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Introduction

The autonomy of individual human agents, particularly when construed as the capacity to govern freely one's own actions, has often served as a principal marker of the cultures of Western modernity. Whether one is, in Charles Taylor's terms, a "booster" or a "knocker" of modernity, individual autonomy looms large as a defining feature of what each recognizes as a characteristically modern account of what it means to be human. Yet, even though autonomy has taken center stage in modernity, it is useful to recall that modern thinkers were not the first to construe self-governance of one's actions as an important ingredient in the exercise of morally responsible human agency.[1] Once we attend to the fact that a capacity for self-governance is central to traditions of moral discourse and reflection that focus on virtue and character as structurally constitutive of moral agency, the emergence of autonomy as a core element in the dynamics of modernity can no longer be considered to issue primarily from an insight totally original with "modernity" about the form, operation, or capacity of human agency.[2] In this respect, the emphasis the ethics of modernity places on autonomy may not be so much a major break

from previous ways of construing agency as it is a significant enhancement of a role that the moral traditions from which the ethics of modernity emerged had already given to responsible self-governance within the structure of moral agency.

Kant, whose work plays a formative role in placing responsibility for one's own self-governance at center stage of discussions of moral agency, is instructive on this point: In his seminal treatment of autonomy in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* he explicitly presents his account as nothing more than a precise articulation of a principle which every agent already grasps, as a matter of practical knowledge, in acting morally.[3] This principle bears upon the manner in which the exercise of moral agency carries within its very form a commitment to order one's actions to unconditioned good, i.e., to that good which requires, under penalty of rendering one's agency practically unintelligible, unconditional recognition by all rational agents.[4]

Why might it be significant to point out that, even as autonomy has served as a defining marker of moral agency for the cultures of modernity (and remains so in the aftermath of modernity), it has fundamental antecedents in traditions of understanding human agency that antedate the modernity that gives autonomy such prominence? In what follows, I argue that understanding autonomy within a context locating its continuity with the long stream of moral reflection that Alan Donagan designates "the common morality"[5] is significant for two reasons. First, it allows us to see how it need not be the case that autonomy is inevitably packaged with the "isms"—e.g., individualism, relativism, subjectivism—that the "knockers" of modernity have inveighed against, and, often enough, "boosters" of modernity have celebrated among its glories. Second, dislodging autonomy from its presumed home in the dynamics of social atomism and resituating it as embedded in a mutual recognition of agency that is expressed in practices of social respect[6] provides a basis for a different construal of its relation to faith. In accord with this proposed social reading of autonomy, I will then show how faith, understood as an affirmation of an order of transcendence that makes possible the robust exercise of human moral finitude, may be construed to offer to the structure and workings of autonomous moral agency a formative social context that

is particularly fitting for moral engagement with a secular age's fracturing interplay of contingency.

Making the case for the first reason is the task of Part I. This involves exploring the social dimensions of Kant's account of moral agency that, long overlooked in many standard twentieth century readings of his ethics, have now been highlighted in a significant body of scholarship published since the mid-1980s.[7] Taking these social dimensions into account, I argue, provides a basis for re-contextualizing the role of autonomy in the dynamics of modernity in a way that brings into question that part of the influential "subtraction" narratives according to which the unfolding of modernity and secularity has inexorably required the elimination of transcendence and the end of religious faith. Such re-contextualization challenges narratives that take autonomy as a fitting and, indeed, necessary trope for human emancipation from God and from demands upon moral action indexed to a transcendent order; it offers, instead, an account of autonomy in which God's transcendence renders intelligible an unreserved affirmation of the full dignity and worth of the finitude of human agency On a reading that attends to the social embedding of human autonomy as a necessary condition for its intelligibility and exercise, autonomy does not inevitably set humanity as a whole, nor individual human agents, in a zero-sum agential competition with one another (or, for that matter, with a transcendent God) in order for it to function as the origin and ground of the principles of moral life.[8] Indeed, it may be the case that humans can be properly autonomous only to the extent that the exercise of their autonomy carries within it an affirmation of moral normativity that is not merely immanent to human subjectivity but is referenced to an order that can be legitimately designated as "objective" as well as "transcendent."

This social re-contextualization of autonomy has consequences both for a larger recasting of the narratives of modernity and secularity and for the efforts of this volume to articulate how faith[9] can engage the socio-political order of a secular age. Such re-contextualization places in question those narratives of modernity and secularity that frame autonomy as the paradigmatic form of human moral agency that inevitably eventuates in intractable opposition to faith as a locus for principles for morally responsible conduct. In

contrast, this social re-contextualization does not take it to be the case that autonomy inevitably stands in incompatible rivalry to faith as a principle for the integrity of moral agency, nor that faith necessarily functions as a heteronomous principle for moral agency. While it is of major importance eventually to address this kind of "meta" question—and Taylor's work provides a range of strategies for doing so—that task is not the primary one for this essay. That task, instead, is to show how a socially robust understanding of autonomy bears upon articulating possibilities for how moral agency, as reflectively formed in a community in which faith enters the formative dynamics of agency, appropriately engages pressing issues in the socio-political order. Such possibilities for engagement should thus manifest the structural capacity of an autonomous agency formed in faith to provide the sphere of public discourse with responsible analyses and critiques of these issues and constructive approaches for their resolution.

Part II of this essay will thus explore these possibilities, which presuppose a reading of autonomy and faith as both embedded in a mutual recognition of agency (in Kant's terms, the relation that agents bear to one another in "a kingdom of ends" or an "ethical commonwealth") that is expressed in practices of social respect.[10] In accord with this reading of autonomy, I will show how faith may be construed so that it offers to autonomous agency a formative social context that is particularly apt for responding to the moral challenges posed by the fracturing interplay of contingency that marks a secular age. This section will thus articulate a construal of faith in terms of the enlarged social context it provides for the exercise of an autonomy already referenced to practices of mutual recognition. I will argue that faith offers to the social respect embedded in the structure of autonomy an expansive horizon of welcoming of the other that brings social respect to a completion fully inclusive of the range of otherness before which our humanity stands.

I. The Finitude of Human Agency: The Commonwealth of Autonomous Subjects in the Space of Contingency

In many readings of the intellectual trajectory of modernity and secularity, Kant's articulation of autonomy as crucial to human moral agency plays a prominent role. Although Descartes is most often

credited (and castigated) for fathering "the turn to the subject," this modern subject reaches full moral "adulthood" only as Kant makes it possible for the subject to claim reflectively its own "autonomy of the will" as "the supreme moral principle" for decision and conduct. It may be an historical and conceptual oversimplification to argue that Kant's account of autonomy transposes the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am" into "I will, therefore I am," but Kant's uncompromising affirmation of the human subject's moral freedom has, nonetheless, often been read as providing moral subjectivity with a contour of self-determining agency that brings the chaos of moral relativism inevitably in its wake. Embedded in such relativism, moreover, seems to be an agential subjectivity that radically challenges any moral claim made on behalf of a transcendent authority. On this reading, Kantian autonomy begets a modern Protagorean relativism well suited to a secular age in which God has been pronounced dead: Autonomy frees each of us to decree what is right and what is good with a moral authority once the prerogative of God.[11]

Iris Murdoch concluded her classic description of autonomy, read as a cipher for an absolute moral subjectivism willfully displacing God, with the devastating comment: "Kant's [autonomous] man had already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: His proper name is Lucifer."[12] More recently, Susan Neiman, who does not read Kant as a relativist nor take his account of autonomy to entail relativism, characterized the robustness with which Kant affirms the autonomy of human freedom in terms that strikingly resonate with Murdoch's association of autonomy with godlike power. Commenting on the "universal law of nature" formulation of the categorical imperative, she notes "Universal laws can be imagined by anyone; universal laws of nature are given by one Being alone. In giving us this formula, Kant gave us a chance to pretend to be God. Every time we face a moral dilemma, we are to imagine re-enacting the Creation."[13]

On Neiman's reading, however, "playing God" in a Kantian manner does not require us to place human agency in rivalry with divine agency; it requires, instead, a recognition that fundamental to the integrity of our human moral situation is the acknowledgment of both the difference and the affinity between divine and human agency.

That twofold acknowledgment then bears upon our capacity to envision what *human* moral agency requires of us. She sees this recognition as crucial to Kant's articulation of the limits of theoretical reason and the consequences those limits have for exercising practical reason to shape our conduct: "*Dissatisfaction* [with the limits of our knowledge] *comes from the wish to be God*. If any one claim is the message of Kant's metaphysics, this is it"[14]…"The desire to surpass our limits is as essential to the structure of the human as the recognition that we cannot."[15] On her account, the "wish to be God" does not, in the first instance, stem from a will to exercise omnipotent power on one's own behalf; it arises from an experiential apprehension of the depth to which contingency, as it escapes both our capacity for understanding and the control of our finite agency, shapes the trajectory of our lives: "Yet the wish to determine the world can't be coherently limited, for you cannot know which event will turn out to be not just another event, but the one that will change your life"[16]…"The wish to be God isn't simply pathological; its alternative is blind trust in the world to work as it should."[17]

Neiman's reading of the moral autonomy expressed in "the law of nature" formulation takes on added significance for articulating the place of human agency in a secular age once we note her placement of the exercise of autonomy within Kant's overall depiction of our human situation, which he sees as inextricably tied to reason's efforts to render that situation intelligible, theoretically and practically, with respect both to nature and to God. For Kant, contingency, and our recognition of human finitude with respect to that contingency, are central for the dynamics that give our human situation its moral and its religious structure. He situates the operation of human autonomy within the framework of a contingency, embedded in the workings of both the cosmos and our agency, that serves as a marker for both the limits of finite reason and the dynamism driving reason to surpass those limits. On this reading of Kant, contingency presents no puzzle for the use of our reason that, by seeking the principles at work in the operations of nature, enables us to make sense of the world theoretically: "Where it's only a matter of knowledge, the fact that what affects us is not created by us causes little problem."[18] Matters stand differently, however, for our practical use of reason that seeks to render ourselves and the world in which we must act morally

intelligible: "It would be easy to acknowledge that not controlling the world is part of being human, were it not for the fact that *things go wrong*. The thought that the rift between reason and nature is neither error nor punishment but the fault line along which the universe is structured can be a source of perfect terror."[19]

Behind the "wish to be God" thus lies a desire to rid the world of the contingent, a desire that Neiman sees framing the central goal of Hegel's enterprise, even as Kant, on her reading, finds such a desire both unavoidable and deeply problematic.[20] It is problematic inasmuch as Kant takes a capacity to conceal from ourselves the recognition that we cannot surpass the limits of our human finitude to be embedded within the structure of the human just as deeply as the wish to be God: "Kant reminds us as often as possible of all that God can do and all that we cannot. Nobody in the history of philosophy was more aware of the number of ways we can forget it. He was equally conscious of the temptation to idolatry, the alternative route to confusing God with other beings."[21] Such inveterate capacity for self-concealment of our limitation in the face of human reason's unbridled ambitions is precisely why our reason needs a discipline of "critique" to train us in an intellectual humility from which we can acknowledge that *the dignity properly ours as human is inestimable precisely in virtue of, not in spite of, our finitude*. Kant recognizes that our finitude is so deeply constitutive of the moral shape of human agency that, were we to convince ourselves that we had succeeded in overcoming the moral limits of our finitude, we would not thereby have made our agency more "godly"; we would, instead, have deflated its capacity to engage the play of contingency that stands at the core of the human moral enterprise.

If Neiman's reading is correct, she has identified a contrast between Kant and Hegel that is crucial both for locating the different influences their work has had on shaping the cultures of modernity and for discerning how their work may—and may not—continue to provide useful coordinates for navigating the aftermath of modernity in which we find ourselves. Kant affirms, as Hegel does not, that the proper relation between human finitude and divine transcendence is one that, from the side of finite human reason, maintains, rather than seeks to overcome, the difference between the finite in its full contingency and

the transcendent in its fully radical and non-contingent otherness. On Kant's account, it is only in virtue of recognizing the difference between the human and the divine—a recognition, moreover, that acknowledges that overcoming that difference is not within our human power—that it becomes possible for us to act in full and proper accord with our human finitude. Human agency can be exercised in a fully human manner only in function of an awareness and an affirmation— often exacted from us neither readily nor easily—that the "godly" *perspective* presented to us as a "universal law of nature" for our finite agency to "enact" as pattern for our moral maxims does not thereby enable us to act with an unfailingly omnipotent "godly" *power* of doing "whatever we might wish." That perspective enables us, rather, to exercise a properly finite *human* power to do as we ought in a world that contingency shapes.[22]

      This contrast, in my judgment, renders Kant a more helpful ally than Hegel for articulating the proper contours for understanding the significance of the exercise of human agency in a secular/post-secular age that poses fundamental challenges to the possibility and intelligibility of faith as an appropriate human response to a transcendence properly construed as divine. Neiman's reading of this contrast parses Kant's account by attending to its affirmation of finitude and contingency as that which provides human agency with its fundamental moral range and depth, in contrast to Hegel's affirmation of the impetus to overcome them. This parsing helps to show how a construal of the relationship between divine freedom and human autonomy that pits them against one another as a "zero-sum" game may miss both *how* radically different they are from each other and *why* that difference is central for appropriately understanding what it is to be human. One consequence of missing such a difference is that the human freedom left as a legacy after the rival God has been declared dead turns out to be small change indeed for any who expect humanity thereby to gain moral capital sufficient to make the workings of the world more reliably conducive to the flourishing of all. Inasmuch as the obituary pronouncing God dead is also the news that God never was, there now is one less suspect to blame when human things go terribly amiss; that, however, hardly provides a guarantee that, in consequence of a recognition of the (long-time) absence of God, we have made our human selves better prepared, either now or for the

future, to "do right" for the flourishing of our species and the environing world in which we dwell. As Neiman astutely points out in concluding her chapter on Nietzsche and Freud, the outcome of their unmasking of the God-illusion is that "the price is enormous, for all nature stands condemned. Human beings themselves become walking indictments of creation."[23]

Neiman is not the first to note that the death of God provides impetus for lines of antihumanist thinking that consciously stand against the centrality that the main currents of modernity give to the human. The value of her analysis here lies not so much in the fact that she makes this connection, but rather in her presentation of Kant as champion of the utter centrality of human finitude to the integrity and worth of the human moral endeavor. Kant's account of autonomy provides support for lines of resistance to the anti-humanist and post-human options that, in consequence of both real and perceived failures of modernity, have become part of the landscape of the intellectual culture of the early twenty-first century.[24] Kant's account offers a basis for constructing positive alternatives to such options, alternatives that open possibilities for more adequately addressing, in theory and in practice, crucial ways in which the forms and dynamics of modernity have failed to deliver on their once bright promises to bring about human flourishing. Modernity's articulation of a reflective awareness of historicity may justly merit condemnation for making possible its self-conscious appropriation—and even approbation—of humanity's agency as prime executioner at history's slaughter-bench. This does not require, nonetheless, that the alternative human future be either of the main possibilities post-humanism puts on offer: on one hand, numb resignation to the fate of being a transient epiphenomenon of the dynamics of the cosmos; on the other, the hubris of relentlessly seeking mastery of the techniques and the technology to bend the cosmos—or at least our local part of it—to serve wherever may now be, or in the future emerge, as our dominant human goal and purposes.[25]

Central to this line of resistance, as well as to the possibilities for articulating an alternative robustly affirming the human, is an appropriation and enlargement of key elements in Kant's account of the relationship that contingency bears to the exercise of autonomy

within the community of human finite agents. This relationship, as I argue below, first makes it possible to bring into full relief the extent to which impoverished understandings of both the human and the divine function within such post and anti-humanist options. It also makes it possible to articulate alternatives that stand open to disclosure of what Taylor describes as the hope instanced (though not exclusively) in "Judeo-Christian theism and in its central promise of a divine affirmation of the human, more total than humans can ever attain unaided."[26]

On this reading, Kant situates the mutuality of our human freedom—or, alternately, the reciprocity of our autonomy—as fully engaged with the contingency of the cosmos, even as it also marks the moral locus in which we are mutually enabled to transcend it. His account manifests a deep sense that the common fragility of finite human freedom stands inextricably coordinate to the dignity that we must recognize in one another's humanity in the moral community he terms the "ethical commonwealth." These elements function within a reading of autonomy in which awareness of the reciprocal connections of freely offered respect within which one stands to all other human agents—in Kant's terms, awareness of one's membership in a "kingdom of ends"—brings with it a deep sense of the fragility of our finite freedom. This fragility, I will argue, is exhibited in the exercise of a finite freedom inextricably enmeshed in the functioning of a world of contingency, and thus serves as fundamental locus for recognition of the dignity of our humanity that we are called upon to accord to one another.

Briefly framed, my argument is that Kant's recognition of the inestimable dignity of the power of human freedom to effect good (i.e., for bringing about "what ought to be" in a world of "what is") is equally a recognition that such power resides in agents who are themselves profoundly fragile, whose exercise of that power is correspondingly fragile, yet who are capable of empowering each other's freedom in mutual respect for one another's fragility.[27] For Kant, the fragility of human freedom is inscribed in the embodied conditions of spatio-temporal finitude and contingency. The human power for bringing about good thoroughly pertains to, and is rooted in, a finite practical

reason, exercised in a world of contingency that renders that power for bringing about good both fragmentary and fragile. Such fragmentary and fragile character is not simply an outcome arising from the limited scope of the good we each have power to effect; it also arises to the extent that the endurance of much of the good that we each actually effect requires that others also do what is needed to sustain it. Kant recognizes that, insofar as we each stand alone, the exercise of our freedom provides thin and tenuous protection to our core dignity of spirit in a world in which the contingency of things gone wrong intersects with a finite agency that lacks power—and, even more significantly, the willingness—to effect all that is good.

The ultimate bulwark for our finitude is then not so much the solitary resoluteness that Murdoch eloquently describes as it is the mutual recognition and respect we accord each other for the fragile and vulnerable freedom we each embody. As embodied, moreover, our freedom is rendered fragile not simply by the inconstancy of intention that Kant terms the "inversion of our maxims," nor only by the inattention and distraction with which we thoughtlessly descend into evil's banality, nor by an intent so thoroughly malign that Kant calls it "diabolical" to mark it as beyond human (im)moral capacity. It is also rendered fragile by a vulnerability of both body and spirit to violence and violation. Such vulnerability provides a crucial locus from which to gain a perspective upon the welcoming hospitality to the other that, as I shall propose in the next section, constitutes a fundamental social context within which faith can be constitutively formative of the agency required for responsible human engagement with the fragmented world inherited from modernity.

Let me finish this section of my discussion by framing three major points it has proposed about the structure and exercise of human moral agency. These points follow from indexing Kant's account of autonomy not, as is done in standard narratives of modernity, to an anthropology of atomistic agency, but rather to what I call a "social anthropology of human finite freedom." The first point is that Kant's account of autonomy functions within a social embedding of human agency that is conceived as a structural feature of human finitude. This point would have once been controversial among Kant scholars, but a significant body of recent scholarship has

marshaled an array of interpretive and historical considerations in its favor. This point has significance beyond indicating a need for reconsidering the role Kant's work often plays in accounts of the emergence of those liberalisms formative of modern moral individualism.[28] Of wider importance than such historical revisionism is that, once the historical and conceptual legitimacy of a social construal of autonomy is established, we may then reconfigure–or even put aside—some bifurcations that the "standard" narratives of modernity and secularity associate with autonomy, particularly those placing it on the side of the radical moral subjectivity and individualism captured in Murdoch's reference to Milton's Lucifer or the warfare of the "state of nature" that Hobbes posits as the abiding baseline of human social dynamics.

The second and third points then bear upon the relationship between, on the one hand, the social construal of the structure and exercise of autonomous agency and, on the other, the conceptual and moral functions that a recognition of divine transcendence plays within a human world of contingency and finitude.

The second point is that this social construal of autonomy repositions the moral import of an acknowledgment of divine transcendence: such acknowledgment, rather than undermining human agency, instead encompasses a robust sense of human social and historical responsibility. It provides a basis for affirming a fundamental moral priority for the role of *humanity, as a mutually interrelated whole*, in shaping the social and cultural history that forms the distinctively human mode of interaction with the cosmos.[29] Acknowledging divine transcendence fully affirms human moral responsibility for shaping the direction of history and culture.

The third point is that re-contextualizing autonomy so that social relationality is fundamental to its exercise, shows it to be embedded in the contingencies of the cosmos and human culture that mark our human finitude. This embedding of autonomy in contingency will provide, in the next section, a central locus for the mutual social engagement of autonomy and faith.

As with the first point, the latter points each have a dimension that bears upon the value of Kant's work as a locus for constructive theological engagement, as well as a dimension that bears upon questions about the role of faith in public life. To the extent that Kant can now be read as providing an account in which an acknowledgment of divine transcendence affirms human moral responsibility in the shaping of history, he no longer stands as an "adversary," who, in opposing affirmations of divine transcendence issuing from faith, is intent upon thoroughly replacing religion by secular human moral practice. His work can now be engaged constructively in relation to faith in that it affirms faith as a human posture toward transcendence, one that plays a legitimate constitutive role in shaping autonomous moral agency.[30] Kant's account is thus an effort not to overcome or eliminate religion and faith but to exhibit how faith, construed as a critically formed acknowledgement of divine transcendence, is of crucial import for the proper exercise of human moral agency.[31] Such a critical acknowledgment of transcendence, shaped in awareness of "the limits of human reason," provides the context for rendering human finitude, exercised as autonomous agency in a world of contingency, morally intelligible. Kant takes the human relation to divine transcendence to be that which provides the moral space for human finite agency to be constitutive—though not solely by itself—of the trajectory and outcome of history by working to establish a world community abidingly shaped by the dynamics of the moral reciprocity of mutual respect.

In addition to re-opening possibilities for Kant as a constructive theological interlocutor, these points also bear upon the function of faith in the public life of cultures emergent in the aftermath of modernity. They help delimit the scope and the configuration of human responsibility for giving a morally fitting direction to the trajectory of the socially structured dynamics of public life and culture. Kant aptly characterizes these dynamics as humanity's "unsocial sociability,"[32] which provides the cultural conditions under which human finite agency is exercised for effecting good and resisting evil. In situating the exercise of human moral autonomy in the contingency of both the cosmos and the workings of human agency, Kant's account manifests a deep sense that the common fragility of our finite human freedom, which runs all the way down in our agency, stands inextricably

coordinate to the dignity that we must recognize in one another's humanity in the moral community he terms the "ethical commonwealth."

A relationality deeply embedded in the contingencies of the cosmos and of our human fragility is thus a key element in a Kantian anthropology that inscribes human freedom in the embodied conditions of spatio-temporal finitude. Insofar as we each stand alone, our finitude provides thin and tenuous protection to our core dignity of spirit; under these conditions, human power for bringing about good, rooted in the fragmentary, fragile exercise of finite reason, stands on the slender and precarious footing of a social relationality embedded in cosmic contingency. Human fragility stands aware that, in this world of contingency, it cannot of itself, either individually or communally, provide enduring stability for an order of what "ought to be," the order that fully accords with the dignity and the fragility of our human embodied spirit.

This awareness, critically shaped by acknowledgment of both divine transcendence and human finitude, nonetheless brings with it a two-fold hope enabling us to envision ourselves as responsible agents shaping the trajectory of history and culture. One element of this hope is that what we do autonomously (or differently inflected, what we do in enacting the dignity of our finitude) will have genuine effect in helping to bring about an enduring order of what ought to be. The second element is that the stability of such enduring order of what "ought to be," even though it lies beyond human finite power to effect fully in a world of contingency, constantly stands on offer to us, in virtue of the moral efficacy of our critically formed acknowledgement of divine transcendence, as the one outcome fully worthy of all we enact autonomously from the dignity of our finitude.[33]

This interplay of contingency and hope in relation to a critical construal of human finitude and divine transcendence pervades Kant's philosophical enterprise. The role it plays, moreover, in his account of cosmopolitanism and perpetual peace as worldly enactments of the dignity of our autonomous finitude, provides a particularly apt place from which to make a transition to a discussion of the role of faith in the public life of a secular age. These accounts help delimit how a

critically formed acknowledgment of divine transcendence frames a horizon of hope that is not just personally but also *socially* necessary for finite human agents to persevere in efforts to make the world of human interaction "what it ought to be," i.e., a world in which human agents concretely and consistently exhibit the dynamics of shared membership in "a kingdom of ends."[34] Such hope is necessary inasmuch as human efforts to make the world into what "it ought to be" take place in and for a world in which the recalcitrance of the contingency of "what is" lies so deeply ingrained that it seems to rule out as unintelligible hopes for the attainment of a social order of enduring moral reciprocity. For Kant, the prime instance requiring such (social) perseverance lies in a commitment to establish an international order of enduring peace, even in the face of the recalcitrance of human self-preferential obduracy that seems to support Hobbes's image of ceaseless war as the baseline for human social dynamics. Kant marks the moral urgency of establishing an international order of enduring peace by identifying it as a categorical imperative that humanity must enjoin upon itself *as a species*.[35] His urgency in pressing this point suggests that sustaining efforts in pursuit of a cosmopolitan order of peace is a project within our human capacity to effect only in virtue of a hope that, embedded in the critical self-awareness of human moral finitude, brings with it an acknowledgment of transcendence.

Kant presses the case for humanity to enact a moral commitment to a cosmopolitan order of peace within an anthropological horizon shaped by an acknowledgement of transcendent otherness and human finitude. The final section of this essay will thus engage the question of the role of faith in public life by placing the dynamics of the "unsocial sociability" of our human finitude, as they are enacted in the interplay between our embodied vulnerability and what Taylor has called "the draw to violence,"[36] within that horizon of transcendent otherness and human finitude. I will propose that one fundamental way in which faith makes it possible for us to resist the draw to violence lies in its capacity for enabling an encompassing respect for our shared embodied vulnerability. Faith provides a locus for a human enacting of the primal grace by which the divine fully enters the fractured landscape of human contingency: a hospitality in which the welcoming of one another's otherness becomes

so complete that it allows us to accompany each other in and through the brokenness that marks out the space of human contingency.

II. Enlarging of the Framework of Agency: Faith and the Welcoming of Otherness

In this concluding section I argue that faith, construed as that openness from which humans are empowered to stand in finitude and contingency before the transcendent Otherness of God, offers to the structure and workings of autonomous moral agency a formative social context that is particularly fitting for engaging a secular age marked by the fracturing dynamics of contingency. Faith, on the account offered here, provides a horizon for recognition of the full range of otherness—divine, cosmic, and human—within which autonomous agents are invited to enact, for a world of fracture, modes of healing unity that do not erase the fragmentation and brokenness of contingency into an undifferentiated Hegelian *Aufhebung* but, instead, render brokenness in all its particularities into graced loci for bringing about reconciliation.

This argument for faith's possibilities for empowering an enlarged social context for the exercise of autonomous agency builds upon, first, a social reading of autonomy as embedded in a mutual recognition of agency and expressed in practices of social respect and, second, the multiple horizons of otherness that have come into view from the interplay of the dynamics of fracture in the aftermath of modernity. As a counterpart to this social reading of autonomy, I will articulate a construal of faith that, in its capacity for attending to the full range of otherness, provides an enlarged social context for an autonomous agency referenced to practices of mutual recognition. Faith, construed this way, offers to the social respect embedded in the structure of autonomy an enlarged horizon of welcoming the other, from which our agency is invited to bring social respect to completion in an inclusive hospitality of reconciliation that engages the full range of otherness in which our fractured and fragile humanity stands and participates. In so doing, faith opens possibilities for our agency to shape practices for resisting the draw to violence that all too often infects us in encountering one another's otherness.

The construal of faith proposed here is thus one for which hospitality—a trope aptly captured in George Steiner's remark, "I believe we must teach other human beings to be guests of each other"[37]—is the enacted form of the relationality fundamental to the bearing that faith has upon agency.[38] Particularly helpful for setting the context for this construal is a counter-trope to hospitality that Neiman has elegantly proposed as a fitting characterization of the fragile and deeply fractured dynamics in which humanity seeks moral and spiritual intelligibility in a "post-modern" condition: "homeless." Neiman's trope puts in bleak terms the consequences of modernity's disenchantment of the world, which renders the workings nature of void of meaning, save in terms an efficient causality absent of purpose, upon which human instrumental rationality only arbitrarily gains purchase. We—at least to the extent that modernity remains deeply etched into our bearing toward the world—now live and act in a world of nature fully disenchanted of purposes that pay attention to humanity; even more ominously, we live and act in a world in which we have become acutely aware of how thoroughly capable we have become of disenchanting and disengaging ourselves from attention to our own humanity. "Homeless" captures a sense that we act within a landscape where not only an indifferent nature fractures human purposes, but also where something fundamental in ourselves and in the exercise of our agency has itself been deeply fractured. She remarks: "Auschwitz revealed the remoteness of humans from themselves"[39] and adds that "Auschwitz was conceptually devastating because it revealed a possibility in human nature that we hoped not to see."[40]

There is a connection that links these coordinates provided by Neiman's trope of "homeless," a construal of faith through a trope of "welcoming," and a social reading of autonomy. This connection is in the dynamics of mutuality within which each of these coordinates are embedded, particularly as mutuality functions in the multiple spaces and varied inflections of cosmic and human contingency.[41] Through this connection of mutuality functioning in the spaces of contingency, faith offers autonomous agency a capacity for entering into a wider horizon of engaging otherness, where such engagement can be enacted as a fully encompassing hospitality.[42]

Viewed from this connection in mutuality, Neiman's trope of "homeless" exhibits a moral poignancy that powerfully exposes our individual and systemic failures to exhibit to one another the basic human reciprocity of mutual welcome in hospitality. The conditions of living with one another that we have helped shape (sometimes actively, sometimes by acquiescence) in civic life, in the marketplace, in the dynamics of religion and of culture, which should be ones conducive to the flourishing of all, have all-too-often been ones we have misshaped (as much by inattention as by illintent) to one another's detriment. At the outset of the twenty-first century, the dynamics of so many interactions within our dominant socio-cultural, political, and economic structures provide scant evidence from which to glean firm assurance that we, as a species, have yet learned how to make the space on which we dwell a fitting "home" for one another as fellow humans, let alone for other living beings with whom we share the earth. We seem to provide to one another, in the social worlds we construct to affirm "our" identity over against "theirs," little to suggest that we have mastered the skills to share, in a modicum of peace, even a small space side by side with fellow human beings who are not the "us" delimited in our parochialisms. Inscribed deep in our failures, great and small, to welcome the displaced, the uprooted, the homeless, as well as in the license we often give ourselves to drive strangers away with coldness, hostility and even violence, is a refusal to recognize that we, too, stand "homeless" in our human condition and that, as George Steiner pointedly remarks, all of us "are guests of life on this crowded polluted planet."[43] Unsure of how welcome we truly are in the world, even when we stand in a privileged place, our welcome for others falters, lest opening the door to them bring with it contingencies that might displace us as well.

Although Neiman offers what looks like an unrelievedly bleak depiction of our human condition as "metaphysically homeless," she still affirms, in accord with a Kantian trajectory of hope, the capacity of moral reason to empower human imagination for reshaping "the world as it is" into "the world as it ought to be" and so enact, for and with one another, some human wholeness for our world. Her account also aligns with Kant's articulation of hope as the moral horizon of

reason in affirming that the human project of rendering the world morally intelligible by enacting what ought to be is sustained only by an ordering to a point of reference—an encompassing "ideal" of the highest good—that functions "transcendentally." This ideal frames a trajectory of intelligibility for moral endeavor that is more encompassing than whatever can be rendered out of any mere juxtaposition of the fragments of human action from which we seek to exact moral sense.[44]

Neiman's philosophical grammar for this function, it must be noted, is robustly apophatic—as was Kant's—with respect to what modernity has perceived as an incurably onto-theological grammar of orthodoxy in Christian theology's affirmation of a transcendent God. Though not identical to "faith" as I construe it in terms of hospitality and welcome, Neiman's reading of "hope" does take a dynamic of human accompaniment to be central to the attainment of whatever human wholeness we have the capacity to effect for one another through our agency. In this she captures a central dimension of Kant's cosmopolitan vision pointing us toward the enlargement of mutuality— particularly in circumstances in which possibilities for mutuality seem deeply broken or even erased—as a fundamental horizon for sustaining the exercise of our agency.[45]

Neiman's construal of hope locates its moral function in the attention we pay to the mutuality of our common condition of being "homeless." Hope, as the readiness to accompany one another, particularly in the most shattering circumstances, provides a fundamental pattern for exhibiting how attention to our mutuality empowers us to open for one another a welcoming human space upon which we can dwell with each other in a manner that makes that space worthy to be called "home." In following a trajectory that attends to the moral profundity of human accompaniment Neiman's account points in a direction along which we may also plot important dimensions of a construal of faith indexed to the trope of hospitality.

Hope, in Neiman's account, is an enacted trajectory of human accompaniment—of making the world "home" for each other—that provides the fundamental horizon of moral intelligibility from which to engage our "homeless" human circumstances. It thereby provides a

frame of reference for concluding my account of faith by pointing to two important points along its trajectory from which faith can be seen taking form as an "enacted hospitality" of accompaniment. In the first instance, faith is a response acknowledging the gifted character of creation as "the hospitality of God." In accord with this account, the most fundamental form of "faith" is *the hospitality of divine enactment in the radical originating that brings to be, and continues to sustain, the dwelling place that is creation itself*. This faith has its origin in God; it is a faith *God enacts* in the encompassing bringing-to-be that is creation and that makes creation a "dwelling place." Creation may itself thus be viewed as a divine "making room" in which God's welcome is given to the abundance of all that God creates.

This dynamic is deeply embedded in the Genesis narrative (Ch 3-4) that eventuates in what Christian theology has long seen, well before modernity, as a primal instance of the fracturing that renders us "homeless." God, the most gracious host, invites the man and the woman, fashioned in God's image, to make the garden, expressive of the abundance of God's creation, their dwelling place. Yet within that abundant hospitality, the man and the women make themselves ungracious guests: They attempt to seize for themselves what is received rightly only if accepted in response to the Creator's graciousness. The narrative then makes manifest that acknowledgment and acceptance of creation as the radically originating offer of divine hospitality is a condition for the possibility of our human enactments of mutuality. So it is altogether fitting that the next fractures narrated fray and then break the deepest bonds of human mutuality: The man and the woman set themselves at odds with one another in passing off blame; far more ominously, Cain, perceiving no divine welcoming for himself, sunders in brutal murder his fraternal bond with Abel.

The Genesis narrative provides the negative articulation of what is most appropriately construed as the positive relation between the first, originating dimension of faith as the "enacted hospitality" of God's accompaniment of creation, and the second, received dimension of that faith to empower human agency with a capacity to enact hospitality for one another. Our recognition and affirmation of the most fundamental form of hospitality as the divine enactment by which

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we now stand as "guests of creation" is what makes it possible for us to enact the human hospitality by which we become "guests of one another" in acknowledgment of our mutuality.

It may well be that attention to this fundamental relation between these two dimensions of faith as "enacted hospitality" lies behind the importance that many religious traditions attach to practices in which human solidarity is enacted by welcoming the stranger at our door. In these practices we learn how our human status in the world is marked by mutual vulnerability to one another, all the more so when we meet as strangers to one another. Hospitality–at least as it has been enacted in the religiously informed practices of many cultures–is thus far more than a civil, wary, politeness that allows us to maintain those barriers between "us" and "them" that are transgressed at peril. It is, instead, the enacted risk of greeting another's vulnerability out of our own–and a reciprocal acceptance of that enacted risk by the one welcomed. Such welcoming opens up a previously unimagined common ground of mutuality that allows each of us to stand upon a new space of respect issuing from a mutual recognition of vulnerability.[46]

Faith, on this construal, thus takes form as recognition of the horizon of a divine hospitality that welcomes us into the space of creation and thereby empowers us to make that space home for one another.[47] In a "secular age" in which so much public space functions as a place for a zero-sum contention of narrow interests and "take-no-prisoners" protection of what are all-too-often parochial and tribal identities, making room for welcoming one another in mutual vulnerability presents a compelling challenge to our capacities to exercise agency in full accord with the mutuality that gives agency its fundamental moral shape. In that context, what I have articulated in this section is an argument for the role of faith, as enacted hospitality, in giving our autonomous agency a capacity to address this challenge to the mutuality that lies at the heart of its moral exercise. In that role, faith provides a horizon of divine hospitality welcoming us to the space of creation, so that we may, by our hospitality to one another, attend to the deep fractures of our "metaphysically homeless" human condition in ways that allow creation of spaces of mutuality *in which we can enact together what is needed for the overcoming of fracture*.

"Faith," on the reading I am proposing here, creates a space of possibilities for us to act with one another, even as we ourselves are fractured, to heal the fractures of the world. It provides our agency with a horizon of *possibilities for enacting, through welcoming one another in mutual vulnerability, a more encompassing wholeness to our humanity and for our world*. In a world in which "hospitality" to the movement of capital resources, armaments, and instrumentally commodified information has become more valued—and far easier to "enact"—than hospitality to one's brother and sister human beings in their often desperate vulnerability, encouraging a hospitality of mutual vulnerability may even seem foolish and dangerous. Yet it may very well be that only in the folly of hospitality will we be enabled to recognize and articulate the mutual vulnerability that, at least as much as anything else in our humanity, makes us worthy of respect.

Notes:

[1] See, for instance, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, chapter 5, 1113b-1115a; Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, Lectures XI-XIII; Duns Scotus, "The Will and Its Inclinations," in *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, Wolter, Allan B., OFM, ed. and trans., Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986, pp. 188-191, 194-197, 200-203 (I thank James South for directing me to these texts of Scotus).

[2] This point may also be articulated as a construal of moral agency in terms of the *accountability* that agential self-governance entails for shaping and directing one's conduct. The articulation of autonomy emerging in modernity can thus be understood as reconfiguring the scope of accountability: agents are now explicitly and reflexively accountable for the *normativity* of their moral judgments as well as for their conduct. Agential accountability for normativity, however, does not thereby render it, as one influential line of criticism has it, merely "subjective."

[3] *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed., Mary J. Gregor, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 58-59. [German: in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, herausgegeben von der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1904-, Bd. 4:403-404; hereafter KGS.] In this regard, the thrust of his argument is not principally against theoretical moral skepticism but against practical exemptions from the moral order that we are inclined to enact for our own benefit.

4 See, for instance, Stephen Engstrom, *The Form of Practical Knowledge: A Study of the Categorical Imperative*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009, pp. 124-127, 155-159, 167-178.

5 *The Theory of Morality*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, pp. 4-9; this classic study explores commonalities in the moral theories of Aquinas and Kant.

6 This way of reading autonomy cuts against the grain of certain renderings of "modernity" and "secularity" even prior to referencing it to a horizon of faith.

7 A notable precursor for this line of interpretation is Lucien Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant* (1971/French: *La communauté humaine et l'univers chez Kant* 1948; German: *Mensch, Gemeinschaft und Welt in der Philosophie Immanuel Kants*, 1945). Other Kant commentators who have later articulated this social dimension include Sharon Anderson Gold, Allen Wood, Roger Sullivan, Robert Louden, Philip J. Rossi, Howard Williams, Holly Wilson, and, most recently, James DiCenso.

8 Hobbes's image of the "state of nature" as *bellum omnium contra omnes* is an influential model for such zero-sum competition. I take Kant's account of autonomy, particularly the relational philosophical anthropology implicit in his account of an "ethical commonwealth," to contrast sharply with this image.

9 A comment on how "faith" is being construed in this discussion. I take faith its most general sense to encompass both the personal (individual) and social dimensions of those practices (including linguistic ones) of a community through which that community expresses and articulates *both* the relationship *in which what it affirms as transcendent stands to the community* (and its members), *and* the relationship *in which all in the community stand to that transcendent*. Faith is also neither merely a personal inner attitude (though it includes that), nor radically incommunicable or ineffable (though it may be the case that no particular articulation of faith is fully adequate). Faith's links to a community's practices and traditions thus provide the primary contexts for locating the intelligibility of its affirmations and articulations of faith. In consequence of these links, faith is thus both social and publicly communicable. Faith, moreover, has both articulated and enacted dimensions, so the intelligibility of faith is a function of the mutual correlation and interaction of these dimensions. Enacted faith serves to render intelligible what is articulated as profession of faith; profession of faith provides the grammar to render intelligible faith's enactment.

10 For "social respect," see Philip J. Rossi, *The Social Authority of Reason: Kant's Critique, Radical Evil, and the Destiny of Humankind*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005, pp. 152-162.

[11] This modality of relativism, at once Promethean and Protagorean, accords well with a secularity that gives moral urgency to the human project of displacing God, but does not exhaust the possibilities for an agential subjectivity in tune with other variations on secularity. Attention also needs to be paid to that form of secularity in which God is not so much displaced as rendered irrelevant, a secularity whose atheism is marked more by shrugs of indifference than by defiant fists.

[12] *The Sovereignty of Good* (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 80. She offers a quite different account of Kant, which takes him to affirm an (objective) metaphysical primacy to the good, in her later Gifford lectures, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992).

[13] *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 76.

[14] Ibid., p. 62, emphasis in original.

[15] Ibid., p. 80.

[16] Ibid., p. 74.

[17] Ibid., p. 75.

[18] Ibid., p. 80.

[19] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

[20] Ibid., p. 89.

[21] Ibid., p. 75.

[22] Put in more formally theological terms, this is a consequence of recognizing that "creating" is a "mode" of acting that, as properly divine, is radically different from any human finite "making." On this point, the work of David Burrell, Robert Sokolowski, and George Steiner, provides important considerations for marking this difference and for engaging its bearing upon the function of belief in contemporary culture.

[23] *Evil in Modern Thought*, p. 237. See also Taylor's remarks in the last two sections of the concluding chapter of *Sources*, pp. 513-521*.*

[24] See, for instance, Stephanos Geroulanos, *An Atheism that Is not a Humanism Emerges in French Thought*, (Stanford, 2010).

[25] Who sets these human purposes, and what gives them value, are questions implicated in a larger discussion of the relation between the divine and the human.

[26] *Sources of the Self*, p. 521.

[27] I have developed this point in "Finite Freedom, Fractured and Fragile: Kant's Anthropology as Resource for a Postmodern Theology of Grace," *Philosophie et théologie*: *Festschrift Emilio Brito, SJ*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 206, ed. Éric Gaziaux, Leuven: Peeters Press, 2007: 47-60; see especially Part III, 54-60.

[28] This is not to deny the formative role that influential interpretations of Kant's work that discounted or ignored the social embedding of autonomy have played in shaping modern moral individualism; they clearly had a role. But if a social embedding of autonomy more accurately represents Kant's own views, accounts of Kant's heritage need to inquire how and why this was lost from view. Kant, moreover, cannot be fully absolved from blame; as Lewis White Beck, arguably the most important mid-twentieth century English language Kant commentator, observed, "It is regrettable that Kant was not more careful; though, had he been so, the race of Kant commentators would have been unemployed" (*A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 221.)

[29] One indication of this repositioning within Kant's work is that, as the critical project moves into the 1790s, his discussion of hope shifts focus from personal immortality toward the final outcome of humanity's career as a species.

[30] This is not to be taken to imply that this is the *only* way to construe faith; this is a claim about faith viewed from the human side in terms of its consequences for moral agency. It should not be taken to stand in opposition to a construal of faith that focuses on its origin in divine gratuity.

[31] Philip J. Rossi, "Moral Autonomy, Human Destiny, and Divine Transcendence: Kant's Doctrine of Hope as a Foundation for Christian Ethics," *The Thomist* 46, 1982: 441-58.

[32] The human "tendency to enter into society, combined, however, with a thoroughgoing resistance that constantly threatens to sunder this society" ("Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent" in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey, Indianapolis; Hackett, 1983, 32 (KGS Bd. 8: 20).

[33] The second section, "Imagination" of Anthony Godzieba's essay in this volume, provides a complementary account of the envisioning of possibilities with reference to a framing horizon of transcendence.

[34] Rossi, "Cosmopolitanism and the Interests of Reason: A Social Framework for Human Action in History," *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants: Akten des X. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Vol. 4, ed. Valerio Rohden, Ricardo R. Terra, Guido A. de Almeida, and Margit Ruffing, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008: 65-75; "Cosmopolitanism: Kant's Social Anthropology of Hope," *Kant und die Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, Proceedings of the XI International Kant Congress, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter), forthcoming.

[35] Cf. *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 490-491 (KGS Bd. 6: 354-355); "Toward Perpetual Peace," in Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 325-328 (KGS Bd. 8: 354-357). Kant portrays peace

as what we might term a "species imperative" bearing upon both the external social order of justice among nations and the inner social order of among moral agents construed as an "ethical commonwealth"; see also *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, trans. and ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 132-133 (KGS Bd. 6:96-98).

[36] Cf. *A Secular Age*, pp. 656-710.

[37] Theo Hobson, "On Being a Perfect Guest: The Tablet Interview: George Steiner." In: *The Tablet* 259 (August 13, 2005), p.15.

[38] See Rossi, "Sojourners, Guests, and Strangers: The Church as Enactment of the Hospitality of God," *Questions liturgiques – Liturgical Questions* 90, 2009: 121-131.

[39] *Evil in Modern Thought*, p. 240.

[40] Ibid., p. 254.

[41] See Rossi, "Human Contingency, Divine Freedom, and the Normative Shape of Saving History," for *Tradition and the Normativity of History*, ed. Lieven Boeve and Terrence Merrigan, Leuven: Peeters Press (forthcoming), for a discussion of the interplay of two inflections of contingency, one the contingency of creation's absolute dependence, the other the intra-cosmic contingency of uncertain outcome.

[42] Mary Doak's essay in this volume indicates how Benedict XVI's relational account of the human, grounded on a Trinitarian theology, traces a complementary trajectory placing priority on a welcoming openness to those most in need.

[43] Hobson, "*On Being a Perfect Guest: The Tablet Interview: George Steiner*", in *The Tablet* 259, August 13, 2005, p. 14.

[44] She specifies this function as a "regulative" one.

[45] Kant's exemplary instance of this enlargement of the horizon of mutuality for sustaining the exercise of our moral agency is his identifying (in *The Metaphysics of Morals*) the imperative "There is to be no war" as categorical, "even if there is not the slightest theoretical likelihood that it can be realized*" (*Practical Philosophy*, p. 491; KGS Bd. 6: 354).

[46] These practices may also be seen as loci for the enactment of what David Tracy, in his contribution to this volume, terms a "disclosive truth" issuing from the dynamics of "Publicness Two." In addition, to the extent that the truth herein disclosed bears upon the possibility of enacting a welcoming embrace of otherness, particularly in circumstances of a "homeless" postmodernity in which the other is seen first and foremost as threat, these practices may also display the interruptive "excess" at work in what he terms "Publicness Three."

[47] A full theological account of the "divine hospitality" and its engagement in human vulnerability would trace its trajectory through the doctrinal loci of creation, incarnation, and resurrection; for an adumbration of this, see the fourth section of Godzieba's essay in this volume and Rossi, "Human Contingency, Divine Freedom, and the Normative Shape of Saving History," [n. 40]). There is, moreover, a dynamic in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius along this trajectory, most notably in the meditation on the Incarnation at the beginning of the Second Week and in the concluding *contemplatio ad amorem*.