

In the three volume *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (University of California Press), Hegel writes the following on the ancient Greek world:

"Because ethical life constitutes the essential foundation here, what we are dealing with is the initial mode of ethical life so to speak, ethical life in its immediacy. There simply is this social rationality, the rationality or ethical life being wholly universal.... The rationality does not yet subsist as a subject, it has not yet raised itself... into the unity of the subject, nor has it deepened itself inwardly" (II.643).

Further, "Ethical life has to be distinguished from morality; the latter is the subjectivity of the ethical, what knows itself as inwardly accountable.... The ethical is an objective content such that a subjectivity or this internal reflection is not yet present. Because it has this character, the ethical content fragments" (II.644).

"The gods are scattered; Zeus rules them as a family. The higher power, absolute unity, stands above the gods as a pure power. This power is what is called destiny, fate, or simple necessity. It is without content, is empty necessity, an empty unintelligible power.... It is not wise.... Destiny is devoid of purpose and wisdom, it is a blind necessity that stands above all, even the gods, uncomprehended and desolate" (II.651).

Hegel then establishes the connections between God, thought, and love:

"The principle by which God is defined for human beings is also the principle for how humanity defines itself inwardly, or for humanity in its own spirit" (II.203).

"Spirit is an absolute manifesting. Its manifesting is a positing of determination and a being for an other. 'Manifesting' means 'creating an other'.... The making or creation of the world is God's self-manifesting, self-revealing" (I.129).

"The vitality of God or of spirit is nothing other than a self-determining..., a self-positing, in finitude, which involves distinction and contradiction, but is at the same time an eternal sublating of this contradiction. This is the life, the deed, the activity of God; he is absolute activity, creative energy, and his activity is to posit himself in contradiction, but eternally to resolve and reconcile this contradiction: God himself is the resolving of these contradictions" (412-13).

"In thought... what comes to consciousness is the contradiction of the very factors that are at the same time supposed to constitute a unity.... The consciousness of this contradiction and its resolution belong to thought" (I.153-4).

"Love is a distinguishing of two, who nevertheless are absolutely not distinguished for each other.... I have my self-consciousness not in myself but in the other..... This other, because it likewise exists outside itself, has its self-consciousness only in me.... This is love, and without knowing that love is both a distinguishing and the sublation of the distinction, one speaks emptily of it" (III.418).

Kierkegaard

In *The Concept of Irony* (Princeton University Press, 1989) Kierkegaard's primary thesis is that "the similarity between Christ and Socrates consists essentially in their dissimilarity" (6).

Kierkegaard goes on to write that "the intention in asking questions can be twofold." Either "one can ask with the intention of receiving an answer containing the desired fullness" and, then, "the more one asks, the deeper and more significant becomes the answer; or one can ask without any interest in the answer except to suck out the apparent content by means of the question and thereby to leave an emptiness behind." While the first method involves what Kierkegaard identifies with the biblical concept of love of neighbor, the second method describes what he identifies with the practice of Socrates, which was "essentially aimed at the knowing subject for the purpose of showing that, when all was said and done, they knew nothing whatever." Kierkegaard notes that every philosophy that begins with a presupposition ends with the same presupposition; it is thus the case, he holds, that "just as Socrates' philosophy began with the presupposition that *he* knew nothing, so it ended with the presupposition that human beings know nothing at all" (36-7). Kierkegaard further comments that it might seem "that when Socrates went about in the service of the oracle in order to show people that they knew nothing, he could not possibly have known only that he himself knew nothing, because behind that he must indeed have known what knowledge is" (170). Yet, Kierkegaard insists, the idea "that he was hiding a knowledge behind his ignorance was known to Socrates as well, but he regarded it as a misunderstanding." For what kept Socrates from actually speculating about what appeared to be "the remotely intimated positivity" behind his ignorance was his "divine call," in light of which he addressed himself to each person individually, "wrested everything from him, and sent him away empty handed" (172-73). Thus, consistent with the primary thesis of *The Concept of Irony* (on the essential dissimilarity between Christ and Socrates), Kierkegaard is clear in *Works of Love* (Princeton University Press, 1995) that what Socrates ultimately was ignorant of was the neighbor: Socrates "did not know that the neighbor existed and that one shall love him" (373).

Outline of Weekly Readings

First Term

Week 1 September 7: Introduction

2 September 14: Plato

Republic

- -Book I, 336b – 354c
  - -Note that, earlier in Book I, Socrates and his interlocutors agree that "good people are just and able to do no wrong" (334d).
- -Book V-VI, 474c – 484c
- -Book VI, 486d – 492e
- -Book VI, 504c – 518d

Symposium (selections provided in the course syllabus)

3 September 21: Plato

Republic

- -Books III-IV, 412b – 445e
- -Book V, 471b – 473d
- -Book X, 595a – 621d

4 September 28: Bible

Genesis 1.1-3.24; 11.1-9
Exodus 3.1-15; 19.1-20.17; 23.9; 31.12-34.28
Leviticus 19.1-4, 17-18
Deuteronomy 5.1-6.15; 13.1-5; 18.9-22; 29.1-31.29
Hosea
Selections from the Law Code of Hammurabi (in the course outline)

5 October 5: Bible

Matthew 1.1-25, 4.1-17, 5.1-8, 7.1-7, 14.13-21, 15.29-38, 16. 5-12, 16.24-25, 19.16-26, 22.15-22
Luke 3.23-3.38, 17.20-21
John 1.1-1.14
Romans 1.26-27
I Corinthians 1.4-8, 1.18-28, 2.1-16, 7.4, 8.1-3, 9.1, 11.2-16, 13.1-13, 15.35.55
II Corinthians 5.14-5.17

6 October 12: Kant
Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals
Parts I and II (omit the Preface)

7 October 19: Kant
Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals
Part III

8 October 26: York Reading Day – No Seminar

9 November 2: Kierkegaard
Fear and Trembling
pp. 1-88, 112-123 (omit pp. 88-112)

10 November 9: Kierkegaard
Fear and Trembling

11 November 16: Nietzsche
The Gay Science (the following aphorisms are to be read as provided in the course syllabus): 114, 116, 122, 124, 125, 269-275, 301, 304, 311, 334, 340, 345, 377
On the Genealogy of Morals
Preface: sections 1, 3, 6, 8
First Essay: sections 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 11 (1st paragraph), 16-17

12 November 23: Nietzsche
On the Genealogy of Morals
Second Essay: sections 1, 2, 4, 16-24

13 November 30: Nietzsche
On the Genealogy of Morals
Third Essay: sections 1, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 22-28

Ideas Central to Socrates and Plato

Fundamental Platonic Positions or Formulations

- To know the good is to be the good.
- No one willingly or knowingly does evil: evil is always done in ignorance of the good.
- It is better to suffer evil [done to me by others] than to do evil [to others].
- To desire or seek something is to lack what you desire, to be ignorant of what you seek.

The Structure of Opposites in Plato (the Divided Line)

divine	human
immortal	mortal
unchanging	changing
being	becoming
soul	body
forms	appearance
one	many
master (ruler)	slave (ruled)
perfect	imperfect
wisdom	ignorance
knowledge	opinion
right	opinion
pure	impure
just	unjust
finite	infinite
death	life
intelligible	visible
things known in themselves	things known relative to us
knowledge without qualification	knowledge of particulars

Plato's *Symposium*

The *Symposium* is composed of five speeches in praise of Love. Particularly important are the following: the speech of Aristophanes, who indicates that love as complete or whole was split into the opposites of man and woman as the punishment of human beings by the gods; the Speech of Diotima on Love, as reported by Socrates; and the praise of Socrates (the beloved) by Alcibiades (his lover). Below are key passages on love (199E-200B, 204A-B, 211C-212A). Two different translations of these passages are provided: B. Jowett, Library of Liberal Arts; A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff, Hackett Publishing.

It is also important to keep in mind the following:

1. "Philosophy" = "love of wisdom" (*philo* = love, *sophia* = wisdom)
2. When it is Socrates' turn to praise Love, he begins by asking to be "absolved from the promise that I made in ignorance," for his promise, he says, was "of the lips and not of the mind." Yet, with these words he cites verbatim the title character of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, whose ignorance of Love results in death – his own and that of Phaedra, the woman who loves him.

JOWETT TRANSLATION

[Socrates questions Agathon, late 5th century tragedian, about the speech that he has given in praise of love.]

-And now, said Socrates, I will ask about Love [Eros]: Is Love [love] of something or of nothing?

-Keep in mind what this is and tell me what I want to know – whether Love desires that of which love is.

-Yes, surely.

-And does he possess, or does he not possess, that which he loves and desires?

-Probably not, I should say.

-Nay, replied Socrates, I would have you consider whether "necessarily" is not rather the word. The inference that he who desires something is in want of something and that he who desires nothing is in want of nothing, is in my judgment, Agathon, absolutely and necessarily true. What do you think?

-I agree with you, said Agathon.

-Very good. Would he who is great desire to be great, or he who is strong desire to be strong?

-That would be inconsistent with our previous admissions.

-True. For he who is anything cannot want to be that which he is?

-Very true.

[Socrates then reports what Diotima told him about Love: Love is neither mortal nor immortal, neither good nor evil, neither wise nor ignorant, for there is a mean between wisdom and ignorance, and this mean is "right opinion."]

-[Love, Diotima says, is thus] "a mean between ignorance and knowledge. The truth of the matter is this: no god is a philosopher or seeker after wisdom, for he is wise already; nor does any man who is wise seek after wisdom. Neither do the ignorant seek after wisdom. For herein is the evil of ignorance that he who is neither good nor wise is nevertheless satisfied with himself; he has no desire for that of which he feels no want."

-"But who then, Diotima," I said, "are the lovers of wisdom if

-"A child may answer that question," she replied; "they are those who are in a mean between the two; Love is one of them. For wisdom is a most beautiful thing and Love is of the beautiful; and therefore Love is also a philosopher or lover of wisdom, and being a lover of wisdom is in a mean between the wise and the ignorant."

Diotima continues: "And the true order of going, or being led by another, to the things of love is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upward for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only, and from one going on to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is." Beauty is defined a few lines earlier by Diotima as "absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase or any change is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things." She concludes by asking "what if man had eyes to see the true beauty – the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colors and vanities of human life – thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine?"

NEHAMAS AND WOODRUFF TRANSLATION

[Socrates questions Agathon, late 5th century tragedian, about the speech that he has given in praise of love.]
-"Now try to tell me about love," he said. "Is Love the love of nothing or of something?"
-"Of something, surely!"
-"Then keep this object of love in mind, and remember what it is. But tell me this much: does Love desire that of which it is the love, or not?"
-"Certainly," he said.
-"At the time he desires and loves something, does he actually have what he desires and loves at that time, or doesn't he?"
-"He doesn't. At least that wouldn't be likely," he said.
-"Instead of what's *likely*, " said Socrates, "ask yourself whether it's *necessary* that this be so: a thing that desires desires something of which it is in need; otherwise, if it were not in need, it would not desire it. I can't tell you, Agathon, how strongly it strikes me that this is necessary. But how about you?"
-"I think so too."
-"Good. Now then, would someone who is tall, want to be tall? Or someone who is strong want to be strong?"
-"Impossible, on the basis of what we've agreed."
-"Presumably because no one is in need of those things he already has."
-"True."

[Socrates then reports what Diotima told him about Love: Love is neither mortal nor immortal, neither good nor evil, neither wise nor ignorant, for "there's something in between wisdom and ignorance" = "judging things correctly without being able to give a reason" = "correct judgment."]
-[Love, Diotima says, is thus] "between wisdom and ignorance as well. In fact, you see, none of the gods loves wisdom or wants to become wise – for they are wise – and no one else who is wise already loves wisdom; on the other hand, no one who is ignorant will love wisdom either or want to become wise. For what's especially difficult about being ignorant is that you are content with yourself, even though you're neither

beautiful and good nor intelligent. If you don't think you need anything of course you won't want what you don't think you need."

-"In that case, Diotima, who *are* the people who love wisdom, if they are neither wise nor ignorant?"

-"That's obvious," she said. "A child could tell you. Those who love wisdom fall in between those two extremes. And Love is one of them, because he is in love with what is beautiful, and wisdom is extremely beautiful. It follows that Love *must* be a lover of wisdom and, as such, is in between being wise and being ignorant."

Diotima continues: "This is what it is to go aright, or be led by another, into the mystery of Love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know what it is to be beautiful." Diotima states a few lines earlier that, as Beauty is "itself by itself, it is always one in form; and all the other beautiful things share in that, in such a way that when those others come to be or pass away, this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change." She concludes by asking "how would it be... if someone got to see the Beautiful itself, absolute, pure, unmixed, not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality, but if he could see the divine Beauty itself in its one form?

The Law Code of Hammurabi (selections)

8. If any one steal cattle or sheep, or an ass, or a pig or a goat, if it belong to a god or to the court, the thief shall pay thirtyfold; if they belonged to a freed man of the king he shall pay tenfold; if the thief has nothing with which to pay he shall be put to death.

116. If the prisoner die in prison from blows or maltreatment, the master of the prisoner shall convict the merchant before the judge. If he was a free-born man, the son of the merchant shall be put to death; if it was a slave, he shall pay one-third of a mina of gold, and all that the master of the prisoner gave he shall forfeit.

195. If a son strike his father, his hands shall be hewn off.

196. If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.

197. If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.

198. If he put out the eye of a freed man, or break the bone of a freed man, he shall pay one gold mina.

199. If he put out the eye of a man's slave, or break the bone of a man's slave, he shall pay one-half of its value.

200. If a man knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out.

201. If he knock out the teeth of a freed man, he shall pay one-third of a gold mina.

202. If any one strike the body of a man higher in rank than he, he shall receive sixty blows with an ox-whip in public.

203. If a free-born man strike the body of another free-born man or equal rank, he shall pay one gold mina.

204. If a freed man strike the body of another freed man, he shall pay ten shekels in money.

205. If the slave of a freed man strike the body of a freed man, his ear shall be cut off.

229. If a builder build a house for some one, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, then that builder shall be put to death.

230. If it kill the son of the owner the son of that builder shall be put to death.

231. If it kill a slave of the owner, then he shall pay slave for slave to the owner of the house.

Kant’s Critical Distinctions (The Two Standpoints)

autonomy	heteronomy
categorical	hypothetical
unconditioned	conditioned
practice	theory
thinking	knowledge
idea	experience
freedom	nature
intelligible	sensible
morality	happiness
objective	subjective
subjects	objects
a priori synthetic	a posteriori
duty	example, inclination
moral necessity	natural necessity
end in itself	means to an end
person	thing
truth	certainty
subjects	objects
objective	subjective
deduction (justification)	explanation, insight
absolute	conditional, relative
command, moral law	natural law
dignity	price
rational	rational

Kant’s Critical Categories

In his critical theory Kant identifies three kinds of propositions:

- analytic (a priori logical necessity);
- synthetic (a posteriori empirical existence);
- synthetic *a priori* (holds together necessity and existence).

These propositions correspond to three concepts of what Kant calls possibility:

- logical possibility (found in analytic, *a priori* propositions);
- real possibility (found in synthetic *a posteriori* propositions);
- absolute possibility (or actuality, found in synthetic *a priori* propositions).

Kant also distinguishes among three faculties of the mind:

- sensibility (the perception of the objects of natural space and natural time);
- understanding (the faculty that provides the rules for organizing our perceptions);
- reason, which he divides between the theoretical and the practical:
  - -as theoretical, reason is turned towards the study of nature
  - -as practical, reason limits the understanding to knowledge of nature and constitutes the principles of morality.

In light of those faculties, Kant distinguishes between:

- appearances (the sensible world);
- things in themselves or noumena (the intelligible world).

In order to comprehend the relationship between appearances and things in themselves, it is worth noting that, in *The Critique of Practical Reason* (translated by Lewis White Beck, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1956), Kant points to the importance of separating the natural causality that applies to the objects of time and space from the freedom of human subjects: "no other course remains," he holds, "than to ascribe the existence of a thing so far as it is determinable in time, and accordingly its causality under the law of natural necessity, merely to appearance, and to attribute freedom to the same being as a thing-in-itself" (98). He then writes the following: "The concept of creation does not belong to the sensuous mode of conceiving existence or to causality but can be referred only to noumena. Consequently, if I say of beings in the world of sense that they are created, I regard them only as noumena. Just as it would therefore be contradictory to say God is the creator of appearances, it is also a contradiction to say that He, as the Creator, is the cause of actions in the world of sense, as these are appearances; yet at the same time He is the cause of the existence of the acting beings (as noumena). Now, assuming existence in time to hold only of appearances and not things-in-themselves, if it is possible to affirm freedom without detriment to the natural mechanism of actions as appearances, then the circumstance that the acting beings are creatures cannot make the least difference to the argument, because creation concerns their intelligible but not their sensuous existence..." (p. 106).

Nietzsche
The Gay Science (selections)
Translated by Walter Kaufmann
Vintage Books, 1969

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How far the moral sphere extends.— As soon as we see a new image, we immediately construct it with the aid of all our previous experiences, *depending on the degree* of our honesty and justice. All experiences are moral experiences, even in the realm of sense perception.[8]

116

Herd instinct.— Wherever we encounter a morality, we also encounter valuations and an order of rank of human impulses and actions. These valuations and orders of rank are always expressions of the needs of a community and herd: whatever benefits it most—and second most, and third most—that is also considered the first standard for the value of all individuals. Morality trains the individual to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only as a function. The conditions for the preservation of different communities were very different; hence there were very different moralities. Considering essential changes in the forms of future herds and communities, states and societies, we can prophesy that there will yet be very divergent moralities. Morality is herd instinct in the individual.

122

Moral skepticism in Christianity.— Christianity, too, has made a great contribution to the enlightenment, and taught moral skepticism very trenchantly and effectively, accusing and embittering men, yet with untiring patience and subtlety; it destroyed the faith in his "virtues" in every single individual; it led to the disappearance from the face of the earth of all those paragons of virtue of whom there was no dearth in antiquity—those popular personalities who, imbued with faith in their own perfection, went about with the dignity of a great matador.

When we today, trained in this Christian school of skepticism, read the moral treatises of the ancients—for example, Seneca and Epictetus—we have a diverting sense of superiority and feel full of secret insights and over-sights: we feel as embarrassed as if a child were talking before an old man, or an over-enthusiastic young beauty before La Rochefoucauld[15]: we know better what virtue is.

In the end, however, we have applied this same skepticism also to all *religious* states and processes, such as sin, repentance, grace, sanctification, and we have allowed the worm to dig so deep that now we have the same sense of subtle superiority and insight when we read any Christian book: we also know religious feelings better! And it is high time to know them well and to describe them well, for the pious people of the old faith are dying out, too. Let us save their image and their type at least for knowledge.

124

In the horizon of the infinite.— We have left the land and have embarked. We have burned our bridges behind us—indeed, we have gone farther and destroyed the land behind us. Now, little ship, look out! Beside you is the ocean: to be sure, it does not always roar, and at times it lies spread out like silk and gold and reveries of graciousness. But hours will come when you will realize that it is infinite and that there is nothing more awesome than infinity.[19] Oh, the poor bird that felt free and now strikes the walls of this cage! Woe, when you feel homesick for the land as if it had offered more *freedom*—and there is no longer any "land."

125

The madman.— Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" —As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated? —Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

"How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us—for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto."

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke into pieces and went out. "I have come too early," he said then; "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars—*and yet they have done it themselves.*"

It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said always to have replied nothing but: "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"[20]

269

In what do you believe?— In this, that the weights of all things must be determined anew.

270

What does your conscience say?— "You shall become the person you are."[69]

271

Where are your greatest dangers?— In pity.[70]

272

What do you love in others?— My hopes.

273

Whom do you call bad?— Those who always want to put to shame.

274

What do you consider most humane?— To spare someone shame.

275

What is the seal of liberation?— No longer being ashamed in front of oneself.[71]

301

The fancy of the contemplatives. — …

Whatever has *value* in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature —nature is always value-less, but has been *given* value at some time, as a present—and it was *we* who gave and bestowed it. Only we have created the world *that concerns man*! —But precisely this knowledge we lack, and when we occasionally catch it for a fleeting moment we always forget it again immediately; we fail to recognize our best power and underestimate ourselves, the contemplatives, just a little. We are *neither as proud nor as happy* as we might be.

304

By doing we forego.— At bottom I abhor all those moralities which say: "Do not do this! Renounce! Overcome yourself!" But I am well disposed toward those moralities which goad me to do something and do it again, from morning till evening, and then to dream of it at night, and to think of nothing except doing this *well*, as well as *I* alone can do it. When one lives like that, one thing after another that simply does not belong to such a life drops off. Without hatred or aversion one sees this take its leave today and that tomorrow, like yellow leaves that any slight stirring of the air takes off a tree. He may not even notice that it takes its leave; for his eye is riveted to his goal—forward, not sideward, backward, downward. What we do should determine what we forego; by doing we forego—that is how I like it, that is my *placitum.*[29] But I do not wish to strive with open eyes for my own impoverishment; I do not like negative virtues—virtues whose very essence it is to negate and deny oneself something.

311

Refracted light.— One is not always bold, and when one grows tired then one of us, too, is apt to moan like this: "It is so hard to hurt people—oh, why is it necessary! What does it profit us to live in seclusion when we refuse to keep to ourselves what gives offense? Would it not be more advisable to live in the swarm and to make up to individuals the sins that should and must be committed against all? To be foolish with fools, vain with the vain, and enthusiastic with enthusiasts? Wouldn't that be fair, given such overweening deviation on the whole? When I hear of the malice of others against me—isn't my first reaction one of satisfaction? Quite right! I seem to be saying to them—I am so ill-attuned to you and have so much truth on my side that you might as well have a good day at my expense whenever you can! Here are my faults and blunders, here my delusion, my bad taste, my confusion, my tears, my vanity, my owlish seclusion, my contradictions. Here you can laugh. Laugh, then, and be merry! I do not resent the law and nature of things according to which faults and blunders cause merriment.

"To be sure, times used to be more 'beautiful' when anyone with a halfway new idea could still feel so *indispensable* that he would go out into the street and shout at everyone: 'Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' —I should not miss myself if I were not there. All of us are dispensable."

But, to repeat it, that is not how we think when we are bold; then we don't think of this.[30]

334

One must learn to love.— This is what happens to us in music: First one has to *learn to hear* a figure and melody at all, to detect and distinguish it, to isolate it and delimit it as a separate life. Then it requires some exertion and good will to *tolerate* it in spite of its strangeness, to be patient with its appearance and expression, and kindhearted about its oddity. Finally there comes a moment when we are *used* to it, when we wait for it, when we sense that we should miss it if it were missing; and now it continues to compel and enchant us relentlessly until we have become its humble and enraptured lovers who desire nothing better from the world than it and only it.

But that is what happens to us not only in music. That is how we have *learned to love* all things that we now love. In the end we are always rewarded for our good will, our patience, fairmindedness, and gentleness with what is strange; gradually, it sheds its veil and turns out to be a new and indescribable beauty. That is its *thanks* for our hospitality. Even those who love themselves will have learned it in this way; for there is no other way. Love, too, has to be learned.

340

The dying Socrates.— I admire the courage and wisdom of Socrates in everything he did, said—and did not say. This mocking and enamored monster and pied piper of Athens, who made the most overweening youths tremble and sob, was not only the wisest chatterer of all time: he was equally great in silence. I wish he had remained taciturn also at the last moment of his life; in that case he might belong to a still higher order of spirits. Whether it was death or the poison or piety or malice—something loosened his tongue at that moment and he said: "O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster." This ridiculous and terrible "last word" means for those who have ears: "O Crito, *life is a disease.*" Is it possible that a man like him, who had lived cheerfully and like a soldier in the sight of everyone, should have been a pessimist? He had merely kept a cheerful mien while concealing all his life long his ultimate judgment, his inmost feeling. Socrates, Socrates *suffered life!* And then he still revenged himself—with this veiled, gruesome, pious, and blasphemous saying. Did a Socrates need such revenge? Did his overrich virtue lack an ounce of magnanimity? —Alas, my friends, we must overcome even the Greeks![70]

345

Our question mark. – …

These historians of morality (mostly Englishmen) do not amount to much. Usually they themselves are still quite unsuspectingly obedient to one particular morality and, without knowing it, serve that as shield-bearers and followers—for example, by sharing that popular superstition of Christian Europe which people keep mouthing so guilelessly to this day, that what is characteristic of moral actions is selflessness, self-sacrifice, or sympathy and pity. Their usual mistaken premise is that they affirm some consensus of the nations, at least of tame nations, concerning certain principles of morals, and then they infer from this that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me; or, conversely, they see the truth that among different nations moral valuations are *necessarily* different and then infer from this that *no* morality is at all binding. Both procedures are equally childish.

377

We who are homeless. – …

We are, in one word—and let this be our word of honor—*good Europeans,* the heirs of Europe, the rich, oversupplied, but also overly obligated heirs of thousands of years of European spirit. As such, we have also outgrown Christianity and are averse to it—precisely because we have grown out of it, because our ancestors were Christians who in their Christianity were uncompromisingly upright: for their faith they willingly sacrificed possessions and position, blood and fatherland. We—do the same. For what? For our unbelief? For every kind of unbelief? No, you know better than that, friends! The hidden Yes in you is stronger than all Nos and Maybes that afflict you and your age like a disease; and when you have to embark on the sea, you emigrants, you, too, are compelled to this by—a *faith*![149]