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Rational Hope, Moral Order, and the Revolution of the Will

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One day everything will be well: that is our hope. Everything is fine now: that is our illusion.

—Voltaire, Poem on the Lisbon disaster

1. Belief and Its Alternatives

According to Kant, the attitude we ought to take towards claims about existent, concrete "supersensible" objects is *different in kind* from that which we take towards claims about sensible objects and necessary truths. In most passages the first kind of attitude is called "Belief" (*Glaube*); elsewhere he calls it "acceptance" (*Annehmung*, *Annahme*).[1] Just as the attitude itself is different, the justification that such an attitude enjoys is *different in kind* from that which underwrites knowledge (*Wissen*). I've argued elsewhere that these differences help to explain what Kant means when he says, famously, that he had to "deny knowledge in order to make room for Belief" (KRV Bxxx).[2]

Since some of the most prominent instances of Belief in Kant's system have to do with the supersensible items of traditional religion (God, the soul, the afterlife), it comes as a surprise when he states that philosophy of religion is

[1] I use "Belief" to refer to the technical Kantian notion here, and "belief" to refer to our ordinary contemporary notion. Unfortunately, there is really no good English translation for the word *Glaube* in German. For further discussion, see Andrew Chignell, "Belief in Kant," *Philosophical Review 116*, no. 3 (2007): 323–60 and Leslie Stevenson, "Opinion, Belief or Faith, and Knowledge," *Kantian Review 7*, no. 1 (2003): 72–101.

[2] See Andrew Chignell, "Kant's Concepts of Justification," *Nous 41*, no. 1 (2007): 33–63. I have consulted and often followed the translations in the *Cambridge Edition of Kant's Works*, ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992–).

not concerned primarily with rational Belief (*Vernunftglaube*) but rather with the attitude of hope (*Hoffnung*). In the "Canon of Pure Reason" chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant says that all of his philosophical interests are united by three questions—"What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?"—and in a 1793 letter to a prominent theologian he makes it clear that the third question is the main topic of the philosophy of religion.[3] Many commentators have ignored this difference by lumping Belief and hope together,[4] but in fact, I think, hope is yet another kind of attitude, one that has a different character and different rational constraints.

Why does Kant think that questions about mere *hope* are what concern us in the philosophy of religion? As just noted, Kant's own discussions of God's existence and the immortality of the soul in the *Critiques* are usually conducted in terms of rational Belief, and the creeds he would have known refer explicitly to *Glaube* rather than *Hoffnung* (the German term *Credo*—like the English "creed" and "credence"—derives from the Latin *credere*—"to believe"). Indeed, even the traditional object of the theological virtue of hope—the afterlife—is referenced in doxastic terms in every Lutheran and Catholic mass: "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting."

One answer to this question is that the various needs and interests of reason described in the *Critiques* are supposed to motivate firm Belief, and I think Kant quite reasonably follows an "assert-the-stronger" policy: *Other things being equal, if one asserts anything about a given proposition p, one should assert the strongest justified attitude that one has towards p*, even if one also holds weaker attitudes towards *p*. So if one has knowledge or justified Belief that *p*, one wouldn't normally assert one's hope that *p*. Another answer is that the "postulates of pure reason," even the ones that deal with God and the soul, are not distinctly *religious* doctrines for Kant so much as they are tenets of mere (*bloß*) practical reason. Philosophy of religion, then, has the task of discovering what if anything can be added to those postulates by performing the experiment exemplified by Kant's *Religion* book: It's not a *Critique of Pure Hope*,

[3] In the letter to C. F. Staüdlin on May 4, 1793, he also says that he needs to add a fourth question—"what is the human being (*Was ist der Mensch*)?"—in order fully to characterize his own projects in philosophy (AA 11:420ff). We also find the four-question formulation in the Introduction to the Jäsche *Logic* of 1800 (AA 8:25).

[4] See, e.g., Hermann Cohen, *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen* (New York: Norton, 1971), especially "The Messianic Idea" at pp. 122ff; Philip Rossi, "Kant's Doctrine of Hope: Reason's Interest and the Things of Faith," *New Scholasticism 56*, no. 2 (1982): 228–38; Onora O'Neill, *Kant on Reason and Religion* (Tanner Lectures on Human Values, 1996), http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/oneill97.pdf (accessed May 1, 2012); Christopher McCammon, "Overcoming Deism: Hope Incarnate in Kant's Rational Religion," in *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Chris L. Firestone and Stephen Palmquist (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 79–89; Katrin Flikschuh, "Hope as Prudence: Practical Faith in Kant's Political Thinking," *International Yearbook of German Idealism 7* (2009): 95–117.

exactly, but it does seek to exhibit which parts of an "alleged revelation" can brought within the ambit of rational Belief, which can be adopted as objects of rational hope, and which must be abandoned as irrational enthusiasm (see AA 6:12–13).

A third answer to the question is this: Perhaps Kant noticed that the attitude that religious people have towards these more robust and specific revealed doctrines often doesn't look like bona fide conviction (*Überzeugung*)—this is Kant's analogue for what we might call "belief"—or even like practical Belief in Kant's sense. By focusing on "what may I hope?" we encounter an approach that rejects the focus on knowledge, epistemic justification, and bare theistic belief that dominates contemporary analytic philosophy of religion and instead turns to the kinds of attitudes that many religious people actually adopt, towards the robust and particularist doctrines that they actually consider—especially in liturgical or ceremonial contexts.

In the next section, I consider some basic intuitions about the proper objects of hope in an effort to isolate one of the most significant necessary conditions on its rationality. In the third section I discuss the way in which an appeal to hope rather than ordinary belief or Kantian Belief might resolve a long-standing conundrum in Kant's philosophy of religion.

2. The Objects of Rational Hope

A longer paper would seek to articulate the *objects*, *nature*, and *ends* of rational hope in order to understand the role that this attitude plays, for Kant, in our cognitive, affective, and religious lives. Here I restrict my focus to the first issue—about the legitimate *objects* of hope (or, put another way, the objects of rational hope), though as we will see in section 4 this has some implications regarding the nature and ends of hope as well.

What kinds of things do we hope for? Or, staying closer to Kant: What *may* we rationally hope for? (Or, for the grammatically zealous, "For what may we rationally hope?") An initially appealing answer might just be: *anything at all*, or at least anything we want—there are no rational constraints on hope beyond the rational constraints, if any, on desire. If someone were systematically to *believe* things that we found deeply implausible, many of us would be tempted to play Clifford to his James and tell him that he really ought not to believe such things without sufficient evidence. But, so this line of thought goes, mere hope wouldn't provoke such responses, no matter what it was for. Let a thousand hopeful flowers bloom. . .

Further reflection reveals, however, that there are indeed some rational constraints in the region. Suppose I told you that I hope to become a married bachelor. You wouldn't just shrug permissively or regard me as scandalously daring. Rather, you'd be puzzled or worried that I'm deluded or malfunctioning, or

suspect at the very least that I haven't grasped the concept of *bachelor* (or marriage) adequately. One can't *reasonably* hope to be a married bachelor—it's a conceptual impossibility. This suggests that there are rational constraints on hope after all: constraints related, at the very least, to the apparent modal status of its objects. The recognition that there are such constraints lies behind Kant's statement of his third question—What *may* I hope?—the German verb is *dürfen*, meaning "to be allowed or permitted."

But are the constraints merely conceptual/logical, or are they broader than that? In order to grasp the general principle here, and the rationale for it, it will be useful to consider a series of examples, starting with weaker notions like the probable and the improbable, and then returning to various conceptions of necessity and impossibility, focusing in each case on the hoping subject's evaluation of the proposition's status, rather than any objective probability or modal status it enjoys. It will turn out, or so I will argue, that one of the main constraints on rational hope is that it cannot be directed towards what seems certain to be *really* (i.e. metaphysically) impossible.

A. *The merely probable*: The car will start tomorrow; the dog wants to go for a walk.

Obviously there is no prohibition on hoping for something that we *take to be* merely probable, but we often also go beyond mere hope in such cases and generate full-blown doxastic expectations—"the car *will* start tomorrow" or, more cautiously, "the car *will probably* start tomorrow." If we have hope in addition to an expectation, we tend not to mention it. This indicates that our ceteris paribus "assert-the-stronger" norm is operative here: We give others a better sense of our information state when we assert the strongest justified attitude that we have towards a given *p*, where flat-out belief that *p* is stronger than a probabilistic estimate that *p*, which is in turn stronger than mere hope that *p*.[5] But although it is not properly assertable, and perhaps not often adopted, hope for an expected (albeit merely probable) outcome certainly seems permissible.[6]

B. *The improbable*: I will win the lottery; it won't snow in Ithaca next year; the U.S. soccer team will win the next World Cup.

Under normal circumstances, propositions describing scenarios that the subject takes to be highly improbable are inappropriate objects of belief—even the very

[5] The norm of assertion here reflects the fact that an assertion of hope that *p* carries the implicature that the subject *doesn't* take himself to have a stronger justified attitude towards *p*. This is just implication, however, and not entailment: if I'm extremely cautious about testifying to things, even things that I believe, I may well decide to assert my hope and then cancel the implicature: "I really hope that the car will start tomorrow—I'm a pretty cautious guy, you know me—but of course I also believe that it will."

[6] Katrin Flikschuh disagrees, and argues that hope and expectation are somehow mutually exclusive. See Flikschuh, "Hope as Prudence," pp. 106–7.

weak or partial forms of belief that early modern philosophers called "opinion." But they do seem to be suitable objects of hope.[7] I can rationally hope to win the lottery, even while admitting that it is not something that I should bank on (so to speak). We do talk of "giving someone false hope" when we lead him to hope for something extremely unlikely. But the falseness in false hope is not a function of the fact that just *any* sort of hope in this case would be irrational, but rather of the fact that the subject—the hoper—is misinformed about how unlikely the object of his hope really is. We wouldn't consider it false hope if it were directed towards what someone explicitly *knows* to be a highly improbable cure (think of the cancer patients who hope to "be the 1%").[8] "False hope," then, is based on overestimation or ignorance of the relevant probability. Interestingly, if the subject *under*estimates (culpably or not) the probability of some state of affairs, and then hopes that it will obtain, we don't consider the hope to be "false." The mistake in such a case consists not in hoping but in failing to realize that something stronger—expectation or belief—is warranted.

A related way in which hope for the improbable can seem irrational is if it involves behavior or dispositions that are more consistent with *expecting* the hoped-for state to be realized. If you purchase a fancy yacht on credit merely because you hope to win the lottery, something has clearly gone wrong. But the malfunction is also clearly downstream from hope—the "as if" behavior, rather than the hope that occasions it, is the source of the real irrationality. This indicates, by the way, that hope *simpliciter* cannot be analyzed, as some have suggested,[9] into a desire for some X plus the disposition to "act as if" X obtains.

C. *The causally impossible*: I fly around the room, just by flapping my arms; the dead rise.

Empirical miracles like this aren't just unlikely; they are causally impossible. Or so we tend to think. Some philosophers (Malebranche, Leibniz) conceive of empirical miracles as events that follow from the "higher order" that God actually wills, even though they are inconsistent with the lower or "subordinate"

[7] In making this point I am departing from Hobbes, Descartes, Hume, and J. Wheatley, all of whom take rational hope to involve the assumption that *p* is "probable." What precisely the term "probable" means in early modern philosophy is a larger question which I won't discuss here. See J. Wheatley, "Wishing and Hoping," *Analysis 18*, no. 6 (1958): 121–31.

[8] See Adrienne Martin's elegant analysis of "hoping against hope," especially in medical contexts, in Adrienne M. Martin, *How We Hope* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[9] See Philip Pettit, "Hope and its Place in Mind," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 592*, no. 1 (2004): 152–65; James L. Muyskens, *The Sufficiency of Hope: Conceptual Foundations of Religion. Philosophical Monographs* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), pp. 14–15; Sidney Axinn, *The Logic of Hope: Extensions of Kant's View of Religion* (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994). Note that the claim is about hope *simpliciter*: There may be a *species* of hope that can be analyzed in this way.

laws of nature that we aim to capture in scientific theories.[10] But let's suppose for the moment that miracles involve the genuine suspension of the causal laws governing the empirical universe, or the genuine impedance of causal powers.

Other things being equal, it would obviously be irrational to *expect* that a miracle of this sort will occur—that is, to believe or opine that it will or probably will happen. This is true even though we may admire in some ways those who "expect a miracle" (ways that are consistent with also thinking that the person is irrational). On the other hand, we can quite reasonably *want* the miracle to happen or *wish* that it had happened: the constraints on rational desire and wish are much looser than the constraints on rational belief.

What about hope? Is it rational to *hope* for what we reasonably take to be causally impossible? I don't think this is clear, and my own recent unscientific surveys of English speakers suggest that the uncertainty is shared. Indeed it seems as though the answer depends on whether one makes "reasonably" or "hope" the linguistic focus in stating the question: Can I *reasonably* hope that a ninety-nine-year-old woman will conceive a child, or that I'm going to fly away just by flapping my arms? The standards for reasonable hope rise when the question is intoned such that "reasonably" is the focus, and now it will seem to most people that the answer is clearly no. But: Can I reasonably *hope* that the dead will rise to greet us tomorrow, or that I'll just fly away? Now the focus (by way of what linguists sometimes call "perceptible pitch accent") is placed on "hope," and so the standards go down such that hoping seems harmless and rationally permissible ("it's just *hope*, after all!").[11]

I have been assuming so far that we do not have justified background beliefs about the existence of superbeings (Superman, angels, gods, etc.) who can suspend causal laws or impede causal powers. Without such beliefs, then I think the context-sensitive model of the standards on rational hope may be correct. If we do have such background beliefs, then hope may be reasonable in any context—with or without knowing anything about that being's intentions. And certainly if we justifiably believe something about that being's general character or intentions, and thus justifiably believe that the being might want to suspend the normal order at just this sort of juncture, then we can reasonably expect that a miracle might or even will occur in a given case—that Superman will arrive and save Lois Lane, that Abraham and Sarah will conceive despite their age, that the causal powers of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace-fire will not touch Abednego, and so forth. And if we can reasonably expect in such a case, then

[10] For Leibniz's account of miracles and some of the problems involved, see Andrew Chignell, "Leibniz, Kant, and the Possibility of Empirical Miracles," in *Leibniz and Kant*, ed. Brandon C. Look (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[11] For more on "focus" see Mats Rooth's various papers on the topic, including the overview in "Focus," *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory*, ed. Shalom Lappin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 271–99. Thanks to Adam Marushak for directing my attention to this literature.

it seems reasonable (if a bit weak-minded) to hope. That said, it will not often be appropriate to assert that hope, given the "assert-the-stronger" norm mentioned earlier.

But returning to our main question: Other things being equal—that is, setting aside contexts in which the possibility of superbeings becomes salient, and bracketing contexts where "reasonable" is intoned in a way that makes it the focus, is it reasonable to hope that my dead relative will rise tomorrow and meet me at the breakfast table, or that the sun will stand still so that I can finish mowing the lawn? Again, I am unsure what to say. It is clearly fine to *want* such things, though perhaps our friends would worry if we were to invest a lot of emotional energy in such desires. And it is at the very least more reasonable to *hope* for such things than it is to *believe* or even *weakly opine* that they will occur. That doesn't mean that hope is just the same thing as desire or wish: I can still rationally desire something even if I am *certain* that it did, will, did not, or will not occur, but I cannot rationally hope for it. If other things are equal in the way just described, known causal impossibilities may fall into this category as well.

> D. *The causally necessary*: The sun will warm the earth tomorrow; the apple will fall when it drops from the tree.

If I don't know that it's causally necessary that the sun will warm the earth tomorrow, I can reasonably hope that it will. But what if I know that it's determined to happen: Can I still reasonably hope for something I take to be causally necessary? This is once again unclear, since here (even more than in the case of the probable) something stronger—expectation or even certainty—is justified. That said, I am inclined to think that this is another case in which hope is rationally permitted even though we assert the stronger attitude (i.e., expectation/belief).

Someone might object that an acceptable and common response to the question, "Will the sun warm the earth tomorrow?" is something like: "Well, I certainly *hope* so!" But here the speaker is reporting the presence of her weaker state in order to implicate something about the silliness of the question. In other words, the speaker asserts something that would be more appropriate if the object in question were a causal improbability ("I hope so"), but intones her response in a way that draws attention to the fact that the questioner is asking something to which he should already know the answer. If that gloss is correct, then this isn't really a violation of the ceteris paribus "assert-the-stronger" policy: She has genuine belief, but she's mentioning her hope (if she in fact has hope) because the questioner should already *know* that she has that belief.

> E. *The Past*: World War II ended in 1945; my parents met each other; the team won the game yesterday.

Regarding past events, we again have to separate the epistemology from the metaphysics: Do we know at *t* that the war is over? If so, then (time travel scenarios aside) it seems irrational to hope at *t* that the war is not over. It seems equally irrational to hope that the war *is* over at *t*, but that's at least partly because hope involves desire, and in this case the desire has been satisfied. (I suppose someone might express the hope [and have the desire] that the war *continues* to be over, but I'm not sure we would really understand what he meant.)

If we don't know one way or the other what happened, however, then it may still be rational to hope. We might hope, say, that our local team won the game, even though in fact the question is settled in the world (and we know that it is).[12] Once we find out what happened, one way or the other, then perhaps we can't keep rationally hoping; what the scholastics called the "accidental necessity" of the past is judged from the vantage point of the present.[13]

F. *The metaphysically, conceptually, or logically impossible*: My brother is identical to a dolphin; Chelsea Clinton had parents other than Bill and Hillary Clinton; water is not H_2O; there is a bachelor who isn't male; a sentence of the form "*p* and not-*p*" is true.

Can we reasonably hope for a state of affairs that is impossible in one of these stronger-than-causal ways? We have seen that if we reasonably believe something to be causally impossible, we may still be able rationally to hope for it. And clearly if something is *in fact* impossible in one of these stronger ways but we're not certain of that fact, then we can still rationally hope for it. But if it is both impossible in one of these stronger ways *and* we are certain of that fact, then hoping for it to be true (or even possible) seems irrational in a way that a highly improbable state of affairs or even a causal impossibility is not.

G. *The metaphysically, conceptually, or logically necessary*: Gold is AU; all bachelors are male; 2 + 2 = 4; if *p*, then *p* or *q*.

Although hope for what one knows to be causally necessary seems at times permissible, hope for what is known to be necessary in some stronger way seems just silly. It is clearly out of place to *assert* the hope that all bachelors are male or that my mother is one of my parents; the "assert-the-stronger" norm is still

[12] This in opposition to Aquinas who claims in the *Summa Theologica* that hope (construed as an emotion) always has to do with the future (see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, ed. Daniel Sullivan [Chicago: English Dominicans, Britannica, 1955], 1a2ae, *40*, 1).

[13] On "accidental necessity" see Alfred J. Freddoso, "Accidental Necessity and Logical Determinism," *Journal of Philosophy 80*, no. 5 (1983): 257. The question of whether I can rationally hope that my parents didn't meet goes beyond difficulties regarding the accidental necessity of the past. The question is really: can I rationally hope that something happened such that I do not now exist? I will set this issue aside here, but I don't see a principled reason to think this would be irrational, especially if it seems that the world as a whole, or someone I really care about, would be much better off as a result of my never having existed.

in force. The rational prohibition here may be not merely on assertion, but rather on attitude-formation generally: How can I hope that *p* when I know that *p* holds in every possible world?

(Side note: If this is right, it has interesting implications for philosophers like Spinoza or Shoemaker who regard (some of) the natural laws as metaphysically necessary. Such philosophers would have to insist, implausibly I think, that it is irrational to hope that the sun will shine and gravity will hold tomorrow unless there is some kind of epistemic opacity in place—that is, unless the subject doesn't know that the state of affairs is necessary. Perhaps this explains why Spinoza says that genuine hope is *always* grounded in a kind of uncertainty or doubt, and thus that hope is the counterpart of *fear* rather than of despair.)[14]

What about intermediate cases where the subject knows that a proposition is *either* necessarily true or necessarily false, but is non-culpably ignorant of which is the case? A philosophically sophisticated agnostic, for instance, will know that it is either necessarily true or necessarily false that God exists; a mathematician will be aware that Goldbach's conjecture is either necessarily true or necessarily false, and so forth. In such situations it seems clear that the subject *can* reasonably hope that God exists, or that Goldbach's conjecture is true. Indeed, Christian Goldbach himself was presumably in precisely the latter position. And this would have been so even if he had had *some reason*, even reason sufficient to justify knowledge, to think that it was false. The converse also holds; one can imagine Goldbach's rival after many years of laborious investigation having good but not yet overwhelming reason to think that the conjecture is (necessarily) true, and yet still hoping that it is (necessarily) false.

This again suggests that we can rationally hope for things that we take to be necessary or impossible in a stronger-than-causal sense, as long as we aren't certain *which* of the two options obtains, and as long as this lack of certainty isn't itself culpable. But if both the world and the mind are completely settled (for instance, if *not-p* is a necessary truth and we are certain of that), then it is not rational to hope one way or the other. In such a case the most we can rationally do is expect that *not-p* and resignedly wish that *p*.

These reflections admittedly bear the risks involved in drawing conceptual truths from linguistic intuitions, and no doubt Kant would not favor this way of making the point. Still, I think our results provide some support for the idea that there is an important rational constraint on hope. The line that was drawn by these reflections was at the boundary of certainty about metaphysical modality: We can rationally hope that *p* only if *p* describes something that we

[14] "Hope is a joy not constant, arising from the idea of something future or past about the occurrence of which we sometimes doubt [. . .]. From these definitions it follows that there is no hope unmingled with fear." See Spinoza E, book 3, d. 12,13. To "doubt about the occurrence" of something is to be unsure whether it did or will occur. So for Spinoza, at least, hope trades on uncertainty.

are not *certain* to be metaphysically impossible.[15] If we are certain, or are in a position to be certain, that p is metaphysically impossible, then we can't reasonably hope that p. "Real possibility" (*reale Möglichkeit*) is the relevant Kantian notion here,[16] and so we can put the principle more precisely and in Kantian terms as the following necessary condition:

> (H) S's hope that p is rational only if S is not in a position to be certain that p is really impossible.[17]

The analysis so far also shows that that there is reason to steer clear of more intuitive formulations that focus solely on epistemic possibility, such as

> (H′) S's hope that p is rational only if, for all S is in a position to know, p.

We should avoid this because, in some cases, the subject might very well be in a position to *know* that *not-p*, and yet still hope that p. This was true in the case of Goldbach's rival described above. There are also causal examples: Given the laws and the assumption that our knowledge of them can provide knowledge of future events, I may very well know that the ring that just slipped off my finger will fall down into the gorge and be lost forever. At the same time, I may earnestly hope, in the moment, that through some supernatural mechanism it will defy gravity and come back up into my hand. Of course, if what I have *is* knowledge in the first place, then my hope will ultimately be dashed along with the ring (knowledge is factive). But that needn't entail, in the moment, that this hope is irrational.

In the Goldbach case, the rival knows that p but he's not yet certain. In the gorge-and-ring case, I may have causal knowledge but not certainty. Or perhaps I am certain that the event is *causally impossible* but not certain that it is metaphysically impossible. In each of these situations, I think, hope is still rational; if that is correct, then these cases count in favor of (H) over (H′). It is only when we become certain that the relevant event is *metaphysically* impossible that rationality requires us to abandon hope.

The same sort of considerations work also against a slightly weaker principle such as

> (H″) S's hope that p is rational only if, for all S is justified in believing, p.

[15] Here and in what follows, I articulate the condition in terms of what is impossible rather than what is necessary; these notions, of course, are interdefinable.

[16] For further discussion of Kant's notion of "real possibility" and the various roles it plays, see my "Kant, Real Possibility, and the Threat of Spinoza," *Mind 121* (2012): 635–75.

[17] Here and throughout, the "in a position" clauses are meant to pick out, very roughly, the states a subject could be in if she were to reflect momentarily on her evidence. I am now in a position to know what I had for breakfast, since when I reflect for a moment I come up with a pretty clear piece of memorial evidence. I am not now in a position to know, however, that the weather in Helsinki is miserable today, even though it only takes a moment for me to check the newspaper and see that it is. Also: I'm assuming that if S knows that p then she is *ipso facto* in a position to know that p.

Again, in the gorge-and-ring case, it seems clear that what I am justified in believing is *not-p* rather than p—that is, that the ring will *not* defy gravity and somehow return to me. And yet, in the moment, it seems that I can still reasonably hope that it will.

Our best candidate so far for the necessary condition on rational hope, then, appears to be (H)—we can't be certain that p is really impossible. With this condition in hand, we can now turn to a discussion of the way in which such a modal condition functions in Kant's philosophy of religion.

3. Kantian Religion: The Role of Hope

> The whole domain of the supernatural is thus removed from the region of belief into that of simple hope, and in that, for anything we can see, it is likely always to remain.
>
> —J. S. Mill, "Theism"

3.1. HOPE IN THE *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

In the passage from the Canon of Pure Reason mentioned at the outset, Kant tells us that all "interests" of reason are "united" in the three questions about knowledge, ethical action, and religious hope. The third question, he goes on to say, is "simultaneously practical and theoretical, so that the practical leads like a clue to a reply to the theoretical questions and, in its highest form, the speculative question." More specifically, by reflecting on the fact that "something ought to happen," we can make an "inference" about what we may hope for, even if we can't *know* that it will obtain or even that it is possible (KRV A805–6/B833–4).

Kant goes on to describe what he calls a "moral world"—a world in which human happiness and human virtue are in perfect proportion—and to argue that we all ought to will that there is such a world and that we are happy (and thus virtuous) within it. This claim, together with a version of ought-implies-can, is supposed to underwrite commitment to the real possibility of the moral world (KRV A807/B835). And the commitment to real possibility in turn licenses hope for its actuality:

> [I]t is equally necessary to accept in accordance with reason in its theoretical use (*eben so nothwendig sei es auch nach der Vernunft, in ihrem theoretischen Gebrauch anzunehmen*) that everyone has grounds (*Ursache*) to hope for happiness in the same measure as he has made himself worthy of it in his conduct, and that the system of morality is therefore inseparably combined with the system of happiness, though only in the idea of pure reason. (KRV A809/B837)

This is an odd phrase: "accept that everyone has grounds to hope." Given the context of the discussion, it is clear this "acceptance" is equivalent to "Belief" (*Glaube*) in the technical Kantian sense, and indeed Kant often treats these terms as synonyms. What we are accepting, then, is that everyone has grounds to *hope* for future happiness in proportion to his or her own virtue. In other words, we are not baldly accepting that there actually *is* a necessary connection between virtue and happiness; rather, we are accepting that such a connection is *really possible* from a practical point of view (that its concept has what Kant sometimes calls "objective practical reality") and then hoping for its actuality—in our case as well as in that of others.[18] Kant goes on to claim, contentiously, that God's *actual* existence as well as that of the future life for the human soul are necessary conditions of the mere (albeit real) possibility of such a necessary connection, and thus that the very willing of the moral law requires that we adopt Belief in God and a future life (KRV A810–11/B838–9).

Kant's moral proofs are as familiar as they are controversial, and I don't propose to make more than a few brief remarks about this version of the argument. First, note that Kant doesn't say that we may hope for the present existence of a perfectly moral world. This shows that he is taking into account the conclusive evidence he thinks we have (in our own case as well as others') that this is *not* such a world. Hope for a different past or present is hope for a metaphysical impossibility, albeit an "accidental" one.[19] Still, we can hold out "hope of being happy" in a moral world to come, and thus hope that our own ultimate moral state is one of overall goodness.

Second, in the first *Critique* Kant apparently thinks of the hope for happiness as providing part of the *psychological motivation* (if not the normative reason) for doing one's duty. The mere weight of rational law isn't going to be enough, most of the time, to motivate creatures like us; rather, we have to (*a*) Believe in the real possibility of "promises and threats"—that is, in the real possibility of a "moral world" in which virtue is rewarded with happiness (KRV A811/B839). We also have to (*b*) positively hope that this world is actual, and

[18] Michalson seems to miss the modal distinction here when he accuses Kant of begging the question by just "assuming at the outset that the universe is fair and proportionate," Gordon Michalson, *Fallen Freedom: Kant on Radical Evil and Moral Regeneration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 92. For one of Kant's many discussions of "objective practical reality" see, for instance, "The End of all Things" (AA 8:333).

[19] If the ideality of time raises eyebrows here, then perhaps we can think of Kant's refusal to hope for the perfect world as resting on the straightforward idea that when a fact is known with certainty to obtain (e.g., the world is morally imperfect), then one cannot reasonably hope that it doesn't obtain. This is just an instance of the general principle, discussed above, that one cannot reasonably hope for what one knows (with certainty) to be a metaphysical impossibility.

(*c*) hope that *we* will be happy in it (by way of being just).[20] But again, Kant thinks it is only rational to hope for something if one has sufficient subjective grounds to Believe that it is really possible (KRV A822/B851).

Third, and most significant for our purposes here: Kant is clearly operating with a stronger condition on hope than the one that came out of our armchair analysis in section 2 above. That condition said that

> (H) S's hope that *p* is rational only if S is not in a position to be certain that *p* is really impossible.

But now we have seen that Kant's claim in the *Critique of Pure Reason* goes further in that it requires the subject to have a certain positive propositional attitude towards the modal status of the relevant proposition, even if only implicitly.[21] The revised principle, then, is:

> (H*) S's hope that *p* is rational only if S at least rationally Believes that *p* is really possible.[22]

The difference between (H) and (H*) is subtle but crucial, since without the slightly stronger principle, Kant's moral proof wouldn't make it to positive Belief in God's actual existence as the guarantor of this real possibility. Instead it would arrive at the conclusion that for all we are justified in believing, God exists—and this is presumably weaker than the result that Kant wants—that is, full-blown Belief in God's existence as a result of our willing (and hoping for) the Highest Good.

3.2. HOPE IN *RELIGION*

The most prominent and frequent use of "hope" in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* relates to a version of the doctrine of "supernatural assistance" in the moral life. This is a notoriously tricky and convoluted part of the critical philosophy; a number of recent critics have highlighted significant "conundrums" in what Kant says about our moral condition initially (radically evil) and what we can rationally Believe regarding the means to moral

[20] The story about the motivational role of hope seems to change as Kant's moral philosophy develops in the 1780s. In the first *Critique* there is, as David Sussman puts it, a "possible divergence between the authority and motivational power of reason" that Kant later "decisively rejects," David Sussman, "Something to Love: Kant and the Faith of Reason," in *Kant's Moral Metaphysics: God, Freedom, and Immortality*, ed. Benjamin Bruxvoort Lipscomb and James Krueger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 133–48, p. 138.

[21] Note: its being positive does not entail that it is *occurrent*. What I say here is intended to be consistent with the claim that these attitudes are often if not exclusively dispositional.

[22] "At least" here is meant to ensure that the condition is met if the subject has something stronger than mere Belief, too—rational conviction or knowledge of the modal situation would also do.

improvement.[23] The problem stems from the fact that Kant's rigorist commitments in ethics entail that a free agent is always oriented toward the bad (and thus "radically evil") or toward the good; there is no room for a middle, "indifferent," or meliorist position (AA 6:22–24). In Part One of *Religion*, moreover, Kant argues that we all "innately" possess a radically evil propensity for which we are also somehow responsible. Our task as ethical agents, then, is to perform the "revolution of the will" that makes us fundamentally good once more. All the same, throughout *Religion* Kant says that we may and even must hope for *external* assistance in this task. Here is a representative passage:

> Reason says that whoever does, in a disposition of true devotion to duty, as much as lies within his power to satisfy his obligation (at least in a steady approximation toward complete conformity to the law), can *legitimately hope* (*hoffen dürfe*) that what lies outside his power will be supplemented by the supreme wisdom *in some way or other* (which can render permanent the disposition to the steady approximation), without reason thereby presuming to *determine that way or know in what it consists*, for God's way can perhaps be so mysterious that, at best, he could reveal it to us in a symbolic representation in which the practical import alone is comprehensible to us, whereas, theoretically, we could not in the least grasp what this relation of God to the human being is in itself, or attach concepts to it, even if God wanted to reveal such a mystery to us. (AA 6:171, my emphases; see also AA 6:48, 6:52–5)

Conundrum theorists highlight the tension between passages like this one—which claim that if we have done our moral best we can "legitimately hope" for mysterious assistance—and two other basic Kantian commitments. The first is the "ought-implies-can" principle: If we ought to be good, then Kant thinks we can be good (AA 6:50; KRV A807/B835). So assistance in getting to the place where we ought to be cannot be *required*. But, on the other hand, Kant says regarding the "will to the good" that "the human being, in his natural corruption, cannot bring it about on his own within himself" (AA 6:143).[24]

[23] By Michalson most prominently (*Fallen Freedom*), but also by Allen Wood, Nicholas Wolterstorff, John Hare, and Philip Quinn. See Allen W. Wood, "Rational Theology, Moral Faith, and Religion," in *Cambridge Companion to Kant*, ed. Paul Guyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 394–416; Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Conundrums in Kant's Rational Religion," in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, ed. Phillip Rossi and Michael Wreen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 40–53; John Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics, Human Limits, and God's Assistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Philip Quinn, "Original Sin, Radical Evil, and Moral Identity," *Faith and Philosophy* 1, no. 2 (1984): 184–202; Philip Quinn, "Christian Atonement and Kantian Justification," *Faith and Philosophy* 3, no. 4 (1986): 440–62.

[24] For discussion of the apparent violation of ought-implies-can here, see Wolterstorff, "Conundrums in Kant's Rational Religion," 48–9.

Second, and more pressingly, the conundrumists point out that Kant is committed to the "stoic maxim" according to which each individual is fully causally responsible for his or her moral condition.[25] "Man *himself* must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become," Kant warns (AA 6:44). This isn't part of the general ought-implies-can principle, but once granted, it stands in serious tension with the claim that assistance is required for our transition to a good will. For if such help is involved, then it seems that *we* are not making ourselves what we morally can (because we ought) to be.

Most of the conundrumists leave the discussion there, arguing that Kant fails to steer us adequately through the "moral gap" between the Pelagian Scylla and the Augustinian Charybdis. Hare sums up the situation this way:

> What Kant has to do is to show that the revolution is possible, and he does this by pointing to the possibility of supernatural assistance. His failure, however, is to show how he can appeal to such assistance given the rest of his theory, and in particular given the stoic maxim. He has to show, we might say, not *how* supernatural assistance is possible, but *that* he can appeal to it given the rest of his theory. This is what he fails to do.[26]

I want to suggest, by contrast, that a solution to the conundrum comes into view when we recognize that what Kant is commending to us in this context is neither knowledge nor Belief but rather mere hope. As we have seen, hope can be rational even where knowledge and Belief are not; a subject does not have to *show*, *prove*, or even *indicate* that a state of affairs is really possible in order rationally to hope for it. She doesn't even need practical grounds for Belief that it is *actual*. Rather, according to principle (H) it simply needs to be the case that, for all she is certain of, the state of affairs is not really *impossible*. Alternatively (and this is the slightly stronger formulation that we encountered in (H*)), the subject simply needs a justified Belief that the state of affairs is really possible. Both of these are quite a bit weaker than what Hare requires of Kant, namely that he somehow *show* that assistance is possible before asking us to hope for it.

But can even these weaker conditions be met in the case of supernatural assistance? Kant seems to think so; it is "incomprehensible," as he puts it in the passage just quoted (AA 6:171), whether and how the combination of individual effort and external help might obtain. But by the same token we also do not know that it is really *impossible*. As long as that is so, we can Believe that it

[25] The label "stoic maxim" is from Wolterstorff, "Conundrums." For references to it, see Michalson, *Fallen Freedom*, p. 93; Hare, *The Moral Gap*, pp. 62ff

[26] Hare, The Moral Gap, pp. 61–2.

is really possible (on non-epistemic grounds) and then hope that it is actual.[27] As Kant puts it: "to Believe (*glauben*) that grace *may* have its effects, and that *perhaps* there must be such effects to supplement the imperfection of our striving for virtue, is all that we can say on the subject" (AA 6:174, my emphasis). Whichever condition on rational hope we accept, then—(H) or Kant's stronger (H*)—the claim that full human agency and superhuman assistance work together to make us morally good is one that we can rationally hope to be true.

But here, I think, the critics will cry out: Wasn't the source of the central conundrum the fact that the following seems like an incompatible quartet, where S stands for any corrupt moral agent?

(A) S is morally responsible for making himself good (i.e., for converting the quality of his will).
(B) S can make himself good.
(C) If S is morally responsible for making himself good, and S can make himself good, then S's moral condition must be fully *ontologically* dependent on S as well. (Stoic maxim).
(D) S requires assistance in becoming good.

Kant cannot reject (A), given his overall ethical theory, and he cannot retain (A) and reject (B) without violating ought-implies-can. So, say the critics, he is forced to deny either (C)—the Stoic maxim—or (D) the requirement of assistance.

This is the heart of the conundrum. But putting it in such a stark form also suggests that Kant may have a way out. For even if we accept the conjunction of (A)–(C), the tension with (D) may not be a matter of logical necessity, despite initial appearances. This is where Kant's claims about noumenal ignorance play a role: perhaps we simply don't know enough about how relations between substances at the fundamental level work to *know* that S's being fully responsible for his moral character logically precludes God's also being partly ontologically responsible for it. It seems better to say simply that the situation is "incomprehensible" or "inscrutable" for us (AA 6:52), as Kant repeatedly affirms, or that (A)–(C) can be known, at most, to be in some kind of derivative tension with (D), rather than a full-blown logical or conceptual tension. These points are at the heart of my argument in this section, and so worth considering in more detail.

[27] For an account of "non-epistemic grounds" see my "Belief in Kant," *Philosophical Review 116*, no. 3 (2007): 323–60. Eric Watkins raises a question (in formal comments at the Eastern Division meeting of the APA) about what kind of non-epistemic grounds we could have for holding that something is really possible that aren't also grounds for holding that it is actual. I think Kant's "moral proof" involving the possibility of the highest good offers some guidance here, but an adequate discussion of the question will have to wait for another occasion.

What would lead someone to think that one state of affairs is incompatible with another state of affairs in the intelligible world, where the "incompatibility" here is the noumenal analogue of causal incompatibility in the empirical world? Presumably one might try to extrapolate from beliefs about causal relations at the empirical level to a belief about the character of these ground-consequence relations at the noumenal level ("nausal" relations, for lack of a better term). In the former context, we think quite reasonably that if some event x is *fully* causally responsible for some effect E, then another event y is *not at all* causally responsible for E. The conclusion we extrapolate is that in the realm of free intelligible acts, too, it is impossible for one agent to be *fully* nausally responsible for something while also requiring the assistance of some other agent to accomplish it. Is there a way to resist this extrapolation?

One way is to suggest that, for all we know, straightforward compatibilism at the noumenal level might be possible; perhaps we can be fully responsible even while another being is also partly or fully responsible. But it is pretty clear that while Kant is a compatibilist about noumenal freedom and *phenomenal* determination, he regards determination (theological as well as scientific) as incompatible with what he calls the "laws of freedom" in the intelligible world (AA 28:1106).

A second approach would divide the labor in Anselmian fashion by arguing that the creature simply has to *stop resisting assistance*, and that this would then allow for the requisite revolution of the will while still preserving freedom.[28] Although Kant says things in places that suggest this kind of picture (see AA 6:44 where he says we must "accept God's help"; cf. AA 6:191), in general it doesn't seem to do much to resolve the tension between his view and the Stoic maxim. For the latter says that if we are not the ontological ground of the positive *change* in the character of our will, then we are also not morally praiseworthy for it.

A third response is epistemic: We can remind ourselves that this is, after all, the noumenal world, and thus that we can't *know* that something like the conjunction of (A)–(D) is impossible unless we spy a genuine *logical* contradiction. As noted earlier, most of Kant's language in *Religion* and related writings suggests that pointing this out is his strategy for avoiding the conundrum; he thinks it is simply inscrutable to us how these nausal relations work, and thus the weaker modal condition on hope in (H)—that S can't be justifiably certain that *p* is really impossible—is satisfied. Here is a relevant passage from *Conflict of the Faculties* (1798):

> But we need not be able to understand and state exactly what the means of this assistance is (for in the final analysis this is transcendent and,

[28] For a sophisticated account of Anselm's picture here, see Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

> despite all that God himself might tell us about it, inconceivable to us). (AA 7:44)

And even more explicitly in a lecture from the critical period:

> [E]ven if it is true that our will can decide something independently of every natural cause, it is still not in the least conceivable how God might concur in our actions despite our freedom, or how he could concur as a cooperating cause of our will; for then *eo ipso* we would not be the author of our own actions, or at least not wholly so. (AA 28:1106)

As far as our ability to conceive of things is concerned, then, it looks like assistance in the moral revolution is out. But, inconceivability must not track real impossibility for Kant, since he immediately goes on to say that freedom "belongs to the intelligible world, and we are acquainted with nothing of it beyond the fact that it exists, so we also *do not know the laws by which it is governed.*" As a result, "*our reason cannot deny the possibility of this concursus.*"[29] Assistance in the moral life may be unknowable and even inconceivable, but that's not sufficient for being certain of its impossibility, and so hope for it satisfies (H). Again, this appeal to ignorance regarding the intelligible counterpart to natural laws is the way Kant typically seems to want to respond to the conundrum.

But since, as we have seen, he also appears to back the stronger modal condition on hope—(H*)—according to which S must have at least a positive rational Belief that *p* is really possible, it is worth discussing whether that condition too can be met in this context. So let's consider a fourth and much more tendentious kind of response to the conundrum.

Suppose that the situation we're imagining—that we are fully responsible for our own moral character *and* that external assistance is involved—*is* in fact impossible as far as the nausal "laws" of the intelligible realm are concerned. And suppose, further, that we have good reason to think that this is so. Even so, I submit, this needn't doom Kant's claim about the rationality of hope for assistance. For what we have here (by hypothesis) is merely an impossibility according to the "laws" of this realm—one that is, for all we know, still logically as well as "absolutely" really possible.[30] In other words, perhaps there is a level distinction in the intelligible realm such that a state that is incompatible with its "laws" is still logically and absolutely possible *per se*.

[29] AA 28:1106 (my emphasis).

[30] For Kant's use of the notion of "absolute possibility," see, for example, KRV A324/B382 in the first *Critique*. In the Postulates we're told that absolute (real) possibility "goes beyond all possible empirical use of the understanding" and relates to things and their natures *per se*—it has to do with what is "possible in all respects" rather than "possible only under conditions that are themselves merely possible" (KRV A232/B284).

The analogy to plain vanilla empirical miracles is useful here: Just as someone might be rational in hoping for an empirical miracle even though she regards miracles as causally impossible, so too a Kantian might rationally take a "miracle of the moral world" to be possible, even though she knows it is impossible in some metaphysically derivative sense. Kant himself draws the analogy in the remainder of the passage quoted above:

> But even if our reason cannot deny the possibility of this *concursus*, it still sees that such an effect would have to be a *miracle of the moral world*, just as God's acts of cooperation with occurrences in the sensible world are God's miracles in the physical world. (AA 28:1106–7, original emphasis)

The moral miracle that we take to be possible is that a kind of extramundane assistance helps us do something that we ought to do, and yet that we are also *fully* responsible for doing it ourselves. We Believe this to be possible on practical grounds, and then take it as the object of our hope. Kant's suggestion, by way of analogy, is that this is no less rational than believing in the absolute (empirical) possibility of "miracles in the physical world": It's not something that we can rationally *expect*, given the empirical laws and our knowledge of them. But hope is still permitted. A less radical variation would suggest that the "laws" of the intelligible realm—whatever those are—do not apply to divine activities in the way that they do to interactions between finite substances, and so it may be nausally possible for God to assist (though not determine) without compromising autonomy and moral responsibility.[31] Either way, Kant can insist that we ought to perform the revolution of the will in a fully autonomous fashion—even if we also require assistance.

It is worth keeping in mind here that most scholastics and many early moderns thought that God both concurs with our actions and leaves us causally responsible for them in a way that is sufficient for moral responsibility. Kant, at least in some early texts, seems to adopt this general sort of concurrence doctrine as well.[32] Perhaps the tension we feel in the idea of a "moral miracle" is a result of general puzzlement about concurrence doctrines—empirical, noumenal, moral, and otherwise. I can't pretend to eradicate that tension or puzzlement here, but it is at least worth noting that Kant is not alone among

[31] This variation would allow us to read the passage just quoted as analogizing "miracles of the moral world" not to causal, empirical miracles, but to *ordinary* "acts of cooperation with occurrences in the sensible world" (AA 28:1106–7).

[32] Kant seems to endorse this in the pre-critical period *Nova Dilucidatio* (AA 1:415) and Inaugural Dissertation (AA 2:396–414). Watkins suggests that Kant's ongoing commitment to divine concurrence may allow him to say, in the critical period too, that God is "in" space in some sense, and perhaps even for us to experience God as given in space. (See Eric Watkins, "Kant on the Hiddenness of God," in *Kant's Moral Metaphysics*, pp. 255–90. This discussion is found on pp. 272–3.)

his predecessors and contemporaries.[33] Moreover, even if he ultimately rejects *empirical* concurrence—as some recent commentators suggest[34]—he might still regard it as metaphysically possible for us to receive divine assistance in the *intelligible* realm while doing something for which we are fully responsible.[35] Or, at the very least, he might regard such a "moral concursus" as something that we can Believe to be really possible on practical grounds, even if we can't have knowledge or conviction that it is. But according to (H*) such Belief is all that is required for rational hope.[36]

My claim in this section, then, is that there are a number of strategies for defending the idea that hope for assistance in the moral revolution is rational on the Kantian picture. Our ignorance of the modal situation rules out any certainty that there is a genuine conundrum involving the stoic maxim and the ought-implies-can principle here, and so (H) is satisfied. Furthermore, the suggestion that the possibility in question would be of an absolute "real" or metaphysical sort, rather than either the causal *or* the nausal sort, may leave room for positive Belief in that possibility, as required by (H*).

4. Conclusion: For What *Should* We Hope?

In section 2, I focused on the propositional *objects* of rational hope and generated two variants of a general modal condition on hope. The discussion there, however, also points in a certain direction regarding the *nature* of hope. Simple models construe hope as merely a kind of feeling. We have discovered that rational hope also requires that its object be, for all the subject is certain of, not impossible. One can't reasonably hope for something that one takes with certainty to be really impossible, though one can still wish for or desire it. Other

[33] Some of the best recent discussions of concurrence generally are by Alfred Freddoso. See, for example, Alfred Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Why Conservation Is Not Enough," *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 553–85; Alfred Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case Against Secondary Causation in Nature," in *Divine and Human Action*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 74–118.

[34] Desmond Hogan argues that whatever sympathies Kant had for concurrence in the pre-critical period are later abandoned for a Durandus-style conservation account. See Desmond Hogan, "Kant's Theory of Divine and Secondary Causation," in *Leibniz and Kant*, ed. Look.

[35] It would be worth trying to figure out how the counterfactuals would go here—what would have happened if we hadn't received assistance? For the time being, however, I will have to leave this as homework.

[36] An objector might insist that the tension is not merely metaphysical but rather full-on *logical*: being morally responsible for the quality of one's will, given Kant's other principles, *logically* entails that no one else is responsible for it. If this were correct, then perhaps a Kantian advocate of supernatural assistance would be forced to go (as Nick Stang put in discussion) "fully Kierkegaardian" (i.e., irrationalist) here. Whether this objection is correct still seems to me non-obvious, as the arguments above indicate. That an irrationalist picture would be repugnant to Kant, however, is clear.

contemporary authors writing on hope have sought to add to this belief/desire model a certain stance or comportment toward the apparent possibility: The prospect of its obtaining, however improbable, must be an item of special focus and concern, or must be salient in a way that licenses what would otherwise be unreasonable fixation on a very slim chance.[37] Still others claim that it grounds various dispositions to assertion or even action. Whether we should include these further components in our analysis of hope—or in our analysis of *Kantian* hope for that matter—is a question for another day.

The discussion also tells us something about the *goals* of rational hope. "What may I hope *for*?" can be read not as a question about the event or state of affairs that is hoped for but rather as a question about the goals aimed at in hoping. To or for what end (i.e. *wherefore*) do I rationally hope? An *intrinsic* characterization of the goal might just say that hope is a good attitude to have. In much of the Western tradition, steadfast hope is a virtue, an excellence of character worth having (at least in part) for its own sake or even, as Bonaventure puts it, a kind of meta-virtue or *habitus* of remaining steadfast in other virtues. A *pragmatic-instrumental* characterization would say that because hope makes us into people with other important or valuable traits—people who act optimistically, focus on the bright side, and thus cheerfully contribute to the occurrence of the thing-hoped-for—it is pragmatically rational to hope for something even when it is known to be unlikely.

Finally, there might be a kind of *moral-instrumental* characterization, and this is what gets us back to Kant and the normative aspect of *dürfen*: not just what I *may* hope for, but what I *should* and *should not* hope for. Hope on this view is a natural, practically rational result of willing in accordance with the moral law. The hope in question is that our world will be, if not a perfectly moral world—one in which everyone freely does the right—then at least one in which virtue is perfectly proportioned to happiness in the life to come. And more than that as well; my hope should be that *I* will do what *I* ought, and in so doing make myself worthy of perfect happiness, even if external assistance is also required.[38]

[37] For discussion, see Adrienne M. Martin, "Hopes and Dreams," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 83*, no. 1 (2011): 148–73; Martin, *How We Hope*; Ariel Meirav, "The Nature of Hope," *Ratio 22*, no. 2 (2009): 216–33; Philip Pettit, "Hope and its Place in Mind"; Luc Bovens, "The Value of Hope," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 59*, no. 3 (1999): 667–81.

[38] See Bonaventure's discussion of Augustine's view of the difference between faith and hope in *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* (1252). Faith is what we have about the end state of the universe as a whole ("all good people will be saved"), but mere hope is what a person has regarding his own place in that ultimate state (i.e., "through hope he has confidence that he himself should be saved [*per spem autem confidit, se esse salvandum*])." Thus, Bonaventure says, "it is from this general faith that he believes, hoping through hope to apply it to himself." This is from 3.25.1.5, trans. Rachel Lu. For further discussion of Bonaventure's view of hope, as well as this translation, see Rachel Lu, "Natural and Supernatural Virtue in St. Bonaventure," Cornell University, 2012.

Kant says in his lectures on the philosophy of religion, as well as in the published *Religion* itself, that the "minimum of theology" or "minimum of cognition" in true religion is the Belief that God is really possible and that if he did exist, then he would command the moral law (AA 28:998; AA 6:153–4, and note).[39] Some commentators have read this as articulating an appealingly low standard for religiosity, since even an agnostic or perhaps a certain kind of atheist could achieve it.[40] Others have viewed this position as articulating an appallingly low standard for religiosity, inadequate to characterize authentic religious faith.[41]

Perhaps we can bring these competing perspectives a little closer by suggesting, in conclusion, that Kant's point is that rational *hope* for various things (which is what religion adds to pure Kantian morality, and how religiosity psychologically supports our efforts to accomplish the demands of the latter) requires only *one* "practico-dogmatic Belief"[42] —namely, that God's existence is really possible. In other words, while it's true that the "minimum of theology" is the Belief that God is really possible, a life lived in conjunction with this Belief may still require a sophisticated complex of attitudes, desires, and affections—including hope for extramundane assistance—that would not fit very well within a determinedly atheistic framework. On the other hand, many of the crucial attitudes involved in such religion won't be doxastic, and they won't have the sort of justification or warrant that epistemologists tend to discuss. At his best, then, Kant opens up a new way to be authentically religious without worrying so much about what and whether we believe (in the contemporary sense).[43]

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[39] By "minimum of cognition" Kant just means assertoric assent: there's obviously no knowledge, intuition, or proof in the offing.

[40] Wood, "Rational Theology, Moral Faith, and Religion," 405–6.

[41] See the "Introduction" and other contributions to Firestone and Palmquist, *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion*.

[42] This is how he characterizes certain kinds of Belief in the *Real Progress* essay, at, e.g., AA 20:305ff.

[43] I'm grateful to participants in the 2011 conference on "Order" at the University of California–San Diego for feedback, and especially to its organizers, Nancy Cartwright and Eric Watkins. Thanks also to Troy Cross, John Hare, Kristen Inglis, Samuel Newlands, Clinton Tolley, and Watkins for comments on an earlier version presented at the Eastern Division meeting of the APA. Participants in a Center for Philosophy of Religion meeting at Notre Dame in 2011, and in the 2012 "Kant and Modality" conference at the Humboldt University of Berlin (organized by Toni Kannisto and Tobias Rosefeldt), as well as Adam Marushak and Kieran Setiya, provided helpful reactions to a more recent draft. It's quite possible—logically, metaphysically, causally, and nausally—that what remains here is still flawed, but it is certainly much the better for all of these interactions.