ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The autonomy of autonomy: On Jürgen Habermas's *Auch eine Geschichte der Philosophie*

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1 | REDEMPTIVE TRANSLATION

Major books like *Auch eine Geschichte der Philosophie* (AGP)[1] start from and develop a single (although complex) idea. This idea has been present in Habermas's work for some time. It can be traced back to the core project of the Frankfurt School, in the tradition of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and Horkheimer's *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, of reconstructing the genesis of and criticizing one-sided forms of rationality that lead to positivism, scientism, and other reductionist accounts of morality and social life.[2] The critique of naturalism that Habermas developed over the past 20 years and leads to AGP marks the most recent development of this theme; however, it has been a life-long preoccupation, if one thinks, for example, of *Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie'* from 1968.

When it comes to reflecting on modernity, or what Habermas now calls "*entgleisende Moderne*" (derailed modernity), discussions of religion have not been absent from his work either, if one thinks, for example, of some of his reflections on Bloch, Scholem, Benjamin, Horkheimer, and Adorno. Take, for example, his analysis of Benjamin's alternative to ideology critique, namely, "*rettende Kritik*" (redemptive or salvaging critique), which tries to hold onto the moments of the past that had the—to a certain extent messianic—potential to save us from a path of historical catastrophe.[3] Furthermore, in dialogues with theologians he developed the idea of a "transcendence from within,"[4] which he still upholds.

Although AGP is part of this long series of reflections, it has, as far as I can see, a more determinate occasion and starting point. It dates back to the period around 2000 when Habermas combined his reflections on the work of John Rawls—and the idea (which we shared) that religious views had to "translate"[5] their arguments into a secular language of public reason—with his critique of liberal eugenics. At the end of his book on *The Future of Human Nature* (German original 2001)[6] as well as in his *Peace Prize Speech* from the same year,[7] he asks whether we have—or could have—a good secular translation within the limits of a rational morality (*Vernunftmoral*) of the religious idea that we are not authorized to "play God" and determine the nature and fate of human beings by means of biogenetic engineering. In this context, he formed the idea of a *twofold* or reciprocal translation process, such that not only religious views have

to engage in a work of secular translation but secular views also have a duty to learn from and try to understand and translate religious insights:

> "But only if the secular side, too, remains sensitive to the force of articulation inherent in religious languages will the search for reasons that aim at universal acceptability not lead to an unfair exclusion of religions from the public sphere, nor sever secular society from important resources of meaning. In any event, the boundaries between secular and religious reasons are fluid. Determining these disputed boundaries should therefore be seen as a cooperative task which requires *both* sides to take on the perspective of the other side."[8]

This idea of a *reciprocal duty of translation* was also one of the main points in his dialogue with Joseph Ratzinger (2004), then Cardinal, and soon to become Pope, in which Habermas speaks about the need for an "appropriation of genuine Christian contents" ("*Aneignung genuin christlicher Gehalte*") in a secular language without deflating them:

> "One such translation which salvages the substance of a term is the translation of the concept of "man in the image of God" into that of the identical dignity of all men that deserves unconditional respect."[9]

Seen in this light, AGP is the grand reconstruction of such forms of "*rettende Übersetzung*" as a historical learning process, reaching back to the important historical juncture of the Axial Age. The point remains to be aware of the importance of such "redemptive or salvaging translations" and view that process as open-ended, so that postmetaphysical thought is both the product of such cognitive progress and at the same time remains sensitive to the still existing normative potential of religious thought and open to further learning in a dialogical attitude ("*eine lernbereit dialogische Einstellung zu religiösen Überlieferungen,*" I, p. 79).

This major project determines the structure and tone of the book. For on the one hand, the narrative is one of secularization, and that of course includes the critique and overcoming of religious forms of thought in a process of emancipatory progress, leaving the confines of religion when it comes to developing the autonomy of reason and human agency.[10] According to Habermas's primarily vindicative genealogy, reason is not simply the *product* of contingent historical processes; rather, it remains the critical *authority* when it comes to evaluating what counts as generally justifiable (I, pp. 71, 111). *Genese* (genesis) and *Geltung* (validity) remain distinct. Yet, on the other hand, the narrative is one of dialogue involving a certain esteem for elaborate religious and theological theories and arguments; hence, the learning involves critique as well as appreciation, a *dialectical* learning in the Hegelian sense of the term. That also justifies the adaptation of Herder's title for the book, because Herder tries to do justice to different cultural historical forms (although his developmental narrative is weaker than Habermas's).[11] After all, according to Habermas, postmetaphysical thinking after Kant remains true to a form of philosophical thought that does not reduce philosophy to a scientistic–naturalistic enterprise, but upholds the perspective on our understanding of ourselves and the world (*Selbst- und Weltverständnis*, I., p. 12) as a whole, continuing to pose Kant's four questions. That is why in the last paragraph of the book Habermas affirms that a notion of reason that had no way of transcending the given world would wither away (*verkümmern*, II, p. 807)—and that this is where postmetaphysical thinking and religious consciousness still meet. The main point of the book, however, is not primarily to highlight the need for an ongoing constructive dialogue between philosophy and religion (or theology), but instead to make an argument for a nonreductive form of postmetaphysical philosophy.[12]

2 | MORAL AUTONOMY AND THE AUTONOMY OF MORALITY

Despite Habermas's intentional avoidance of a narrative of decline (*Verfallsgeschichte*) (as highlighted in ch. 1 of AGP), there are important aspects of the narrative where the translation from religious to secular language involves both

progress and loss, and this, let us say, negative-dialectical twist is what I want to focus on. I will concentrate on the formation of the concept of moral autonomy that culminates in Kant, is transformed following Peirce into a notion of discursive autonomy in Habermas's discourse ethics, and forms the core of the central notion of reasonable freedom (*vernünftige Freiheit*) elaborated in the second volume of the book. Yet, according to Habermas, something gets lost in the process of transforming a religious form of morality into a secular and postmetaphysical one—namely, a certain sense of "unconditional" (*unbedingtes*) and "absolute ought" (*absolutes Sollen*), leaving a systematic "gap" (*Lücke*, I, p. 166f.) that cannot be fully closed again. As a result, *vernünftige Freiheit* suffers from a core weakness—and the autonomy of autonomy, so to speak, is placed in question, because it needs constant motivational support from other sources (though not from religious ones, because that would be a form of regression).

In what follows, I will briefly reconstruct that argument and highlight (even more briefly) why I have qualms about it.

On the one hand, Habermas regards Kantian and post-Kantian conceptions of autonomy—of moral autonomy and the autonomy of morality—as the major achievement of modern philosophy (II, pp. 209 and 562). In his critique of Rawls, for example, he affirms the priority of autonomous reason and morality (I, p. 98) and argues that justice has to rest on its own foundation of reasonable justification ("*selbsttragende 'vernünftige' Rechtfertigung*", I, p. 131). On the other hand, the postmetaphysical conception of reason is a *secular*, but not a *secularistic* one (I, p. 133), so that it is not only aware of its religious past but is also conscious of its own limits.

One of these limits resides in what might be called a *semi-translation* of the Christian notion of the two kingdoms and of the divine authority of universal morality into a postmetaphysical conception, which occurred between Luther and Kant, following a tradition that began with Augustine (I, p. 164). Although Kant saved the "deontological substance of a morality of reason and of rational natural law" ("*deontologische Substanz von Vernunftmoral und Vernunftrecht,*" I, p. 166), he had to make a clear separation between the religious conception of "redemptive justice" (*rettende Gerechtigkeit*) and deontological morality, shifting from divine to self-given, rational moral law (I, p. 166f.). But that leaves a "gap" between moral duty and the attraction of a larger (religious) notion of the good that Kant could not fill (though he tried to narrow it in his philosophy of religion)—and which Hegel attempted to close with the notion of *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life), with only limited success (a point to which I will return).

Habermas elaborates on this in the crucial chapter on Hume and Kant and the very last chapter together with the Postscript (and subsequent texts). He stresses the innovative character of the conception of moral autonomy as self-legislation grounded in reason, especially in connection with the idea of emancipatory social and political practice in Kant, Hegel, and, in particular, the young Hegelians leading up to Marx. Yet at the same time that notion of moral freedom can only ground moral duty in a "need" or an "interest" of reason basically in itself, as affirming its own legislative power (II, pp. 308 and 319). The result is a "motivational deficit of a reason-based morality conceptualized in cognitivist terms, which … intrinsically lacks the motivational force of the religious promise of salvation" ("*Motivationsschwäche einer vernünftigen, also kognitivistisch begriffenen Moral, der … von Haus aus die Antriebskraft des religiösen Heilsversprechens fehlt …*"; II, p. 332). Or, in a later passage: "After the critique of metaphysics had decoupled faith and knowledge, what could replace the authority of the divine will and its laws as a justification of the binding force of moral norms?" ("*Was konnte, nach der metaphysikkritischen Entkoppelung des Wissens vom Glauben, an die Stelle der Autorität des göttlichen Willens und seiner Gesetze treten, um die Bindungskraft moralischer Normen zu begründen?*"; II, p. 344). The result is a profound "embarrassment of secular postmetaphysical thinking at being unable to find a rational explanation for the normative binding forces originally nourished by the sacred complex" ("*Verlegenheit des säkularen nachmetaphysischen Denkens, eine vernünftige Erklärung für normative Bindungskräfte zu finden, die ursprünglich vom sakralen Komplex gezehrt hatten*"; II, p. 347).

I am skeptical about this argument for two reasons. First, I think Habermas's reading of Kant is one-sided, because it does not sufficiently stress the *social*–practical, *moral* character of reason in Kant. The categorical imperative is a principle of rational self-legislation, yet it is grounded in the moral—and not "just" rational—idea that we are all (equal) members of the kingdom of ends who are responsible to and for each other. Thus, a notion of *moral community* and moral responsibility is built into the very conception of reasonable autonomy in addition to the assumption that we

are bound by rational principles. Reflecting on our status as moral law-givers also means reflecting on our membership in a social community of equals and the responsibilities that flow from that—at least that is how I read Kant.[13]

Second, the idea of the justificatory or motivational gap (Habermas uses both terms, as seen above, with special emphasis on the motivational aspect), the notion that the categorical imperative has only "weak" motivational force, and the charge that it lacks full moral authority give too much credit to a religiously grounded morality—which is thereby almost posited as an ideal. For from the perspective of postmetaphysical morality, such a religious morality is highly *deficient*, as critics such as Castellio, Bayle, and Kant (and, to some extent, Habermas himself; see AGP II, p. 219f.)[14] have pointed out (and as I try to show in the narrative of my *Toleration in Conflict*), for a number of reasons. First, it is not really a form of intersubjective morality, because the main reason to see oneself as being bound to obey the moral law is love or fear of God—not respect for the other as a human being. But whether the resulting kind of behavior is based on love or fear of God, it is not morally motivated in the full sense; hence, a form of heteronomy. Second, such a notion of morality is authoritarian, because it regards the law as being imposed by a higher authority outside the moral subject him- or herself. Third, if an essential reason for being moral is the hope of becoming worthy of grace and salvation, then the resulting action is not really moral either but (in Habermas's words) "ethically"—that is, hypothetically, in Kant's sense of the term—motivated, and hence a form of heteronomy. Fourth, such a notion of morality is extremely limited and is not truly universal, because from that perspective one cannot fully trust nonbelievers to be morally responsible persons, because they have no way of seeing the point of morality—and can be at best only "anonymous" moral persons. And finally, within a religious framework such as the Christian or a Muslim one, moral norms can be trumped by other imperatives in order to defend the honor of God—against blasphemy, for example, as the long history of religious intolerance demonstrates.[15]

For all of these reasons, a morality based on the autonomy of practical reason—as the imperative to respect others as equal justificatory authorities, to put it in my terms—is not a weaker form of morality, neither with respect to motive, foundation, nor content, but a *stronger* one as compared to a religiously based one. Overcoming heteronomous aspects of morality means strengthening it, not reducing it to a weaker form of motivation. Autonomous morality, after all, also proved to be strong enough, historically speaking, to challenge and overcome religious restrictions of morality, allowing the learning process of modernity to unfold historically, the very process that Habermas stresses. This may not count as a form of historical proof in a strong sense of the term, but like Habermas, I consider the advances during the period of modernity as important stages of progress, and overcoming the restrictions of religious morality was essential for that process to unfold (II, p. 215ff.).

In light of this, I agree with Habermas that it is a highly relevant question whether and in what way "the motivating force of good reasons can replace the sacred binding force of divine commands" ("*die motivierende Kraft guter Gründe die sakrale Bindungskraft göttlicher Gebote ersetzen kann*"; II, p. 370); however, from the perspective outlined above, I see the replacement of divine authority by the authority of reason not as an enduring *problem* for postmetaphysical thought but as a major *advantage.* Morality ought not to be thought of as an authoritarian and alien, divine force but as an at once liberating and binding force in our rational life, in the sense of our *autonomous* responsibility toward others (and not, or at least not primarily, toward God).

I also agree fully with Habermas's claim that the "detranscendentalizing" move beyond Kant toward a discursive conception of morality (which was possible after Peirce) represented a further progressive step; but I would distinguish between a "detranscending" move away from religious to autonomous morality and a "detranscendentalizing" step, which is quite a different matter. And the latter move has to be limited, for despite the corresponding transformation of philosophy (as Apel called it), we remain citizens of *two worlds*. As Peirce's (and Habermas's) stress on the unlimited community of discourse (and justification) shows, there can be no meaningful normative notion of the "counterfactual" transcending what is empirically given without the transcendental idea that we are always members of a discursive or communicative kingdom of ends in which we are *ideally* truly equals, even when *as an empirical matter* we are treated as low, undeserving, worthless, and are silenced.[16] That is the truth of the doctrine of two worlds that remains even after all secular translations. The "counterfactual element" is essential for any thought of *vernünftige Freiheit* and true emancipation: "Only a form of freedom about which we know that nobody is truly free until everyone

is satisfies the concept of autonomy" ("*Nur die Freiheit erfüllt den Begriff der Autonomie, von der wir wissen, dass niemand wirklich frei ist, bevor wir es nicht alle sind*," II, p. 552).[17] If we are to have this kind of *Wissen*, then a *detranscendentalization* (*Detranszendentalisierung*) cannot be a complete *elimination of the transcendental* (*Enttranszendentalisierung*). That is how the "transcending force of validity claims" ("*transzendierende Kraft von Geltungsansprüchen*," II, p. 584, see also p. 596f. on Apel) becomes part of the lifeworld and at the same time transcends it—from "within," as it were (II, p. 752ff.).

This means that we cannot and must not look for a notion of "unconditional" ("*unbedingte*") or "absolute" duty or binding force that is structured like a religious one (II, p. 588f.). Rather, for postmetaphysical thought it means that reason accepts *no* higher authority than itself and ought not to do so in order to avoid regression. To look for an equivalent of religious authority that could "anchor" reason would be to look for something that should not and cannot exist. This is also Habermas's view.

In my view, the noumenal power of religious authority could also only be based on reasons, "good" reasons, as religious believers assumed. And I do not see why the moral reason that you owe all others respect as equal members of the community of justification of all humans who are bound together by the capacity for justification, responsiveness, and responsibility would be "weaker" because it is "only" based on reason (II, p. 761). Would that imply that cognitivistic morality is weaker because it lacks—what exactly? Emotional depth, ethical aspirations, love, or fear of God? But these are all *extramoral* motives from a Kantian or post-Kantian viewpoint, and thus we would declare only those moralities to be "strong" that go beyond moral motives and leave autonomy behind, because they require an anchor external to morality. That would amount to a contradiction, because "strong" morality would no longer be morality properly speaking. It is part of the very definition of a deontological notion of morality that its justification and its motivation are inseparable, and that is why I disagree with Habermas's claim that post-Kantian morality can only rely on a "weak motivational force of good reasons" (II, p. 804) in need of further support.[18] There is no stronger force from the perspective of morality than good moral reasons. To search for other, additional motivational reasons would lead us back to—Hume.

To put it in a nutshell, it seems that, on the one hand, Habermas does not go far enough in *detranscending* morality, so that it can be regarded as fully autonomous and binding, whereas, on the other hand, he goes too far in *detranscendentalizing* morality, explicitly questioning what he must implicitly assume, namely, the binding force of the socially relevant, transcendental–moral idea that we are members in a kingdom of ends.

3 | MORAL "ENCOURAGEMENT" AFTER KIERKEGAARD AND THE YOUNG HEGELIANS

In the Postscript (and in his famous Frankfurt lecture from June 19, 2019, on *Moralität und Sittlichkeit*),[19] Habermas returns to this central issue around which the whole book revolves. With Hegel, and following up on his earlier writings on discourse ethics, he once again addresses the "embarrassment that the abstract ought lacks a motivational embedding" ("*Verlegenheit der fehlenden motivierenden Einbettung des abstrakten Sollens*," II, p. 803), and reminds us of an "excess" ("*Überschuss*") of unconditional obligation and absolute duty that stems from religious background assumptions (p. 804). Because these assumptions are no longer tenable from the perspective of postmetaphysical reason, Habermas reinterprets the point of the Kantian conception of freedom as expressing the "self-understanding of humans as autonomous beings of reason" ("*Selbstverständnis des Menschen als eines autonomen Vernunftwesens*," p. 805), such that there are a number of reasons (some of them historical) to accept such a self-understanding; but ultimately it remains dependent on—shall we say, an *ethical*—decision in the sense of *fides qua* (p. 805), an act (or perhaps a leap?) of faith. If we read this in a post-Kierkegaardian way, a nonmoral, heteronomous, namely, ethical (in Habermas's sense of the term) consideration or identity came to motivate moral action.[20] And moral autonomy withered away, because ethical "oughts" are, in Kantian terms, hypothetical and not categorical.[21] Ethical values attract us in guiding our lives, whereas moral norms bind us as reasonable and responsible persons.

In modernity, however, such an act of ethical–moral faith is not the heroic or decisionistic act of a single individual, as Habermas explains using a Hegelian thought. As I mentioned above, Habermas is highly critical of Hegel's attempt to include, modify, and preserve (*aufheben*) Kantian morality in the *Sittlichkeit* of the state. This is because it cannot do justice to the transcending power of the *unconditional* moral ought that remains a "thorn in the flesh of ethical life" ("*Stachel im Fleisch der Sittlichkeit,*" II, p. 550), both in the sense that *individual* moral actions go beyond conventional norms and *collective* democratic action transcends the given normative order (II, p. 535).[22] Hegel's notion of "objective spirit" does not leave sufficient room for reasonable freedom to radically transcend what is normatively given toward further emancipation, individually and socially. This latter point was stressed especially by the young Hegelians and Marx.

Still, with regard to the period after the detranscendentalization of the Kantian notion of autonomy, following the path prepared by the young Hegelians, Habermas is convinced that successful historical struggles to achieve democratic political orders and institutionalize human rights *create* political–moral forms of life that not only *encourage collectives* to aim for further democratic and moral progress, but also *nourish* the motivation of *individuals* to act according to the moral law (II, p. 550ff.) and develop the self-understanding mentioned above. In democracies, Kantian morality acquires empirical political and legal reality (II, p. 553), and moral, discursive reason not only becomes situated in legal and political institutions and social life-worlds, but is also supported by a practice of reason-giving that aims to make these practices more democratic and egalitarian:

> "Without the task of justifying *standards* of political justice in discourse, which originated in natural and rational law but has now been assigned to the respective historical participants in a historical constituent assembly themselves, it would not have been possible to convince entire populations with arguments that there is a secular equivalent for the religious legitimization of the exercise of political rule." (II, p. 554)

In this way, Habermas combines a post-Kierkegaardian ethic with a post-Hegelian idea of *sittliche* progress in the form of learning processes "that do not, as Kant thought, only take place in the heads of the individual subjects, but that also do not simply progress above the heads of communicatively socialized subjects" ("*die sich zwar nicht mehr wie bei Kant im Kopf des einzelnen Subjekts vollziehen, die sich aber ebenso wenig objektiv über die Köpfe der kommunikativ vergesellschafteten Subjekte hinweg durchsetzen,*" II, p. 555).

The Postscript summarizes this thought as follows, combining the two, in my terms, (post-)Kierkegaardian and the (post-)Hegelian aspects:

> "The individual's self-understanding as an autonomous rational being can find encouragement above all in the historical traces of those moral-practical learning processes which are embodied in the increase in institutionalized freedoms and, today especially, in the practices and legal guarantees of democratic constitutional states. These empirical reasons can reinforce the fragile trust in one's own powers" (II, p. 806; "*Diese empirischen Gründe können das fragile Vertrauen in die eigenen Kräfte stützen*").

Habermas suggests a complex, post-Hegelian notion of moral-political *Aufhebung*: While the young Hegelians developed a radical notion of rational freedom to transcend conventional forms of *Sittlichkeit* (II, p. 597), modern forms of democratic *Sittlichkeit* contain that moment of transcendence *within themselves*, so to speak, an *inherent transcendence*: they institutionalize a form of legal and political order that reflexively generates the duty to improve on itself, procedurally and substantively, by establishing superior forms of democratic organization, of securing and interpreting human rights, and by aiming at transnational forms of democratic cooperation. It is thus a *Sittlichkeit* that is *present and at the same time yet to come*; it generates the empirical motivational force to act morally through forms of socialization and learning that aim at further social and political progress.

This way of combining *Moralität und Sittlichkeit*, which Habermas also summarizes and develops further in his Frankfurt lecture, is unique, and it marks the culmination of the argument of the book—and, needless to say, constitutes the core of his view of the relationship between reason, progress, democracy, and morality (which was also laid out in *Between Facts and Norms*). It is also very much informed by the philosophy of Kant, who saw progressive "*Geschichtszeichen*"[23] such as the enthusiasm about the French Revolution as indications of the moral and progressive nature of human beings that encourage them to believe in and act toward social and political improvement.

Still, the argument cannot fully succeed, because it leans toward an excessively empirical (almost empiricist) interpretation of motivation. For the radical demand (Habermas speaks of a "*Zumutung*," II, p. 805) of the unconditional moral ought could not be salvaged into modernity and postmetaphysical thinking if its motivational force were empirically dependent on the individual *ethical* will to be moral that is *encouraged* by social and political institutions and established norms. In that case, neither could we hold onto the moral *duty* to be such a person as a duty that is, as Habermas affirms, *independently* "distinguished as right" ("*als richtig ausgezeichnet*," ibid.) and can be used to criticize the self-understanding of persons; rather, we would have to translate that duty into an ethical consideration. Nor could we motivationally hold onto the moral *imperative* of rational freedom, individually and collectively, independent of social progress or regress. We would be bereft of the moral force of the duty to aim at emancipation for the sake of justice if that force depended on historical success. Rather, the situation is the other way around: the duty remains an autonomous one and increases in importance in times of despair and political regress. In addition, if morality did not transcend every form of *Sittlichkeit*, we could not even identify progress or regress, whether times were good or ill. This is why Habermas, at the end of his Frankfurt lecture, speaks of reason as a mole who stubbornly works toward its realization, citing Kant: "Kant inculcated this mentality in us …."[24] This means that the work of rational freedom is aided by an "empirical" support, but its normative bindingness and validity remains *independent* of this; and if that is the case, its motivational force cannot depend on nonmoral motives, on *ethical* decisions or on *established* institutional forms. If reason did not motivate the mole to work tirelessly, even if the ground gets very hard, it would not fully understand itself as being both historical and progressive, transcendental in nature.

In other words, the transcendental—that is, our membership in a kingdom of ends that transcends every given community generating an imperative of progressive realization, despite the odds—has to remain the "thorn in the flesh" of every ethical or *sittliche* form of life in order to guide *and* motivate human action in secular modernity. And likewise, it remains a thorn in the flesh of every religious body of faith that could only express the point of morality in a mediated, limited form (as argued above). The "excess" of the moral ought is not homeless in the postmetaphysical age, and hence it is not in need of empirical, ethical–political shelter or guidance; rather, it is on its way to itself as a demand of reason and (rational) hope, even in times of despair. If we had to translate moral reasons back into ethical and *sittliche* reasons, we would practice a form of *reverse translation*—quite against the spirit of this book and Habermas's general enterprise.

NOTES

¹ Habermas, J. (2019). *Auch eine Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. 1: *Die okzidentale Konstellation von Glauben und Wissen*, Vol. 2: *Vernünftige Freiheit. Spuren des Diskurses über Glauben und Wissen*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, henceforth quoted as AGP with volume and page references. Translations from the German have kindly been provided by Ciaran Cronin whom I also owe many thanks for checking my English.

² For a comprehensive analysis of this theme, see Jay, M. (2016). *Reason after its eclipse: On late critical theory*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

³ Habermas, J. (1983). Walter Benjamin: Consciousness-raising or rescuing critique. In *Philosophical-political profiles* (pp. 129–164). F. G. Lawrence (Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

⁴ Habermas, J. (2002). Transcendence from within, transcendence in this world. In E. Mendieta (Ed.), *Religion and rationality* (pp. 67–94). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

⁵ For a use of this term in this context, see my discussion of Rawls in Forst, R. (2002). *Contexts of justice* (pp. 98f). J. Farrell (Trans.). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press (German original 1994). Habermas shares this meaning of the term in his essay "'Reasonable' versus 'true' or the morality of worldviews." In *The inclusion of the other* (pp. 75–101). C. Cronin (Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998 and in "Religion in the public sphere." In *Between naturalism and religion* (pp. 114–147). C. Cronin (Trans.). Cambridge: Polity, 2008.

⁶ Habermas, J. (2003). *The future of human nature*. H. Beister et al. (Trans.) Cambridge: Polity.

⁷ Habermas, J. (2016). Faith and knowledge. reprinted in *The future of human nature* (pp. 101–115). Cambridge: Polity.

⁸ Habermas (2016, p. 109).

⁹ Habermas, J., & Ratzinger, J. (2006). *The dialectics of secularization: On reason and religion* (p. 45), F. Schuller (Ed.), B. McNeil (Trans.). San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press.

¹⁰ In this respect, there are important parallels between his project and mine in Forst, R. (2013). *Toleration in conflict: Past and present*. C. Cronin (Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ See my brief discussion of Herder in Forst (2013, § 23).

¹² He highlights this in the opening text of this symposium, Habermas, J. (2021a). An author's retrospective view. *Constellations*, 28(1), 5–10.

¹³ I elaborate on this in Forst R. (2012). *The right to justification* (chs. 1 and 2). J. Flynn (Trans.). New York: Columbia University Press. For an interpretation of Kant's ethics that stresses its social, intersubjective character, see also Herman, B. (1993). *The practice of moral judgment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

¹⁴ I discuss this in my essay "Religion and toleration from the enlightenment to the post-secular era: Bayle, Kant, and Habermas." In Forst R. (2017). *Normativity and power* (ch. 5). Cronin, C. (Trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ See on these various points Forst (2013, §§ 5, 9, 18, 21, 29–32).

¹⁶ See also Habermas (2021a, sec. 4).

¹⁷ See Habermas (2021a, sec. 5).

¹⁸ See Habermas (2021a, sec. 5) in very clear terms. My disagreement, I admit, is a long-standing one. See, for example, Forst (2012, chs. 3 and 4). And, more recently, my "Religion and Toleration from the Enlightenment to the Post-Secular Era: Bayle, Kant, and Habermas," in Forst (2017).

¹⁹ Habermas, J. (2021b). Noch einmal: Zum Verhältnis von Moralität und Sittlichkeit. In R. Forst & K. Günther (Eds.), *Normative Ordnungen* (pp. 25–41). Berlin: Suhrkamp.

²⁰ See also Habermas (2021a, p. 9): "… such a *self-understanding* can also provide a motivational reason for us to strive to be moral".

²¹ See my critique in Forst (2012, ch. 3).

²² See especially Habermas (2021a, sec. 4).

²³ Kant, I. (1991). *The contest of faculties*, Ak. VII, 84; see Kant, *Historical Writings* (p. 181.) ed. Reiss. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁴ Habermas (2021b, p. 41).

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