Kant’s Philosophy of Religion and Climate Change

by Thomas Paul York

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis argues that Kant’s *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793) may be applied to climate change issues. This thesis makes use of James DiCenso’s interpretation of Kant’s philosophy of religion (2011, 2012), which argues that Kant’s key text on religion conveys a social and political vision. This thesis addresses both traditional religious worldviews and secular political movements engaged in climate politics. It argues for the need to ethically assess these social formations’ evolving responses to the climate crisis. The failure (to date) of religious traditions to adequately address the climate crisis, and possible reasons for this, are addressed. Examples of social formations, ideologies, and religious responses examined include consumerism, environmental theology, religiously motivated climate change denial and dispensationalist theology, as well as the secular climate justice movement. Kant locates the source of many of our problems in the power of choice and determining ground of morality. In this sense, his ethical system is distinct from the neo-Marxist interpretation of “systems of power.” The theory of what DiCenso refers to as “shared representations” of “supersensible” cognition is helpful for understanding the dynamics of belief that inform complex social and political formations. Kant’s philosophy of religion may be of value for those trying to understand how religions and political ideologies that employ powerful symbols and ideals play a role in the unfolding of historical events.

Keywords: Kant, climate change, climate ethics, environmental ethics, dispensationalism, climate change denial, climate justice, biblical literalism, religion, philosophy of religion, consumerism, environmental theology
Dedication and Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to mother, Lynn York, who urged me to complete it and enabled its completion.

I am very grateful to all my advisors and external readers, and in particular Profs. James DiCenso and Larry Schmidt, for their encouragement, advice, wisdom, and friendship, and for providing a good example of philosophical inquiry, intellectual rigour and teaching excellence, which I will try to emulate for the remainder of my academic career. I also wish to thank Fereshteh Hashemi and Marilyn Colaço (of the Department for the Study of Religion at University of Toronto) for their support, assistance, and friendship over the last decade -- and for being kind to my dogs, Baby and Buddy, as well. Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not thank Pauline Hutchings and Paul Jenkins for their love, friendship and support over the course of many years.
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Citations. In this document, the abbreviations for texts are borrowed from James DiCenso, *Kant, Religion, and Politics*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), vii. Also shown, for comparison, are abbreviations used by Allen W. Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999) xvii-xix.

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Abbreviations for forms of the Categorical Imperative are those used in Wood, 1999, pp. xx-xxiii. ML, CI, FH, and RE together constitute the universal ethical principles. There are other universal ethical systems, but the phrase ‘universal ethical principles’ refers to Kantian ethics.

**ML**  
*The moral law within.* Synonymous with moral faith, rational faith, and the Categorical Imperative, ML is famously referred to as “the moral law within me” in the second Critique (CPrR, 5:162). Kant elsewhere refers to it as the moral law and sometimes just as “the law.” An important aspect of ML is the idea that rights entail responsibilities and self-imposed limitations, in consideration of the rights of all others: “the freedom of each to exist together with that of others” (A316/B373); and “the principle of limiting the freedoms of each to the conditions under which it can coexist with the freedom of everyone else, in conformity with universal law” (R, 6:98); and “Any action is right if it can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law” (MS, 6:230-1).

**CI**  
*Categorical Imperative.* There are several variants on CI, including the Formula of Autonomy: “the idea of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law” (GR, 4:431; 4:432) and “Choose only in such a way that the maxims of your choice are also included as universal law in the same volition” (GR, 4:439-40; 4:432-4). There are two important elements of CI: (i) that it is an expression of the “command” of pure practical reason a priori, by virtue of which all rational beings (i.e., moral agents) are lawgivers (i.e., they are able to generate moral laws); and (ii) the highest law that we give ourselves is not the one that serves only self-interest (self-love) and inclinations; it is the law that reflects the principle of universalizability, in consideration of the rights and interests of all others. A variation of CI is The Formula of the Universal Law (FUL): “Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law” (GR 4:421; 4:402).

**FH**  
*Formula of Humanity as End in Itself.* “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means” (GR, 4:429; 4:436). This is the clearest expression of CI as a statement against the instrumental use of others (e.g. slavery, exploitation), and as an expression of the inherent worth of individuals, by virtue of which all rational beings are equals, with inalienable rights, and deserving of respect.

**RE**  
*The Realm of Ends.* “Act in accordance with the maxims of a universally legislative member of a merely possible realm of ends” (GR, 4:439). All variations of CI have social and political implications, but RE most clearly expresses the ideal society in which everyone exercises perfect autonomy of the will – an ideal that although not achievable, because of the propensity to evil in human nature (which gives it an asymptotic character), is nonetheless practically necessary, as an ideal, in order to inspire moral progress towards a just society.
Introduction

This thesis argues that the ethical principles and ideas in Kant’s *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793) have perennial value and may be applied to a key crisis of the modern age: anthropogenic climate change. It could be classified as applied ethics, but with a focus on the philosophy of religion. It is envisaged as laying the groundwork for a more ambitious project, which is to provide an ethical assessment of the engagement of particular world religious traditions, and emerging political movements that have religious characteristics, to climate change issues.

Climate change issues are varied and complex. The reason for this is that climate change represents a fundamental challenge for humanity, affecting nearly every aspect of human existence, and requiring the attention of a wide range of academic disciplines. As such it requires a robust universal system of ethics to address them. Kant, as will be shown, provides such a system. His text on religion, although often ignored or misunderstood, provides the key to unlocking the power of this system in terms of its application to complex social and political issues. The thesis draws largely from James DiCenso’s interpretation of Kant’s philosophy of religion (2011, 2012), which argues that Kant’s key text on religion conveys a social and political vision.

Even though the Office of United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights recognizes the threat that climate change poses to human rights, international climate talks conducted by the IPCC (under the aegis of the United Nations) can lose their ethical focus and become compromised by parochial interests (in the form of national and corporate interests). Climate talks sometimes lack ethical coherency, which undermines human rights considerations. The concept of human rights is itself subject to criticism from different quarters. Kantian ethics provides the conceptual foundation for the concept of human rights, through the Doctrine of Right,
and also through his ethical system. This thesis makes use of both the principle of universalizability and the idea of human rights to argue for the interests of future generations. The concept of rights may itself be understood as a postulate of pure practical reason, which is a claim for arguing for its practical use, and also for providing an understanding as to how it (like any other postulate) can be misunderstood and misused.

This thesis explores the way in which social and political formations are subject to what Kant terms “heteronomy of the will,” which can be likened to what social psychologists term “groupthink.” Kant advocates the ideal of “autonomy of the will” as a way of establishing independence from heteronomous thinking and the irrationality of what Enlightenment philosophers called “enthusiasm,” which is excessive emotion, such as experienced in charismatic religions, but the meaning of which can be expanded to describe the experience of those caught up in totalitarian political movements. This thesis explores the issue of secular political movements engaged in climate politics and motivated by shared visions and ideals, and the need to ethically assess these social formations’ evolving responses to the climate crisis in an impartial manner.

There have been dozens of detailed applications of Kant’s ethics to environmental issues. Most have utilized Kant’s ethics to argue for environmental concern. There have also been efforts to show how Kantian ethics applies to modern historical issues. The application of Kantian ethics to environmental issues often tends to ignore his philosophy of religion. To date, the field of environmental theology has dominated the discussion of religion and ethics as applied to climate change. This thesis fills a gap: the application of Kant’s philosophy of religion, which cannot properly be classed as theology, to climate issues. The potential and failure (to date) of religious traditions to adequately address climate crisis, and the possible reasons for this, are addressed. Kant’s “regulative” and “constitutive” principles (where the former refers to figurative an
interpretation that stresses morality and the latter refers most often to scriptural literalism) are also important for understanding how religious texts can be understood in very different ways, and how these different understandings have an influence in the political realm.

This thesis attempts to do two things in particular. The first is to show the relevance of Kant’s philosophy of religion and Kantian ethics for understanding the conditions responsible for climate change, and the forms that a moral argument for more concerted mitigation and adaptation efforts, reflecting “the moral law within” could take, through shared representations. Chapter I is devoted to this task. The second major objective is to argue for an ethical assessment of the various social and political formations that utilize supersensible cognition and are involved in climate change politics in some way. This is the focus of Chapter II. These social formations include both traditional religious and secular political groups; the latter could be described as religions of a type by using the functional definition of religion. Supersensible cognition influences human beings and their social formations, motivating them to envisage an ideal society and strive for its actualization in various ways, both violent and nonviolently. Examples of social formations and ideologies examined include consumerism, environmental theology, religiously motivated climate change denial and dispensationalist (end-times) theology (predicated on historicist biblical literalism) as practiced by evangelicals, and the largely secular “climate justice” movement. Chapter III focuses on particular issues, such animal agriculture and climate activism. Kant’s philosophy of religion and ethical system can be applicable to any number of politically contentious issues, to gain greater insight into their underlying dynamics, and to provide an ethical analysis of the decision making that informs them. This thesis focuses on climate change issues in particular, providing both an ethical assessment of the conditions that contribute to it, and a framework for the ethical assessment of social formations addressing it.
Chapter I: The application of Kant’s ethics to climate change issues

The purpose of Chapter I is to introduce the topic of Kantian ethics, and begin to examine how they may be applied to climate change issues. This is done in stages, by illustrating the importance of the principle of universalizability for providing a rational basis for concern for future generations; by showing how the Formula of Humanity may applied to be the victims of climate change (to classify them as “ends in themselves”); through the argument that the universal ethical principles and human rights discourse are complementary; through an examination of intergenerational ethics; and through a defense of the use of rational principles.

1.0 Application of the principle of universalizability to climate change issues

Climate change is frequently described as a problem that may be addressed through ethics: many ethicists have argued that responsibility for climate change mitigation is an ethical problem of the first importance; as a result, the field of climate ethics has emerged as a distinct field of scholarship.\(^5\) There are several thinkers who argue that world religious traditions ought to address climate change and are uniquely positioned to do so, because of the moral authority they command and because of their broad political influence.\(^6\) Climate change has been termed “a perfect moral storm.”\(^7\) Kantian ethics has been utilized to explore climate ethics and there are several examples of this.\(^8\) However, as of this writing, there has not yet been a thorough application of Kant’s philosophy of religion to climate change issues.

Climate change is not merely a scientific question; it would be fair to say that it has emerged, in recent decades, as the greatest social and political challenge facing humanity in the twenty-first century, touching on every aspect of human industry and learning, and requiring the entire breadth of human learning and expertise to address it. For example, David Orr, in *Earth in Mind*, argues that climate change and the environmental crisis requires the input of a wide range of academic disciplines, and that higher education institutions have an obligation to introduce environmental and climate issues into the entire curriculum.\(^9\) For this reason an exploration of the intersection of religious studies, ethics, and climate politics is warranted. The purpose of this thesis
is to provide the framework for applying the arguments in Kant’s seminal work on religion – *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (or *Religion* for short) – to these issues. Climate change issues are seemingly endless, because of the enormity and complexity of the problem, so it is impossible to address every issue. As Henry Shue puts it, “It would be easier if we were to face only one question about justice, but several questions are not only unavoidable individually but are entangled with one another. In addition, each question can be given not simply alternative answers but answers of different kinds.” 10 In the midst of this, a framework for an ethical assessment of religious traditions, cultural institutions, and political movements, utilizing the “universal ethical principles” (see A.1) of Kant’s critical philosophy will be of practical value.11 *Religion*, although written about two centuries prior to the emergence of the climate crisis, is uniquely positioned to provide an ethical assessment of emerging religious responses to climate change, based on universal ethical principles.12 Kantian ethics may be deemed practically necessary in the context of modern environmental thought because they provide the necessary philosophical foundation for human rights discourse, which is based on ‘ethical individualism’ (as distinct from ‘ethical holism’, discussed in more detail later).13 Popular concepts such as “environmental justice” and “climate justice” require an ethical foundation in order for us to understand why they may be necessary, and also where they can go awry. In Kantian terms, these ideals may be thought of as “postulates of pure practical reason” (see A.15). Kant’s ethical system and philosophy of religion address the way in which morality is transmitted and cultivated through shared representations (*Vorstellungen*) (see A.3) of historical religious traditions, and how this can contribute to the needed social and political transformation of societies. James DiCenso says that Kant interprets “historical religions as collective representations or symbols of moral ideas. The strategy of ethically interpreting traditions is central to the task of engaging the internalized worldviews and
mores that influence so many people.”\textsuperscript{14} Kant’s ethical system provides a robust account of the way in which these same traditions fail to live up to, or greatly deviate from and even violate the standards and ideals they otherwise aspire to. There are elements of historical religious traditions that employ “representational forms expressing inner ethical states,” such that “sustained engagement” with them can assist us in “ameliorating” the human propensity to evil.\textsuperscript{15} At the same time, these traditions can also facilitate the spread of evil in various ways: through authoritarianism, superstition, hypocrisy, despotism, fetishism, and other forms of what Kant refers to as “counterfeit service”\textsuperscript{16} (see A.5). Religious symbols and narratives, properly understood as representations of ethical principles and inner ethical states, can be misinterpreted as possessing objective reality, with the result that religious authorities can command social and political power over followers through what Kant calls “fetish-faith,” which imposes “humble submission to a constitution as compulsory service and not the free homage due to the moral law” (R, 6:180). The result is that “the masses are ruled and \emph{robbed of their moral freedom} through obedience to a church (not to religion)” (ibid). (It should be added here that when Kant refers to “religion,” in this context, he means “the moral law within” (ML) and not historical religions.) This thesis attempts to provide an account of the potential of religious traditions to engage constructively with climate change issues, and the failure, thus far, of these same traditions to do so.\textsuperscript{17}

Because climate change is ‘anthropogenic’ (the result of human industrial activity), it is a moral issue – it requires moral decision-making – and it is still a situation that humanity has the ability to influence. Properly speaking, even if we move beyond the point where it is possible to mitigate the conditions that cause climate change (which may yet happen in the future, as a result of runaway climate change), moral decision-making pertaining to adaptation issues still applies. Currently, the primary question for many commentators is not whether we ought to do something
about climate change, but rather what ought to be done; should the solution be technological, behavioural, systemic (requiring paradigmatic change), or all of the above? Many climate change analysts advocate an approach that includes every conceivable solution, or what they term “multiple policy instruments,” but it should be acknowledged that every proposed remedy has its own set of ethical dilemmas.

The principles and ideas that underlie Kant’s philosophy of religion are italicized here, and are defined in more detail in the Appendix. The following provides a rough overview of his philosophy of religion. Kant provides us with universal ethical principles that are applicable in any historical or cultural context, including issues which Kant himself could not have anticipated, such as climate change. The basis for the claim of universality and universal applicability lies in moral capacities that all rational beings have in common. Our moral capacity originates with what Kant identifies as pure practical reason a priori, (see A.8) which allows for free will (see 4.0). This is a central claim upon which the entire critical philosophy rests. It is the claim (to use a postmodern way of expressing it) that the origin of morality is not socially or historically constructed. This is not to say that values and ethics cannot be shaped by contingent factors (since clearly they are, affecting the part of the will that Kant calls Willkür), but there is an inner part of the will (die Wille) that is incorruptible by external influences or incentives, that remains pure, so to speak, and on account of which there is the possibility of freedom. Kant says that “a rule is objectively and universally valid only when it holds without the contingent, subjective conditions that distinguish one rational being from another” (CPrR, 5:21).

Universalizable principles that issue from pure practical reason are independent of contingent conditions, be they social, political, evolutionary, psychological, instinctual, historical, or cultural. Kant says that the will is “nothing other than practical reason” and “is a capacity to
choose *only that* which reason independently of inclination cognizes as practically necessary, that is, as good” (GR, 4:412). This concept of practical reason is “concerned with the determining ground of the will, which is a faculty either of producing objects corresponding to representations or of determining itself to effect such objects” and in this way “determining” the will (CPrR, 5:15). The concept of representation (*Vorstellung*) is critically important for grasping how morality may be thought of as socially transmittable through ideals that have social and political ramifications. The objects in question are supersensible objects – objects generated by reason as representations of otherwise purely formal and abstract ethical principles, the purpose of which is to guide maxims of actions in everyday decision making. Pure practical reason is associated with the idea of freedom (see 4.0), in the sense that the will is not empirically conditioned (not determined by contingent factors), but is free and autonomous: “All moral concepts have their seat and origin completely *a priori* in reason . . . they cannot be abstracted from any empirical and therefore contingent conditions . . .” (GR, 4:411). A human being qua rational being has free will, which is a capacity he or she is born with, and results in the capacity to use moral judgement. This process is facilitated by the creation of certain mental objects – supersensible objects— that are not objectively real, but which incorporate elements of the sensible world, and thus may appear to be objectively real, if misunderstood. The original purpose of these objects is to serve as representations of universal ethical principles, which reason generates for itself, in order to guide our moral decision making, by influencing the maxims (or rules) that we give ourselves in order to guide our decisions. Historical religions can also be practically useful vehicles for the moral advancement of our species insofar as through them we can share representations of ethical principles, thereby helping to enlighten humanity.

As a preliminary exercise, to come to terms with the way in which Kantian ethics intersects
with climate change issues, Casey Rentmeester’s essay “A Kantian Look at Climate Change” provides some insights that resonate with this larger project. Rentmeester states that because human beings are the cause of climate change, they can also end it. Climate change is thus a moral issue: “the good news . . . is that the anthropogenic causes of climate change are in principle in our hands. We can cut back on fossil fuels if we so choose. Moreover, we are already in a position to mitigate the effects of climate change.” To be fair, it cannot be entirely mitigated, due to the fact that some changes that have occurred are permanent (e.g., species extinction, melted glaciers), and the process of mitigation is not an easy one, but it is also true that a great deal can still be done. Rentmeester’s argument aligns with Kant’s emphasis on free will, and represents a challenge to deterministic arguments, either from religious climate change deniers, who subscribe to dispensationalist theology, or from those who subscribe to free market determinism and technological optimism, or from neo-Marxists who subscribe to some form of historical materialism which anticipates economic collapse arising from climate change as the prelude to the creation of a socialist utopia. Kant’s emphasis on free will, it should be added, may also serve as a remedy for the pessimism that awareness of climate change often results in. In Religion, Kant says that “however evil a human been has been right up to the moment of an impending free action (evil even habitually, as second nature), his duty to better himself was not just in the past: it still is his duty now . . .” (R, 6:41). This idea that every rational being, at every moment, has the choice of good or evil is applicable, on a much broader scale, to all of humanity: we still have before us the choice to address the climate crisis, or to allow it to continue unabated, with catastrophic consequences. The solution lies in our ability to form what Kant calls an “ethical community,” a society dedicated to universal ethical principles (see A.2). Religions, as we shall see, can play a very important role in the creation of an ethical community and the transmission of these
principles. Kant continues: “. . . he must therefore be capable of it, and, should he not do it, he is at the moment of action just as accountable, and stands just as condemned, as if, though endowed with a natural predisposition to good (which is inseparable from freedom), he just stepped out of the state of innocence into evil” (R, 6:41). In the same way, humanity is morally accountable, precisely because there is a choice, but in order to choose wisely, rational beings must exercise what Kant terms autonomy of the will. Religions can play an important role in advancing autonomous ethical action, but they can also impede it. The dual role that religions can play will be explored in this thesis.

Rentmeester argues that Kantian ethics is uniquely suited to addressing climate change issues, insofar as the ideal of sustainability is on par with the principle of universalizability (which is at the core of the Categorical Imperative), and provides the example of unsustainable transportation, which cannot be universalized, because the Earth cannot sustain everyone using fossil fuels to the degree that Canadians and Americans do. The Bruntland Commission defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and therefore as a matter of intergenerational equity. It argued that human laws 'must be reformulated to keep human activities in harmony with the unchanging and universal laws of nature.' It should be added that more sustainable models for transportation, energy production, food production, extraction industries, housing production, etc., already exist, and more are being created, so the question is not whether we have the means to solve the climate crisis, but why we are not doing so. One plausible answer is that human beings allow their predisposition to good (see 4.11) to be corrupted by what Kant terms the propensity to evil in human nature (see 4.1). This suggests that the solution lies not so much in acquiring the means to solve the problem, but rather in collectively exercising
good moral decision making. As we shall see, religions can play a role in this. Rentmeester argues that individual (behavioural) change is insufficient; therefore a “communal response,” which entails political reforms, is necessary. This aligns with DiCenso’s argument that Kant’s philosophy of religion in fact represents a social and political vision, as distinct from the more standard interpretation of Kantian ethics as applicable only to individual moral decision-making. Kant’s individualism is often viewed pejoratively, as contributing to selfish individualism of the modern age, but as Heinrich Beielefeldt correctly notes, this argument ignores the important difference between ethical individualism and possessive individualism. Ethical individualism accords with the principle of universalizability and therefore has global political implications.

Rentmeester draws a parallel between Kant’s prototype for a League of Nations, and the current necessity for international cooperation towards climate mitigation goals (which has been the goal of international climate talks since they began in the 1980s), arguing that human beings need to think “globally.” Along similar lines, Scott Barret argues that international cooperation is needed to achieve mitigation goals. Kant’s contribution is to propose the idea of world citizenship: if human beings begin to think of themselves in this way (as opposed to self-identification in terms of limited national, ethnic, or specific religious identities), it is a self-identification aligned with CI. Thomas Berry proposes something similar: self-identification as citizens of Earth. Rentmeester notes that the United Nations (which Kant’s proposal for the League of Nations helped establish indirectly), implemented the IPCC, the scientific body responsible for bringing together all scientific knowledge of climate change and coordinating global mitigation responses.

A concerted global response is appropriate because of what has been termed “the tragedy of the commons” – a concept that refers to the fact that it is easy to evade moral responsibility for
pollution which is dumped into common areas, and that such pollution is ultimately detrimental to everyone: “common resources are invariably abused because they do not belong to anyone in particular and therefore no one has a vested interest in preserving them.”

Although nation states may claim air space, the atmosphere cannot be partitioned; accordingly, it is used as a dumping ground for industrial waste products, which makes it a global problem, especially insofar as it contributes to global warming. Can religions help humanity self-identity as citizens of the Earth, with world citizenship? They may be able to, if they are interpreted regulatively. A regulative (rule-giving) interpretation of scriptures is a figurative interpretation that puts emphasis on the ethical meaning of the text (see A.6). World religious traditions have an important role to play in the climate crisis because they have traditionally provided moral leadership and can influence billions of people; hence, some climate scientists invited religious leaders to be included in their discussions:

The Summit on Environment, sponsored by the Joint Appeal in Religion and Science, grew out of a collaboration which began in January 1990 with an Open Letter to the Religious Community sent by 34 internationally renowned scientists. Of the peril to planetary environment they wrote, ‘Problems of such magnitude and solutions demanding so broad a perspective must be recognized from the outset as having a religious as well as a scientific dimension. Efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred.’ Struck by the initiative, several hundred religious leaders of all major faiths from all five continents responded: ‘This invitation to collaboration marks a unique moment and opportunity in the relationship of science and religion. We are eager to explore, as soon as possible, concrete, specific forms of action’. 31

The collaboration between the strange bedfellows of science and religion recognizes the potential role that religions can play, provided these traditions adopt a regulative interpretation of their own traditions. Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter on climate change, Laudato Si’, is a good example of this approach, because he adapts the biblical idea of prophetic social justice32 to the climate crisis.33 This essentially regulative approach is aligned with religious pluralism,
ecumenism, and inter-faith dialogue, as well as cooperation with the scientific community. Francis and other eco-theologians, unlike biblical literalists, are focusing on the moral dimension of scriptures, and for the most part dispense with an ontology based on biblical literalism, which would conflict with the findings of modern science (see A.11). The contemporary Roman Catholic ontology celebrates God’s Creation, and science is seen as an instrument for revealing the beauty and complexity of Creation, not as a rival truth-claim, as it was in the past. Laudato Si’ itself can be understood as a regulative interpretation of scriptures, for the purpose of making a moral argument against the conditions that have created climate change. It perfectly illustrates why Kant feels that religious language utilizing representations of supersensible cognition are valuable: the language and imagery Francis employs to argue for a more just and sustainable world is meant to be inspiring. He begins with imagery describing the beauty of and wonders of nature – which conveys a sense of the sublimity of nature – and by mentioning St. Francis, his namesake, whose importance, in Kantian terms, is to serve as an Urbild (see 4.4), and whose love of God’s Creation we ought to emulate. Invoking the sublime (see 4.10) is purposive, which is to say that it is done to convey a moral meaning for the good of humanity. The concern for the poor and for those who suffer inequity expands the scope of moral concern to the most vulnerable. The phrase “Mother Earth” is also used, which is a potent use of anthropomorphism (see A.14), used regulatively, so it could be understood as a postulate of pure practical reason. It is less certain that the use of God is understood as such. The phrase “God has entrusted the world to us men and women” leads up to the argument that we have a moral responsibility to not transgress the limits of the Earth, and to do so – to be wasteful – is a sin against God’s Creation. That particular reference to God is regulative (rule-giving), to impart that we ought not to continue to waste the Earth, given to us. Laudato Si’ is a strongly worded moral teaching from a highest religious authority of a major Christian
denomination. The document also addresses the need to reduce consumption, and recognize the structural causes of inequity, such as technocracy and globalization. It urges a less anthropocentric, more biocentric worldview, one that includes concern for the poor and it advocates against social injustice. The Jewish prophets are referred to, as are Jesus’ ethical teachings, to share moral teachings that take issue with social injustice. He speaks for the need for solutions, but against blind faith in technology as a solution, and against moral indifference, and obstructionist attitudes (e.g., climate change denial). In summary, it is a perfect example of the role that Kant envisaged for historical religions: the regulative interpretation of scriptures and the purposive use of representations.

While *Laudato Si*’ is indicative of a regulative interpretation of scriptures, the Cornwall Alliance’s reading is indicative of the constitutive interpretation. In that interpretation, symbols and narratives of religious traditions are more aligned with religious exclusivism and parochial interests (see A.6). The Cornwall Alliance disseminates religious climate change denial materials (books, pamphlets, videos) widely. It favours national economic self-interest over global environmental concerns, and stands against the findings of climate science. It vilifies environmentalism as idolatrous. Its campaign has been very successful in managing to persuade a majority of conservative U.S. voters that climate science may be mistaken, since 2001, and this has, in turn greatly influenced the Republican Party and federal U.S. public policy during that time. It is no mistake that religious exclusivism, biblical literalism, and climate change denial go hand in hand: they all stem from constitutive interpretation. Kant, commenting on religious exclusivism, says that whenever “a church passes itself off as the only universal one (even though it is based on faith in a particular revelation which, since it is historical, can never be demanded of everyone), whoever does not acknowledge its (particular) ecclesiastical faith is called an unbeliever, and
wholeheartedly hated . . .” (R, 6:108). It should also come as no surprise that the Cornwall Alliance openly rejects Francis’ position.37

Regulative interpretation takes an open-ended approach to scriptures, interpreting them in terms of their ethical content, in contrast to constitutive interpretation, which is closed to such meanings. Kant distinguishes between natural religion and revealed religion, which roughly correspond to these two types of interpretation (where natural religion corresponds to regulative interpretation, and revealed religion corresponds to constitutive interpretation). The open-ended approach, can also be applied to the ethical assessment of any social or political movement; DiCenso notes that “social-political worlds already incorporate ideational elements; they offer ready-made ideologies that are to varying degrees limited and parochial.”38 This is why it is necessary to apply what DiCenso terms an “ethical hermeneutics” to these ideational elements. Even the ideology that appears most enlightened will always be limited to a degree. He says that the “completeness and systematic unity of ideas of reason indicates a possible expansion of our ethical vision to vistas more inclusive . . . than existing societies.”39 Thus, using this unity of ideas of reason (articulated through universal ethical principles) one can impartially and critically assess any social or political movement, and it can certainly be argued that such an assessment is needed, not only for an ethical assessment of religious traditions, but also for any group or movement anywhere on the political spectrum, Left or Right, secular or religious, violent or nonviolent. Ironically, the more idealistic the movement or ideology, the more vulnerable it is to counter-purposive ethical regress, because it can command unconditional duty to the ideology or movement itself, instead of to ML. At the same time, the expansion of our ethical vision is needed to be able to envisage a better society and to pursue it. Climate justice is an indisputably important moral imperative. It is also an opportunity for non-universalizable ideologies to gain a foothold
and spread, through fear, incentives, and misplaced idealism.

Some of the key ideas explored in *Religion* shed light on both the potential and the hazards that can arise when religious traditions enter into the political arena. Kant’s insights provide a critical evaluation of the shortcomings of religious traditions, while at the same time focusing on their positive potential for needed social transformation. This differentiates his inquiry from some theological texts when they seek to portray only the positive contribution of religious traditions to environmental issues and seek to exonerate religion. Kant can also be distinguished from the approach taken by Lynn White Jr. in his criticism of Christianity, which lays blame for the environmental crisis at the foot of that faith tradition, or James Rachel’s atheist approach in *Created from Animals*. Kant attempts to find a middle-ground between Christian apologetics and atheist arguments that call for the dissolution of religion, by pragmatically articulating the way in which religious traditions can become vehicles for the ethical transformation of societies, while at the same time providing an analysis of their various (and often very serious) shortcomings. A strength of Kant’s approach is that he eschews a traditional theological perspective, insofar as that perspective is heteronomously dependent on the moral authority of what he terms revealed religion or revelation (see A.7), but at the same time employs and appropriates theological language in order to convey meanings and concepts that elude the non-religious language of formal rational principles. His work thereby illustrates the largely (and as yet unrealized) potential of religious traditions for effecting a needed moral transformation of society in conformity with universal ethical principles which (it can be argued) align with the ideal of *sustainable sufficiency*. Rentmeester argues that the principle of universalizability is appropriate for an assessment of climate change issues because it is “on par” with the ideal of sustainability:

An action is right if it can be universalized as a rule in which everyone could follow
without conflict and an action is wrong if it cannot. This model for determining the rightness or wrongness of an action is helpful in regard to how we should confront anthropogenic climate change, because universalizability is on a par with sustainability . . . Martin Schönfeld states “If we transport Kant’s thought into an environmental framework, we can say that an action is right if it is something that we can will that every other person in the world do and still allow the Earth’s climate to sustain a healthy equilibrium.”43 This is a key point, illustrating that the ideal of sustainability may be thought as consistent with the Categorical Imperative, in consideration of future generations. It should be added that Kant’s social and political vision allows for incremental progress to be made along these lines; it is not as absolutist as often thought.

It is important that mitigation and adaptation measures not transgress CI by violating human rights. Kant’s theory of supersensible objects is important in this respect. The supersensible exists only through thought and is distinct from intuitions of sensible reality, although it has the ability to attach itself to said intuitions and create supersensible objects that amplify some aspect of intuitions of the sensible world (e.g. the idea of infinite power) through the use of schematisms of analogy. Reason does not know the supersensible through “objective grounds” and does not feel the need to grant the status of existence to supersensible objects (O, 8:137). It is thus a serious error of reason when supersensible objects are granted constitutive reality, in defiance of reason, because “. . . no assertoric knowledge is required in religion (even of the existence of God), since with our lack of insight into supersensible objects any such profession can well be hypothetically feigned . . .” (R, 6:154). An example of this error, in historical faith traditions, is the ‘superstitious delusion’ of enthusiasm, “when imagined means themselves, being supersensible, are not within the human beings’ power, even without considering the unattainability of the supersensible end intended through them” (R, 6:175). An example of this is faith healing, or any act of magic or
superstition (see A.13). Kant thus concludes that “enthusiastic religious delusion” (see A.5) based on this fundamental error of reason, which views the supersensible as objectively real and within the reach of an individual’s agency to affect, is “the moral death of reason without which there can be no religion, because like all morality in general, religion must be founded on principles” (R, 6:175). Again, “religion” in this sentence, is equivalent to “the moral law” (ML), so Kant’s comment above can be understood to mean: emotion-based religiosity which thinks of God (or other supernatural ideas) as objectively real is an impediment to morality.

For Kant, there is a hierarchy of supersensible objects. While some are merely “empty dreaming” and “figments of the brain” (O, 8:137), the highest order of supersensible objects is the concept of a “first original being as a supreme intelligence and at the same time the highest good” (ibid) (see A.19). In other words, God is the highest order of supersensible objects, and for us it has an important ethical purpose, but what all supersensible objects have in common is their lack of objective reality: “Many supersensible things may be thought . . . to which, however, reason feels no need to extend itself, much less assume their existence” (ibid). It should be noted that in order for the ethical potentiality of supersensible cognition to achieve fruition, it is important that reason be able to recognize that the supersensible object is not objectively real. Reason allows us to distinguish between “the possible and the actual” (O, 8:138) – which is to say that reason allows us to distinguish between what is objectively real, and what is not – but at the same time, reason has a “need” to “take the existence of a most real (highest) being as the ground of all possibility” (ibid). This need arises from pure practical reason, and is necessary in order to imagine the possibility of the ideal moral state of the individual and of society. The ability to conceive of an ideal society is made possible by supersensible cognition; therefore, it is impractical (if not impossible) to dispense with such cognition altogether, because conceptions of the ideal society are necessary to
achieve some measure of good in the world; but at the same time there is an imperative that we do not overstep the bounds of reason and imagine that the supersensible object has objective reality, because doing so could negate its ethical value (insofar as it contributes to heteronomy of the will). The postulate of God (see 4.15), the highest order of supersensible objects, exists as a result of the need of reason to be able to put it to practical use. Thus “faith needs only the idea of God which must occur to every morally earnest (and therefore religious) pursuit of the good, without pretending to be able to secure objective reality for it through theoretical cognition.” (R, 6:154). It should be noted that for this reason Kant strongly objects to forms of “counterfeit service” (i.e., rituals and observances designed to gain God’s favour). God, as a postulate of pure practical reason, is not in need of such deeds or acts, which are consequently wasted. Moreover, when counterfeit service infringes on our ethical duties, it violates the true purpose of supersensible cognition and the practical purpose of historical faiths based on it, putting “courtly service over and above the ethico-civil duties of humanity (of human beings to human beings)” (R, 6:154). Kant refers to “the delusion of allegedly supersensible (heavenly) feelings” (R, 6:185) to describe the practice of “false devotion” in which counterfeit service is operative.

God is “the concept of a supersensible being endowed with the properties required for the attainment of the highest good which is aimed at through morality but transcends our faculties” (R, 6:182). This concept is generated in human thought (or more broadly, the thoughts of any rational being, which includes human beings, but may also include other species endowed with reason), and is thus not in need of service or deference, but should be understood as a postulate towards which human beings can aspire through “good life conduct” (see A.4) and behavior that is “well-pleasing to God” (which means in accordance with ML). Kant notes that this highest order of the supersensible “transcends our faculties” and lies outside our knowledge, which may be expressed
as its unconditionality. The correct response to it is not service to the object itself, as though it were objectively real, but unconditional duty to the moral law that it properly represents.

Supersensible cognition has a practical application, insofar as it provides us with moral ideals towards which to aspire (e.g. RE gives us the vision of the ideal society) but is extremely dangerous insofar as it can be mistaken for constitutive reality, which can lead to violations of morality (e.g. the violation of human rights by theocracies or utopian totalitarian states).

Supersensible cognition exists to serve the teleological function (see A.16) of encouraging the development of an ethically good society; otherwise, it has the capacity to lead to the greatest evils, because it inspires unconditional devotion in adherents, and because it allows for unlimited forms of devotion, some of which can lead to mass violence and terror. It is therefore vitally necessary to recognize the true purpose of this type of cognition, which requires recognition of our capacity to generate it, so as to not mistake supersensible objects for constitutive reality. It is this error of reason, more than any other that leads to the misuse of supersensible cognition, resulting in the violation of ML. At the same time, Kant recognizes the potential for good of supersensible cognition and, consequently, historical faiths that arise from it and adhere around shared representations of supersensible objects. Kant repeatedly speaks of a gradual progression of society towards this telos, by virtue of the efforts of ethically inclined persons through the agency of a collective body, the visible church, represented in its most idealistic form as RE, inspiring the formation of an ethico-political society.

One of the supersensible objects we have the capacity to envisage is the ideal of a perfectly good society, and in human history there are many examples of this vision adopted by utopian thinkers, visionaries, revolutionaries, and religious thinkers. While the ideal of the good society is practically necessary for helping to establish communities of persons of good will and the general
moral advancement of society towards egalitarian and inclusive values, there is also a very real danger inherent in this vision, which the history of utopianism demonstrates and which Kant explores in *Religion* through his examination of the misuse of religion to advance evil. Utopian ideals could be said to issue from supersensible cognition, in the sense that they take elements of the sensible world and amplify them without limit. If the ideal being advanced is an ideal society, and its adherents believe the status quo is incorrigible, the temptation is to envisage a complete annihilation of those elements (or persons) considered heterodox or demonic or impure. Mark C. Juergensmeyer, in *Terror in the Mind of God*, examines religious terrorists whose objective is just that.\(^4^4\) Supersensible objects, around which historical religions form, are not intended to become objects of worship, in Kant’s view; instead, they are meant to help guide us morally. Rational beings have a predisposition to good, which accounts for the generation of supersensible objects to serve as representations of ethical principles, which are needed to guide us. The problem is that human beings typically fall prey to an error of reason which hypostatizes the supersensible objects and views them as constitutively real, and this contributes to what Kant terms “delusory religion,” which leads humanity astray, and contributes to moral regress for society. We are led astray by inclinations (see A.17) that in one way or another persuade us to give priority to self-love (see 4.6) over and above the moral law within (ML). The inversion of moral priorities is Kant’s shorthand definition of evil. A key example of this, which is important for a discussion of the social and political ramifications of religious traditions, is the misunderstanding of the ideal of the perfectly good society in a direction that leads to social engineering to achieve a utopian society, but in so doing violates human rights and the universal ethical principles generated by practical reason. A good example is the Cambodian genocide, which historian Paul Johnson attributes to “the great destructive force of the twentieth century: the religious fanatic reincarnated as professional
This misinterpretation has led human beings to commit the most heinous and evil acts in the name of defending or advancing this or that supersensible object, thereby violating ethical principles, in contradistinction to their intended purpose. To understand how this works, we have to understand Kant’s analysis of the misinterpretation of the concept of God; this analysis provides insight into the fundamental error of reason that occurs within religious traditions and by extension all political ideologies that employ supersensible cognition. The error occurs when God is seen as an objectively real anthropomorphic external being whose favour we can seek through rituals and observances (see A.14). These observances are morally worthless, says Kant, because in fact the idea of God is a postulate of pure practical reason, the only purpose of which is to guide us ethically, and not to justify violations of ML: “without a God . . . the majestic ideas of morality are, to be sure, objects of approbation and admiration but not incentives for resolve and realization” (A813/B841). Kant writes that “if reverence for God comes first, and the human being subordinates virtue to it, then this object [of reverence] is an idol . . . religion is then idolatry” (R, 6:185) (see A.11). God is a practically useful idea to advance ML, but it can also impede moral practice when the idea of God becomes an idol. We need supersensible objects to serve as postulates, in order to be able to envision and bring about needed social and moral progress, without which society can degenerate into an abominable state – as has happened many times, and continues to happen. That is the practical purpose of supersensible cognition. We ought not extend the meaning of this cognition to anything beyond that purpose, or run the risk of undermining its purpose. The constitutive interpretation of supersensible objects, representing a serious error of reason, can (for example) take the form of belief in a literal afterlife, negating the importance of this world and its inhabitants. It can also take the more secular form of political utopianism, in which the perfect society takes the place of God, excusing violations of ML for the sake of an
idolatrous conception of the ideal. The regulative interpretation of supersensible objects, which Kant advocates instead, serves as a remedy for these errors of reason, by identifying the true purpose of these objects, which is to advance universal ethical principles (CI, FH, ML, and RE).

Historical religious traditions – which Kant terms ecclesiastical faiths – may be measured against a universal ethical ideal, to which Kant gives the name the Categorical Imperative (CI), or “moral law within” (ML), which has various formal expressions, including the Formula of Humanity (FH) and Realm of Ends (RE) (see A.1, 4.2). Like all cultural formations, examples of historical religions invariably fall short of that ideal, in varying degrees. Kant refers to an unconditional moral imperative common to all persons, and given expression through the ethical components of religious traditions. He refers to Jesus’ ethical teachings, but one could also include the Jewish concept of prophetic social justice (as exemplified by the prophets Amos or Daniel or Jeremiah), or the concept of ahimsa within Indian traditions, as well as many other examples from different religious traditions (e.g. the Golden Rule). All world historical traditions have universal ethical principles, which serve as widely accessible approximations of ML. These approximations are meant to bring humanity out of the state of moral minority, which is a state that describes most of humanity, because human beings typically prefer to defer moral judgement to authority figures (both secular and religious), rather than aspire to autonomy of the will and autonomous ethical conduct. These ethical ideals are equated with enlightenment, defined by Kant as “the freedom to make public use of one’s reason in all matters” (E, 8:36-7). This is because our species is characterized by laziness and cowardice, according to Kant (E, 8:36-7). It is difficult to argue with him on this point, but at the same time his philosophy of religion provides an optimistic note in its affirmation of ML, the importance of rational hope (see 4.7), and the concept of freedom (see 4.0): the ability of every person to choose good at any time, despite circumstances. Rational hope and
freedom are critically important for humanity in terms of its ability to collectively implement solutions to the climate crisis, and religions can potentially play a role in advancing them.

Kant makes the claim that autonomy of the will is “the sole principle of all moral laws and of duties in keeping with them . . .” (CPrR, 5:33). It is the condition through which we may exercise moral judgement and arrive at universal ethical principles, not swayed by desires, inclinations, or incentives (e.g. the disincentive of social exclusion or punishment, the incentive of pleasure, power or other attractions). Socialization, from this perspective, would represent a heteronomous influence, except inasmuch as it helps to awaken our latent potential for autonomy of the will which is associated with moral judgement. Kant’s *Religion* may be seen an exploration of the way in which historical religions, as socializing influences, can help with this awakening, and also, conversely, the way in which they can hinder it. The fruition of our potential to envisage and actualize ML in the world around us begins with the ability to stand apart from heteronomous influences, in whatever form they come, preventing them from influencing the determining ground of choice to opt towards non-universalizable maxims of action that give priority to self-love.

Through autonomy of the will we become lawgivers in our own right, where the law refers to ML (see A.12): “The moral law expresses nothing other than autonomy of pure practical reason, that is, freedom, and this is itself the formal conditions of all maxims, under which alone they can accord with the supreme practical law” [i.e., ML] (CPrR, 5:33). Heteronomy, on the other hand, is when “the object of a desire . . . enters into the practical law as a condition of its possibility” resulting in “dependence upon the natural law of following some impulse or inclination . . .” A maxim shaped by heteronomous influences “can never contain within it the form of giving universal law . . .”

Kant’s ethical system is independent of any religion tradition, but refers to a moral baseline that appears in all major religious traditions to some degree (insofar as they reflect CI). Religious
traditions, at their best, provide representations of ethical principles, through a regulative interpretation of supersensible cognition, making them more accessible, and enabling said traditions to act in service to the public good. The phenomenon of shared representations of supersensible objects has enormous social and political import. They are more easily shared than the ethical ideals themselves if they are presented as formal rational principles. For this reason there is a pragmatic value of historical religious traditions to advance moral education and awaken the masses from moral lethargy, denial, and inaction.

Kant’s nuanced view of historical religions complements some contemporary thinkers who argue for the pragmatic use of religions to advance environmentalism. Stephen Scharper, for example, writing on the potential of religious traditions to help bring about a more sustainable society, argues for a “new ontology,” or what Thomas Berry calls a “new story.” It is interesting that Berry should use this phrase, because as it turns out human beings may be neurologically predisposed to narratives as a way of sharing information and values. Scharper pragmatically argues that “given that 85 per cent of the human family reads reality through a religious lens, it follows that religious worldviews are a critical component in addressing our present environmental reality.” Similarly, Veldman et al, list some major reasons that religions could be said to have such potential. The foremost reason is that religions create, maintain and influence cosmologies (worldviews), which heteronomously influence ethical decision making, such that autonomous ethical action very often must take the form of independence from dominant worldviews used by entire societies to define themselves (e.g. the position that slavery is morally wrong is an example of an autonomous moral judgement, especially if it occurs within the context of a slave-owning society). A second reason that religion has potential for engaging with climate issues is the moral authority of religious leaders: “religious leaders are able to engage a broad audience, many of
whom accept and respect their moral authority and leadership . . . up to 84 percent of the world population identifies with one of the major world religions. Organized religions' influence may have declined in some parts of the world, such as Western Europe, but elsewhere it continues to have a profound influence . . . religions are, at least in theory, well positioned to mobilize millions of people on the issue of climate change." In point of fact, there are now eco-theologians from every world tradition, interpreting their respective traditions in light of the climate crisis. The majority are within the Christian tradition. They are not as yet successful at mobilizing millions of people, but there are reasons for that failure, explored later in this thesis. A third reason that religions have potential is that they possess institutional and economic resources: religious denominations “run schools and social agencies and are, collectively, the third largest category of investors in the world. In some countries they also wield considerable political power. At the institutional level this influence enables them to reach a broad audience . . . The international recognition and respect of leaders such as the Dalai Lama and the Pope are also symbolic resources that can be deployed to some effect on issues of their choosing.” The Dalai Lama and the Pope, in this sense, can serve the same role identified by Kant in his description of Jesus as an Urbild (moral archetype). Urbilder become, for many, personifications of moral goodness, which is practically of use if it inspires emulation in moral striving.

These are some of many ways in which religion can be said to have great potential for advancing climate change mitigation. At the same time, it is also the case that religions are failing in their potential, and can even be said to represent a serious danger to humanity. Kant provides a good account of this danger; he cautions us against misinterpretations of supersensible objects, which can impede our moral progress, and by extension the moral progress of society. It can be argued that many of the greatest and most evil acts of mass violence in human history were driven
forward by an unconditional commitment by those who perpetrated them, in allegiance to a constitutive interpretation of supersensible ideals, which has led some atheist thinkers (such as Freud) to call for an end to historical religions.\textsuperscript{54} Kant, to his credit, recognizes that human beings are probably incapable of completely abandoning religion, and that the true and original purpose of the generation of these supersensible objects is purposive (i.e., ethically oriented, see A.16), and it is therefore important to grasp and apply the regulative principle whereby we can properly interpret and utilize supersensible objects as representations of universalizable ethical principles. A robust system for analyzing and critiquing religious traditions, which Kant provides, enables us to assess the degree to which religions engage with climate change issues. This is important because not all responses by these traditions may be said to be equal in moral worth: some acts of religious service (counterfeit faith) are “presumed to be . . . well-pleasing to God,” but they do not in any way advance morality. All such acts “in worth (or rather worthlessness)” are the same (R, 6:186-7). Religious-based climate change denial from some Christian evangelicals, for example, has infinitely less moral worth than climate adaptation efforts by Christian churches in the global south or climate mitigation efforts by Christian churches in the global north, because climate change denial gives no credence to the interests of future generations adversely affected by climate change: it cannot be universalized.\textsuperscript{55} Moreover, climate change denial gives moral sanction and justification to actions by fossil fuel corporations, and governments working at their behest, that must properly be termed evil (using Kant’s definition of the word). Religious-based climate change denial relies on a constitutive interpretation of biblical scriptures: it says that climate change is not happening, or that if it is, it is the result of the will of an objectively real supernatural being, and not the result of human industrial activities.\textsuperscript{56} By denying or relativizing the findings of science in this way, one can argue that climate change deniers avoid moral responsibility for the
welfare of future generations, who will be harmed by the adverse effects of climate change and resource depletion. Certain religious beliefs – in this case, attributing to God’s will what is in fact the result of human agency – are morally worthless. This false attribution is a good modern example of heteronomy of the will within a religious tradition, influencing millions of people to say and do nothing about the climate crisis. In the essay “The End of All Things” and in his critique of theological chiliastic (i.e., end-times theology, biblical millenarianism) Kant takes issue with apocalyptic theological determinism of this kind, and at the same time tries to redeem apocalypticism and the idea of immortality, by interpreting them regulatively.

**Postscript to 1.0: Terminology.** DiCenso notes that Kant appropriates religious terminology in order to represent ethical principles. The word *God*, for example, has a highly specific meaning, in this context: it denotes a postulate of reason, not an objectively real external force. In addition, there are some terms that need clarification. In this thesis there is frequent and interchangeable use of the terms *worldview* and *cosmology*, to denote the overarching belief system of a society, constructed and maintained, and on occasion torn down by historical religions. Sociologist Peter Berger uses the term *nomos* to convey the totality of beliefs, practices, and norms of a society, and notes that the effectiveness of a *nomos* is due to its ability to convince those who subscribe to it that it is normative.57 This concept comes into play in describing both the potential of religions to affect society and the failure of religions to engage with climate change. Similar terms include *ontology*, e.g. “the quest for a new ontology [that] speaks to our worldviews, and how these worldviews shape our interaction with culture, economics, politics, and the environment”58, *story*, e.g. “the new story” is used by Thomas Berry to denote a cosmology, which in all of human history until the European Enlightenment was constructed by religious traditions, as reflected in Creation myths, but in the modern era, is informed by the physical science of
cosmology, and the natural sciences in general\textsuperscript{59}; and paradigm (e.g. the use of the phrase paradigmatic barriers by Veldman \textit{et al}). Juergensmeyer refers to Foucault’s term \textit{episteme} to refer to “a worldview or a paradigm of thinking that ‘defines the conditions of all . . . knowledge.’ It also involves the notion of a nexus of socially embedded ideas about society. Pierre Bourdieu calls this a \textit{habitus}, which he describes as a ‘socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures.’ It is the social basis for what Clifford Geertz described as a ‘the cultural systems’ of a people: the patterns of thought, the world views, and the meanings that are attached to the activities of a particular society. In Geertz’s view, such cultural systems encompass both secular ideologies and religion.”\textsuperscript{60}

Kant, as an Enlightenment thinker, rejects religious cosmologies based on traditional metaphysics and theology, and instead embraces science and reason as foundational for ontology.\textsuperscript{61} Human beings must have some kind of worldview through which they are able to construct a sense of reality; it is Kant’s contention in the first \textit{Critique} that the Categories of the understanding enable us to do this. He provides an epistemological theory that describes how we organize “sense-based intuitions, through judgement, by means of an array of organizing rules . . .”\textsuperscript{62} The sense-based intuitions are then used to cognize supersensible objects, generated by reason to convey ethical principles. Using reason, we can differentiate between sensible and supersensible knowledge, and this has the ethical implication of allowing us to set limits on the degree to which we assign ontological status to supersensible objects. In this we are able to rationally understand the ethical purpose of the supersensible objects.

In using the word \textit{political} DiCenso is referring not to electoral partisan politics alone; he is referring to “collective ideational resources as well as institutions and organizations shaped by these ideas . . .”\textsuperscript{63} This is a broad definition of the word political, that “includes politics per se, but
extends further to designate cultural systems of meaning by which societies and communities orient themselves in establishing their overall priorities and values.”

DiCenso’s use of term “political” – adopted here – generally reflects this broader understanding.

The term religion can have a broad meaning as well, through the functional definition of the word: the distinction between substantive and functional definitions of religion allows analysis of “seemingly secular movements as religions because they function as religions; that is, they provide meaning around which individuals coalesce, interpreting life through a system of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and prescriptions for behavior.” According to Yinger (1970) who coined this definition, religion “can be defined as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with these ultimate problems in life.”

Peter Berger notes “the emergence of such functional, secular religiosity as an alternative expression of ‘repressed transcendence’,” according to Wesley Jamison. Berger “argues that in response to modernity's cultural delegitimization of traditional religions and objective truth, individuals, rather than ending their quest for religious truth, tend to shift the foci of their quest toward other outlets” (ibid). There are two functional religions referred to in this thesis: social justice activism (in particular, climate justice activism), and consumerism. Both are subject to ethical critiques. This thesis thus refers to historical religions of two types: The first is the standard and exoteric sense: an amalgam of rituals, beliefs, and community, referred to as historical religious traditions. The second type is a broader, functional sense of the word religion, defining it according to the social function that it serves, as defined by Yinger. The ethical assessment of religious traditions relies upon yet a third definition of religion, given by Kant, which designates ML, for which he uses several terms (e.g. moral religion, moral faith, rational religion, and true or pure religious faith). Kant’s distinction between moral and historical forms of religious faith is called his “doubling” of religion. Historical
religious traditions can be assessed according to the degree to which they conform to or deviate from ML.

1.1 The Formula of Humanity (FH) and climate change

The Formula of Humanity is a variation of CI that states: “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means (GR 4:429; 4:436).” A paraphrase of the principle is as follows: “never use others as means to an end; always treat them as ends in themselves.” In other words, treat all others with respect and dignity. Perhaps the best example of the violation of FH, the instrumental use of others as a means to an end, is human slavery (which sadly, still exists today, although it is illegal), but there are many other examples, including economic exploitation, and the violation of human life and of human rights for military or political ends. Social engineering and totalitarianism and thought control are ways in which human beings in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been used instrumentally, and their status as ends disregarded. Human beings are never very far away from degenerating into political systems predicated on ruthless dehumanizing worldviews, and some have argued that there is a real danger for liberal democracies of doing just that.

The idea of human rights arose during the European Enlightenment as part of the social imaginary that includes the ideals of freedom, equality, and democracy. It was made popular by Rousseau: “the will of the people, or Rousseau’s general will, which articulates the principle of rights and autonomy for all under egalitarian laws.” It may be understood as the most popular and accessible expression of the idea that all other human beings are ends in themselves. This is a concept, which although predating Kant, was greatly advanced by his ethical system, especially the section in *The Metaphysics of Morals* called “The Doctrine of Right” (see 3.5). The concept of
human rights and FH are wholly consistent, inasmuch as they are both expressions of that which is thought to be universal and inalienable, by virtue of which every human being may be considered the moral equal of every other – which is to say, that all human beings are moral subjects, whose interests are deserving of equal consideration. This principle is reflected in the judicial system of liberal democracies, through the concept of equality before the law (at least in theory, if not in practice). Kant notes that “the duties of virtue concern the entire human race” and that therefore “the concept of an ethical community always refers to the ideal of a totality of human beings, and in this it distinguishes itself from the concept of a political community.” A political community may be driven by parochial interest common only to their tribe or group. Universal ethical principles, by contrast, are applicable to all persons. It can be argued that this must include the interests of future generations, if their interests are affected by technologies that exist in the present. This is a fully inclusive ideal supporting universal human rights and responsibilities on a transnational, transcultural level; as universal, its principles cannot be limited to members of particular groups. DiCenso notes that “it works to hold all partial and imperfect manifestations of positive laws of justice in constant critical relation to the guiding ideals of freedom, truth, and justice.”

The individual human being (or rational being) is an “end” of nature: an end, not a means to an end (in Kant’s Formula of Humanity (FH)). The human being is an end because his will is universally legislative, which is to say that human beings are law-makers, by virtue of reason (according to Kant). He adds that the laws (maxims) we give ourselves are not all universalizable, so that the gulf between our potential as lawmakers and what actually happens is enormous. Modern definitions of the concept of rights, as adopted by the United Nations, refer to ‘negative rights’ (which is essentially the right to not be harmed), and ‘positive rights’ (the right to certain
opportunities or resources, through which a basic quality of life can be achieved).\textsuperscript{74} FH is consistent with the concept of negative rights in the sense that using others as a means to an end reduces them and thereby causes them harm, which is what the concept of negative rights precisely militates against. The connection of FH to positive rights (e.g. the right to education, housing, etc.) is more tenuous, but arises in the context of discrimination (i.e., denying a person a basic amenity because of their race, religion, gender, ability, etc. violates FH in the sense that the person is not seen as an \textit{end}; this application of FH becomes an important issue vis-à-vis future generations.

The idea of human rights is a very concise reflection of ML, and may be properly viewed as a postulate of pure practical reason. Kant was influenced by Rousseau to adopt universal human rights (which he calls “the rights of humanity”) and by the concept of egalitarianism.\textsuperscript{75} The concept of human rights is central to and consistent with Kant's egalitarian vision for humanity. The idea of rights and freedoms predated Kant and he mentions human rights infrequently as compared to other concepts, but the whole of his moral philosophy points to the idea, and his system of thought provided an ethical foundation for an international human rights regime adopted by the United Nations.\textsuperscript{76} The idea of human rights is crucial for negotiating issues that are likely to arise from the climate crisis. Already, climate change issues are understood and expressed in these terms: the IPCC operates under the aegis of the United Nations, the international body that more than any other has promoted rights language as a moral baseline for the international community. There is now a broad field of research examining the intersection of human rights and climate change issues, principally in the area of eco-refugees.\textsuperscript{77} Human rights violations leading to preventable death and displacement (the phenomenon of eco-refugees) are already occurring as a result of climate change.\textsuperscript{78} Human rights violations tied to conflicts over scarce resources are expected to increase dramatically as human populations increase at the same time that access to water, arable
land, and oil decreases.  

Scarcity and egalitarian access to a fair distribution of finite resources (such as water or oil) could be classified as matters of distributive justice. Garvey argues that countries disproportionately responsible for GHGs are morally obligated to provide assistance for adaptation efforts to countries with low GHGs but adversely affected by climate change. Sam Aldeman frames the same idea as “intragenerational equity through an equitable redistribution of resources from the countries primarily responsible for the problem to those with inadequate access to the resources needed for adaptation and mitigation.” Interestingly, the movie star Chuck Norris, who is a climate change denying Christian evangelical, attended COP15 and took the opportunity to argue against this idea (which in any case was not ratified) on the grounds that “Obama and other world leaders are using global warming as an excuse to create ‘a one world order’ when they meet in Copenhagen next week.” His comment is interesting because he is really suggesting, as have critics of the IPCC, that it is secondary incentives that motivate expressions of concern over climate change and attempts to mitigate it, and not genuine moral concern. While that clearly is an over-generalization (i.e., making the exception the rule), it does raise the issue of the role that incentives may play for some who seeks funding or acclaim for their efforts, and the attendant need for moral self-examination in this regard. There can be no doubt that with the increase in the urgency of the climate crisis, a new class of bureaucracy within governments will be created to address it, and while mitigation and adaptation efforts are undeniably just, there is always the capacity in human nature for moral corruption, as Kant points out: the “true (moral) service . . . a service of the heart” and the “misconstruction” through which “a delusion . . . creeps upon us” and is “easily taken for the service of God [or humanity] itself . . .” (R, 6:192). This potential for moral corruption increases exponentially when supersensible cognition is employed, because this can
effectively protect violations of FH under the guise of good works, because any argument against a violation is seen as a violation of the ideal (even though it is not). A good example of this is the use of patriotism to excuse war crimes.83

Human rights and climate change also intersect through retributive justice: there have been calls for an international tribunal to prosecute those responsible for human rights violations tied to anthropogenic climate change. For example, outspoken climate scientist James Hansen told Congress that CEOs of fossil fuel corporations who funded climate change denial should be prosecuted for “high crimes against humanity and nature.”84 His point is that by funding climate change denial, corporations such as Exxon Mobil knowingly put the world at grave risk, and that this represents a crime that ought to be prosecuted by the same international jurors who hear cases relating to war crimes. At the same time, the argument can also be made (vis-à-vis retributive justice) that the principle of natural justice (i.e., due process, equality before the law, and presumption of innocence) must always adhere in the case of such allegations so as to avoid the human tendency to scapegoat as a socially sanctioned way of engaging in ritualized violence. As with the Nuremberg Trials, this principle must be adhered to, to avoid breaches of justice.

DiCenzo says that Religion facilitates “a method of interpretation and questioning with the potential to engage multiple religions in relation to ethical and political concerns, such as the furtherance of distributive and restorative forms of justice and of human rights and freedoms . . .”85 The way in which historical religions can engage with climate issues, in terms of distributive justice, is through their advocacy for climate mitigation policies. Their moral and institutional power can be brought to bear at climate talks and in the media, in a way that may have some positive effect. Some groups already stand as an example of this, including the World Council of Churches, which uses the language of human rights and social justice.86 Some historical religions’
emerging efforts, as part of the “civil society” delegations at climate talks, calling for distributive and restorative justice measures to facilitate mitigation and adaptation, stand as notable examples. What historical religions bring to the table is unique: the ability to create and influence cosmologies, their moral authority, their institutional and political support, and wide social networks that could potentially facilitate adaptation.

Given the gravity of these scenarios, if a human rights analysis is to apply, it must be robust and defensible. The universality of rights has come under attack in recent years: critics suggest they are arbitrary, socially and historically constructed and that the very idea of rights was part of European colonialism, used to usurp traditional and indigenous worldviews, and therefore has no validity. The ‘Asian values debate’ serves as a perfect illustration of the criticism of universal ethics by those who embrace cultural relativism. Cultural relativism and using the history of colonialism as a way of evading criticism regarding failure in the area of human rights may be disingenuous and politically motivated, but there are also legitimate philosophical critiques of human rights discourse. It is important to assess the legitimacy of the idea of human rights against such criticisms, by establishing on what grounds it could be termed truly universal and inalienable. To do this, it should first be established that rights are equal to freedoms (MS, 6:230). Kant designates freedom as a postulate (MS, 6:239). If we say that the idea of rights is a postulate of practical reason, then can it become a schematism of object-determination and consequently counter-purposive? The answer is yes: even human rights can be used in ways that transgress freedom (as for example, when they are used as a coercive measure for social control by the state in a way that lacks ethical content). This happens with the postulate of God, so logic dictates that it could happen with human rights as well. What form would this take? The juridico-civil state, under the guise of protecting human rights, could in fact violate civil liberties by creating laws in which
legitimate criticism is prohibited because it is considered intolerant or discriminatory. Kant would come down squarely in favour of freedom of speech on this issue, reserving the right to be critical of historical religions, for example. Today, this has become a contested political issue: what is hate speech and what is free speech? A rational analysis of the ethical shortcomings of a religious tradition, such as militant Islam or Christianity, is not necessarily the same thing as hate speech or incitement to violence (though it is often thought to be).

Malik and Folliesdal argue that although Kant's thought served as a foundation for international law and the entire human rights regime, “few of those who build on Kant's foundation stop to explore what he really thought.” It is therefore necessary to articulate the foundation of rights if they are to be applied to complex life and death situations. The meaning of human rights is at risk of be trivialized and abused through frivolous and vexatious litigation in some “social justice tribunals.” There is an unfortunate tendency to misuse rights discourse and the concept of social justice. An example is the use of the idea of human rights to censor freedom of thought and expression as alleged “hate speech” when in fact the offending thought might simply dissent from orthodox opinion. The juridico-civil state, under the guise of protecting human rights, could in fact violate civil liberties by creating an atmosphere in which legitimate criticism is prohibited on the grounds that it is intolerant or discriminatory. Adelman argues that “human rights are always vulnerable to appropriation and depoliticization by hegemonic forces and, although rights-based struggles are commonly counter-hegemonic, they tend toward the aporetic when they become ends in themselves rather than means towards more substantive justice ... or saving the planet.” To say that a human rights violation has occurred should not be done lightly. Social control through thought control and censorship are common to both despotic theocracies and totalitarian states, so it is questionable whether liberal democracies should be engaged in doing the same, especially
using the pretext of protecting human rights. Kant advocates for “freedom of thought” from the “slavish yoke of faith” (R, 6:188), and having himself experienced censorship from “theologians and religious leaders,” spoke against it and for free speech. The danger of suppressing the communications of those whose worldview you disagree with is that “the ‘wilderness’ of lawless state of nature ensues.” Kant’s critique along these lines is in regards to religious despotism (see 4.8), but it is applicable to any kind of state censorship, under any pretext, including social justice and human rights. In liberal democracies, the most common form of suppression of free speech is political correctness, which is often a very successful attempt to control the thoughts and speech of others. It is a heteronomous form of social and political control over individuals who do not subscribe to what has become a dominant ideological norm, and in its most egregious form, is a force for public shaming, used to silence perceived opponents, in service to an agonistic revolutionary ideal. Its genius lies in the fact that it cannot be opposed without appearing to be bigoted, so it encounters very little opposition from liberal-minded people, and in this way, like a religious ideology, it gains wide acceptance and its promoters gain political power. Interestingly, political correctness utilizes moral arguments against discrimination, but the arguments are based on cultural relativism, and thus remain largely silent on such issues as honour killings or other human rights violations that enjoy cultural protection. Cultural relativism lacks rational coherency because its logic permits atrocities.

Historical religions, as has been established earlier, are valuable insofar as they serve to advance a good society. A good society, in Kant’s view, is one in which everyone voluntarily strives to live in accordance with CI in their relations with one another as much as is humanly possible. Religions are of practical value insofar as they support human rights by advancing climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, and insofar as they impede these efforts, religions could
be said to represent a threat to our species and to life on Earth. In fact, religions do both simultaneously. Religion is more than just an exploration of historical religious traditions. It should not properly be thought of as a theological work, or merely as a commentary on Christianity, although it has been thought of as such (because Kant appropriates theological language to convey what are in fact secular rational ideas).\textsuperscript{97} DiCenso comments that Kant’s analysis may be understood as “a template for a general interpretative methodology that can in principle be applied more broadly [as part of] a wider program, focusing on ethical and political concerns.”\textsuperscript{98} That wider program necessarily includes the idea of human rights which, as already established above, is consistent with FH.

Jonathan I. Israel’s \textit{Radical Enlightenment} provides insight into the historical context of Kant’s illumination of these issues. Kant’s critical period may be understood as part of the Enlightenment rejection of the political and ideological hegemony of Christianity. Israel notes that “by the early eighteenth century it became obvious that the Enlightenment was in reality a force too pervasive and ubiquitous for the Papacy and the Inquisition to curb.”\textsuperscript{99} Kant’s late eighteenth century contest with the censor Wöllner, on behalf of King Frederick William II, is a late and relatively benign example of what had been going on previously, for about two centuries, since Descartes and the advent of “the New Philosophy” and scientific revolution. Part of that cultural shift was the interpretation of biblical scriptures in a way that divests them of supernatural meaning and emphasizes only their moral value. The Jefferson Bible (which excises all mention of miracles, as well as the entire Old Testament), was clearly influenced by this trend. Israel refers to the Enlightenment program for “the total dissolution of theology” and its replacement by philosophy,\textsuperscript{100} advanced through a series of publications and responses to them that included Lodewijk Meyer’s \textit{Philosophia S. Scripturae Intepres} (1666) and Wolzogen’s critique of it, \textit{De
Scripturam Interprete (1668). Subsequently Spinoza and Mendelssohn added to the field, both of whom influenced Kant. Kant’s Religion was published in 1793. Where previous efforts could be described as being in favour of rational theism and deism, Religion is strongly in favour of an entirely moral interpretation of scriptures, and divesting them of any semblance of supernatural meaning. Today there is a difference between those who interpret Kant’s Religion as having a theological meaning, and those who reject that view. These debates may be understood not only as disputes over what Kant meant to say, but also as latter-day continuations of debates occurring in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between theists and those who rejected theism.

Religion, as noted earlier, is really an interpretative exploration of fundamental issues that include rights and freedoms. This begs the question of whether an interpretation of historical religions is needed at all, if human rights language is already accepted in the international community, as a way of articulating moral concerns for the effects of climate change. The answer is that such an interpretation is indeed necessary, given the failure of secularization theory, and especially because as the climate crisis worsens, the role of religion in human societies may become even more pronounced. Many people turn to religions out of fear, in times of crisis. If the political role of religions becomes more pronounced as crises worsen, it will be important to have the conceptual tools to ethically assess the multiplicity of religious responses that will emerge.

Kant notes that Rousseau influenced him to regard the role of the philosopher as one of being in service to humanity, to advance human rights; if it could not do that, then philosophy was useless. To be sure, it can be worse than useless if it is used in service to apologia for human rights violations. Noam Chomsky, in the essay “The Responsibility of Intellectuals” remarks that:

... Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyze actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. In the Western world, at least, they have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression. For a privileged minority, Western
democracy provides the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth lying hidden behind the veil of distortion and misrepresentation, ideology and class interest, through which the events of current history are presented to us. The responsibilities of intellectuals, then, are much deeper than [other groups] given the unique privileges that intellectuals enjoy.¹⁰²

Kant, for his part, took responsibility as an intellectual by articulating the ethical foundation of human rights and freedoms, and the way in which religion can serve as an expression for them. He also, in his own way, exposed the lies and hypocrisy of a class of religious authorities, and experienced some degree of state censure for his efforts. He may not have anticipated that his work would be of practical use in a crisis such as what humanity faces now, but he did understand the perennial value of such an exercise. The idea of human rights has served humanity well in addressing every manner of wrongdoing, principally because the absoluteness and universality of what it refers to makes it difficult to obfuscate in order to serve parochial interests.

Human rights violations are typically in reference to the concept of negative rights. A negative right is “a right not to be subjected to an action of another person or group; negative rights permit or oblige inaction.”¹⁰³ If we add to the analysis the idea of positive rights and community rights (referred to as second and third generation rights by the United Nations), then rights may be understood as crucial in any attempt to articulate a positive vision for humanity at this historical juncture. A sustainable, livable environment may be thought of as positive human right, although this idea has not yet been fully enshrined into international law. Aldeman refers to it as a ‘meta-right.’¹⁰⁴ However, a precedent for the idea was ratified by the United Nations when it was decreed that access to clean water is a positive human right.¹⁰⁵ Of course, this designation does not mean that access to clean water will be honoured by corporations or governments, but the human rights regime, like religious traditions, represents a cultural resource on which to draw.
Kantian thought is one of the foundations for what Charles Taylor terms the “social imaginary” of Enlightenment modernity.\textsuperscript{106} It includes recognition of the rights of individuals in courts of law, and the ideal of a republic that entails a separation of church and state. Kantian ethics provides the philosophical foundation for several articulations of the good society and good relations among individuals, as understood by several thinkers (e.g. John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Tom Regan, and Karl Popper).

Why is Kant’s thought so influential? To answer that one could argue that religious traditions and systems of jurisprudence and governance, at their very best, derive from and articulate the moral vision of which Kantian ethics is a formal expression. The power of his thought lies in the universal truths to which it gives expression, not merely because of the fact that it is part of a socially inherited historical worldview called the Enlightenment. Kant’s thought on religion is not \textit{sui generis}, but it is a definitive expression of rational religion. Israel's \textit{Radical Enlightenment} reveals that more than a century prior to Kant's critical period, several thinkers had clearly articulated rational philosophy, the idea of rights, the ideal of a cosmopolitan society based on rational principles, and most importantly, the importance of interpreting scriptures through rational philosophy. Kant's thought, it could be argued, is simply the most thorough and systematic expression of what came before.

Follesdal and Malik identify ways in which Kant's ethics can be tied to human rights. Among them is the centrality of legal rights: “freedom is constituted by the rights and duties that enable individuals to be subject to the rule of law instead of arbitrary power.”\textsuperscript{107} Some central ideas in Kantian ethics need to be reiterated here, by way of commentary: all rational beings have free will by virtue of reason and are able to formulate rational laws; insofar as those laws are universalizable they benefit everyone and should be enshrined in the laws of a society. Good moral
judgement can be legislated, and this legislation provides the basis for a good society, which is an ideal to strive for continually. The “rule of law” Follesdal and Maliks refer to is not merely the “positive law” of the state imposed on its members; it is reflective of universal laws issuing from reason, such as the principle of natural justice, used by jurists, or the principle of rights. These principles serve to protect against the imposition of arbitrary judgements that serve self-interest (whether individual or collective) when such judgements conflict with morality. An example is the imposition of the will of a tyrant over a society, which is an “arbitrary” or parochial power violating the freedoms of individuals in that society. The freedom of an individual should be understood as universal insofar as it is consistent with the freedom of every other member of society; thus freedom is not unlimited, but refers to the freedom of all, which entails voluntary responsibility on the part of each citizen. A tyrant is one who stands outside the universal law and imposes his own law, based on the primacy of self-interest, over others. It is easy to see how, in the climate crisis, this could occur, and is already occurring.

There are several ways in which FH is applicable to the climate crisis, relating to future generations, climate conflicts, climate mitigation technologies, and animal agriculture. The principle says “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means” (GR 4:429; 4:436). If we ignore the interests and rights of those most negatively affected by preventable greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. eco-refugees, victims of drought and flooding, future generations), and give priority only to the interests of the present generation of consumers, one could argue that this is tantamount to violating FH, in the sense that it disregards the status of future generations as ends in themselves, relegating them to premature deaths and unnecessary suffering. It denies them certain positive human rights listed by the United Nations in its Declaration on Human Rights, and could lead to
situations in which conflicts arise, and their negative rights are violated *en masse* While those in the future are not being used instrumentally as means to an end in any direct sense, their status as ends is nonetheless disregarded in this way. It is an indirect violation of FH. This and the fact that everyone in industrial societies is implicated in this violation, through the widespread but unavoidable consumption of fossil fuels, makes it almost impossible to assign responsibility. This fact has greatly impeded mitigation efforts, because if everyone is responsible, then effectively no one is (see 4.18 of this thesis for a discussion of that issue). Mitigation obligations by governments and corporations are typically voluntary and non-binding: they are not legislated by the juridico-civil state, and in the absence of legislation there is little compliance, rendering these non-binding agreements insufficient to mitigate climate change.\textsuperscript{108}

The concept of autonomous ethical conduct, in this historical context, can take two forms: the first is at the level of *behavioural change*, through ethically minded consumption, and secondly, at the larger social and political level, through advocacy and political action to effect change (to bring about needed reforms).\textsuperscript{109} A robust approach to climate mitigation will argue for both individual and political change, seeing them as complementary. For example, Rentmeester argues that “the ideal way of handling global climate change is to attack it from as many angles as possible, which will mean implementing sustainable practices on an individual and communal level. Individuals can utilize the Categorical Imperative test to determine if their actions are sustainable and the various political leaders of the world can utilize Kant’s emphasis on intergovernmental cooperation to work together to implement sustainable policies that all nations must follow.”\textsuperscript{110}

There is little doubt that as anthropogenic climate change accelerates it will contribute to the conditions that will result in the violation of human rights on a massive scale, especially in
regards to the treatment of eco-refugees.\textsuperscript{111} Eco-refugees already represent the majority of refugees in the world,\textsuperscript{112} and that number is expected to rise dramatically in response to drought, famine, flooding, and war, according to the IPCC.\textsuperscript{113} Some argue that “the greatest single impact of climate change could be on human migration with millions of people.”\textsuperscript{114} If FH undergirds the ideal of human rights, it stands to reason that actions undertaken that knowingly exacerbate the climate crisis, or stand in the way of mitigating it, violate FH. Violations of FH need not only include examples of instrumental reason, such as economic exploitation or slavery: disregard for the status of person as \textit{ends in themselves} is sufficient to violate FH indirectly.

Very few of us take into account those born in the future in the course of our daily lives, even though their status as ends is arguably equal to our own: Garvey argues that temporal distance, like spatial distance, should not logically be an argument against moral standing, according to intergenerational ethicists.\textsuperscript{115} Technological advances have given humanity the ability to seriously and adversely affect the lives of others far into the future. If ML is truly universal in scope, then the moral duty to observe it applies to actions taken in the present, even if their consequences extend far into the future. The deliberate attempt by lobbyists to advance fossil fuel interests in trade negotiations at international climate talks, and the decision by investors to continue to invest in oil, despite knowledge of its dire consequences, are (according to this argument) both examples of indirect violations of FH. Those who knowingly trade away the interests of future generations, by exacerbating the crisis for profit and personal gain violate FH by not granting future generations the status of ends. While FH may positively be violated through slavery, the argument here is that it can also be negatively violated through willful disregard. Kant notes that even if this disregard is legally sanctioned (by positive law), it is nonetheless evil: “although with this reversal [of incentives, constituting radical evil] there can still be legally good
(legale) actions, yet the mind’s attitude is thereby corrupted at its root . . .” (R, 6:30). Investing in oil is legally permitted, and even required legally by “fiduciary duty,”116 but morally it is an example of giving priority to self-love ahead of ML in the formation of one’s maxims of action – which constitutes evil (R, 6:32). The idea of fiduciary duty to investors (the legal obligation to maximize investors’ profits), even if it requires violating ML, is an important example of a blatantly non-universalizable conception of duty. While the harm that fiduciary duty can cause is more indirect and far less obvious than explicitly racist laws in Nazi Germany or the antebellum South (for example), it is precisely its obliqueness and indirectness, and the fact that it is embedded in institutional structures, that allows it to remain hidden from moral scrutiny, and to go unchallenged politically, on the basis of which it continues to receive the social sanction and legal support of societies. Interestingly, there are now efforts being made to argue that climate change and “future generations” and “systemic changes” should be taken into account by investors.117

A more obvious way in which FH will be violated in the context of climate change is through the violation of human rights in the course of climate conflicts. A third way in which FH can be violated in the context of climate change is in the instrumental use of people to mitigate climate change in a way that disregards their status as ends. This can occur, for example, during the entire life cycle of uranium, from mining to waste disposal. At every point, uranium, as a radioactive substance, comes into contact with people, and puts them at risk of irradiation and harm.118 Nuclear energy is widely regarded as part of a spectrum of technological mitigation solutions because it has lower GHG emissions than fossil fuels, but its use for this purpose can only be defended through a utilitarian calculus which views the risk to populations exposed to radiation as expendable.119 Religions, as it turns out, have played an important role in the formulation of ethical arguments against nuclear energy: some members of the Christian peace
movement, such as Sister Rosalie Bertell, have also argued against nuclear energy on moral
grounds.\textsuperscript{120} Shared representations of supersensible cognition, to advance ethical principles, have
been brought into play against proposed technological solutions to the climate crisis, through the
cclimate justice movement, through the use of both Christian and aboriginal religions, in the form of
the social gospel and Mother Earth religions.\textsuperscript{121} FH, as a formal principle, is not widely accessible,
which is why it needs to be transmitted through the vehicles of such representations. Aboriginal
peoples are sometimes used instrumentally in the course of climate mitigation, some critics allege.
Sam Gill, in \textit{Mother Earth}, makes the interesting argument that the Mother Earth symbol gained
wide use among both aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in response to colonialism and land
use,\textsuperscript{122} and it is now being used in the context of climate activism.\textsuperscript{123}

A fourth way in which FH can be violated emerges is through animal agriculture. Even if
we do not regard nonhuman animals as beings to which moral consideration is owed, the
instrumental use of them through industrial animal agriculture is a leading cause of greenhouse gas
emissions.\textsuperscript{124} Thus, eating animals violates human rights indirectly, in the same way that the use of
fossil fuels does, except that fossil fuel use is almost unavoidable, whereas plant-based diets are
easier to accomplish for most people, who typically face only cultural and habitual barriers.
Switching from animal to plant based diets is a moral choice indicative of autonomous ethical
decision-making, because it requires standing apart from widespread and largely unquestioned
cultural traditions – traditions often supported by anthropocentric religious cosmologies that place
animals in an inferior and expendable position in relation to human beings.\textsuperscript{125} Another way in
which animal agriculture violates FH is more debatable: if we count nonhuman animals as ends in
themselves, then FH is violated through their instrumental use. Even if we do not grant animals the
same moral status, Kant’s argument for their indirect rights – to advance human morality – can be
invoked to argue against their instrumental use. Regard for future generations as ends in themselves could be understood as a moral duty in favour of behavioural change in the present, through diet.

1.2 Human rights and the moral law

An element of what Charles Taylor calls the “modern social imaginary” that is already widely in use, and which accomplishes the task of conveying an accessible notion of universal ethical principles, is the concept of human rights. DiCenso notes that “autonomous principles guide ethical judgement concerning existing states of affairs; they support the human right to reform existing social political conditions.” Taylor refers to a “long march” into modernity, which “has been shaped by the modern ideal of mutual benefit. Not only the troubling aspects, like some forms of nationalism or purifying violence, but other, virtually unchallenged benchmarks of legitimacy in our contemporary world – liberty, equality, human rights, democracy – can demonstrate how strong a hold this modern order exercises over our social imaginary. It constitutes a horizon we are virtually incapable of thinking beyond.” Perhaps the efficacy of the ideals of liberty, equality, human rights, and democracy, is due to their common status as examples of supersensible cognition. These ideals, in the context of a secular society, effectively usurp the position previously occupied by the supersensible objects of traditional metaphysics and theology – although as Taylor points out, at the beginning of the modern era, the two were merged: “the order of mutual benefit was originally seen as God-created, and its fulfillment as God-destined.”

We might think of Manifest Destiny, for example as an instance of the merger of conceptions of divine law and natural law in service to parochial interests (colonialism). A more ethically benign example of the confluence of traditional religious belief and modern social imaginaries is religious support for human rights through the abolitionist movement that arose during the Enlightenment
and was embraced by religious groups such as the Quakers and Transcendentalists. Human rights discourse seems, prima facie, to be sufficient for performing the same task that Kant envisions for historical religions: it could be thought of, like God, as a postulate of pure practical reason. However, it is not a representation of ethical principles through the use of supersensible objects in the way that a traditional religious concept is. This postulate (of the idea of human rights) contains within it an element of unconditionality (i.e., rights are universal and inalienable), but traditional religions provide a much richer source of postulates and representations than does human rights discourse.

What is the difference, if any, between representations (Vorstellungen) and postulates, and what role do they play in interpretation? Postulates are hypotheses that Kant thinks are crucial for practical religion. They are abstract concepts that employ supersensible cognition. If human dignity is a postulate, as Kant claims, then the idea of human rights could also be counted as such. In that sense, postulates are something other than representations, but the difference is a minor one. There is both a practical value in such objects, insofar as they allow human beings to formulate the ideals of pure practical reason, and a danger insofar as they can contribute to religious delusion, if misunderstood: “a delusion is called enthusiastic when the imagined means themselves, being supersensible, are not within the human being’s power . . .” (R, 6:175).

Traditional historical religions simply have a longer history than human rights discourse, and as such have evolved to make the representations they are transmitted through more accessible to the masses. Human rights discourse has the limitation of not being able to be conveyed through shared representations as easily: there are no symbols or parables in common usage to convey the ideal as readily as those used by traditional religions. It is for this reason, perhaps, that human rights discourse, although widely accepted, has been unable to sufficiently persuade many
governments of the world to act in accordance with international law. The danger of religion, however, is that when interpreted constitutively, and used as a means of political repression (such as in theocracies), its power to cause harm (to violate human rights) is greatly amplified, precisely because practitioners readily adopt the constitutive interpretation as part of their religious identity. Religion, to use Kant’s metaphor, provides “naked” reason with “clothing” of representations, but it can also run counter to reason.

A religious representation “aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way,” thereby activating creative imagination, which then “sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion” (CJ, 5:315). There are legitimate practical uses of the creative imagination that enliven abstract ideas, “making them accessible and effective within phenomenal existence.”

This statement helps us to understand the immense power that religion has, for advancing both good and evil. If the representation is “unbounded” (it carries with it the sense of limitlessness, unconditionality, or transcendence), it has a greatly amplified power within the individual’s mind, which carries over into the social and political arena, especially when many people internalize the same representations as part of their ‘ultimate concern’ (Tillich’s shorthand definition for faith). Kant recognizes this power and for this reason argues for the practical utilization of representations within historical religions, while at the same time cautioning against the very real danger of constitutive misinterpretations, which are legion. The latter has led to the various types of heteronomy that Kant defines under the heading of delusory faith. In short, myths, parables, and religious concepts make religions more accessible than human rights discourse or formal ethical principles are, but they also make these representations more susceptible to delusory forms of faith, and this can have the consequence of religious violence issuing from religious exclusivism, which violates the very ethical principles the representations should convey.
Another point worth noting about the concept of rights – one that distinguishes it from environmentalism – is that rights are predicated on what Richard G. Botzler and Susan J. Armstrong term “ethical individualism.” Botzler and Armstrong include deontological and utilitarian ethics under this latter category. Environmentalism, by contrast, is predicated on what they term “ethical holism.” This contrast between individualism and holism represents a much-discussed issue in the field of environmental ethics, as is apparent in Tom Regan’s controversial critique of Aldo Leopold’s land ethic. The land ethic is an example of a holistic worldview, in which the greatest good is the integrity of the system, not that of the individual, as summed up in the statement, “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” Regan is critical of the land ethic insofar as it could violate the rights of individuals for the sake of the integrity of the ecosystem. He is using the argument to support animal rights, but the same idea can be extended (and has been extended) to human rights, to argue that environmental policies that ignore human rights, if taken to their logical conclusion, justify mass murder, given the fact of human overpopulation. To be fair, J. Baird Callicot and others have mounted a cogent defense of the land ethic, to show how ethical holism can be reconciled with human rights. However, the important point here is to note that Kant’s principle of universalizability – as an example of a deontological ethical theory – must not be confused with a holistic worldview or an ethic predicated on a closed systemic worldview that abrogates individual rights; it is an ethic that places unconditional importance on the rights of individuals as ends in themselves, as expressed through FH, and by extension to the kind of society that respects human rights.

It just so happens that in the climate crisis, the best way to achieve mitigation goals will often be the one most consistent with advancing human rights and human welfare. This
phenomenon is referred to as the theory of “co-benefits” of climate change mitigation strategies (e.g. cleaner air through cutting fossil fuel pollution; safer and more secure energy supplies; greater health and well-being as the benefits of a low-carbon lifestyle). Universal human welfare and climate mitigation are not mutually exclusive; they are complementary. Individuals are part of the global community; they are Kant’s “world citizens.” This is of importance when talking about legislation and political policies in response to climate change that might potentially violate human rights: CI can be interpreted to mean that only policies and technologies that are socially benign should be adopted. This would exclude nuclear energy, for example, since the entire life cycle of uranium, from mining to radioactive waste dumping, is potentially very detrimental to human health. Ursula Franklin has developed several criteria for assessing whether technologies are ethically sound; among them is that it should “promote justice” and “favour people over machines.” One could argue that these criteria are consistent with ML and with the concept of human rights. The way in which complex technologies, such as computer systems and cars, affect our lives could be thought of as a kind of heteronomy, one which subordinates us to programming and the restrictions of the technology, and also takes away jobs and basic freedoms. One of the co-benefits of climate mitigation strategies is that humanity may be able to reclaim a kind of freedom from the more egregious forms of these technologies that has long eluded us. The climate crisis represents an opportunity for autonomous ethical decision-making in the process of how to reconstruct the world in ways that are more just and sustainable than the status quo. Another, perhaps more obvious, way that technology has adversely affected humanity is the loss of jobs to machines – the issue that activated the Luddite movement in the nineteenth century. A co-benefit of our efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change is likely to be the emergence of ‘green jobs’, what E. F. Schumacher terms ‘intermediate technologies’, and local economies. At the same time, the
climate crisis also presents us with a frightening prospect, if political systems break down, and violence and privation become the norm. In either case, the important of observing human rights should be paramount.

Interestingly, human rights discourse, although widely accepted internationally, is challenged by the type of social justice activism that has pejoratively been termed “cultural Marxism” because it interprets race and gender issues through a revolutionary and collectivist worldview (see 3.4).

In modern liberal democracies, rights and liberties can be understood in different ways, in allegiance to competing social visions and ideals: the political Left strives for the ideals of equality and social justice, and the political Right strives for the ideals of prosperity and freedom. Both Left and Right refer to rights of different kinds, and both are willing to transgress the rights of others in certain situations. In some cases they are willing to resort to violence to achieve a political goal.

The concept of universal human rights, which is supportable through reference to Kantian ethics, and which is already widely accepted by the international community and used in climate talks, is practically necessary as part of any functional cosmology that hopes to address climate change in a way that is both just and sustainable. If we as a species or as a society, adopt a new and more sustainable cosmology, the idea of basic human rights should be part of that. Some critics disagree, however: Michael Depledge and Cinnamon Carlane suggest that “the language of human rights ultimately may prove inadequate for encapsulating the problems posed by climate change,” and Sam Adelman adds to that thought by saying “we may be asking them [rights] to achieve something for which they are not designed.” Adelman provides historical context, noting that human rights violations can be thought of as “the logical consequences of sovereign rationality . . . Sovereignty provides the context of human rights and delimits their possibilities through its
impulse to subordinate them. The natural rights that the classical social contract theorists discerned in the state of nature were reinvented as human rights necessary to curb the states called forth in the contracts.”

Similarly, the modern concept of animal rights and the political movements advocating for animals were largely created, or emerged out of the historical context of the growth of industrial agri-business in the 1960s and 70s. Adelman notes the need for the application of human rights to climate issues, within an international framework, but this will require a new formulation of what rights could mean in that context; specifically, it would mean a stronger framework for the argument that a healthy environment is a human right: “human rights may need to be constructed in the context of climate change” as a “meta-right to a sustainable environment, which would make carbon emissions above a certain level a human rights violation.” Adelman says this “meta-right” might even able to trump other rights, which takes the concept into a murky area. However, the danger of not having a rights-based framework is that great injustices could be justified in the name of some larger end, which is precisely the problem of the application of cost-benefit analyses predicated on a utilitarian calculus, and even more of an issue as concerns social and political objectives that dispense with the use of reason altogether and are entirely motivated by enthusiasm (see 4.13) stirred up by demagogues (e.g. fascism, Islamism, Stalinism, and other brutally repressive ideologies). The kinds of crises that climate change could occasion require safeguards against that type of atrocity through the creation of legal and institutional protections. Adelman admits that the idea of the ‘meta-right’ to a sustainable environment probably would not receive international agreement, and has already failed in court, so the next best option is to assert the need to protect human rights as already agreed upon. There any number of possible religious, political, and ideological justifications that receive popular support and can be used to abrogate basic rights – even the concept of social and environmental justice. Rights may be
considered a postulate of practical reason that like any other postulate must not be misinterpreted to justify actions outside its proper use, which is to protect the person and basic liberties of individuals. A regulative interpretation of the concept rights is therefore necessary. This is necessary for the creation of any society in a post-carbon world, as a safeguard against totalitarianism, to which human societies in times of upheaval often seem prone.

1.3 Anthropogenic climate change and ethical issues

That climate change is occurring and that the cause is anthropogenic (man-made, caused by human industrial activity) is beyond scientific dispute. The fact that it is anthropogenic is precisely why climate change may be regarded as an ethical problem: to knowingly destroy the conditions that make life possible on Earth, when alternatives – such as renewable energy and energy conservation measures – are possible, may be regarded as a deliberate act of free will, and thus subject to ethical analysis. Ethicists James Garvey, Donald Brown, and others, argue that climate change should properly be regarded as an ethical issue of the first importance.147

The cause of greenhouse gas emissions through fossil fuel use, consumption of goods, transportation, and food choices all involve moral decision-making on the part of both individual consumers and the individuals who control major cultural institutions (e.g. governments, businesses, educational institutions, religious institutions, etc.), as well as individuals who make decisions on behalf of nation states and multi-national corporations. Why do so many individuals choose to conform to an unsustainable status quo, and what role does religion have in either challenging the status quo or maintaining it? What is the contribution of religions to the conditions that have led to the climate crisis? As noted previously, Religion proposes a theory of religion that distinguishes between the true pure faith of the moral law within (ML), and historical religious
traditions (variously referred to by Kant as ecclesiastical faith, statutory faith, revealed religion). ML is expressed formally as the Categorical Imperative (CI), in its various forms, which every rational being has access to, by virtue of reason, and through which we can judge good from evil in our moral decision-making.

The term climate crisis, used here, is shorthand for anthropogenic (man-made) climate change, caused by industrially produced greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs – mainly carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide), which have already resulted in a global temperature increase of 0.8 to 0.9 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures as of 2017. There was an increase from about 280 parts per million carbon dioxide equivalents in 1750 CE to 400 p.p.m. as of 2016. It should be added that while there is a causal correlation between GHG emissions and global temperature change, temperature change thus far is not in equilibrium with the current GHG concentrations due to the “thermal inertia” of the oceans and the partially offsetting effect of aerosols. The IPCC estimates a global temperature increase of 4 to 6 degrees C above pre-industrial temperatures and an ocean rise of about 2 metres by 2100 CE. The industries producing the most GHGs are the fossil fuel industries (coal, oil, gas), and industrial animal agriculture industries. Deforestation also plays a part, inasmuch as trees serve as “carbon sinks” (absorbing carbon); as a result, their removal accelerates global warming. It is estimated that a global temperature increase of that degree will have a catastrophic impact on human industrial civilization and human welfare. The impact of global warming, according to the IPCC, includes famines caused by the failure of agriculture due to drought, especially in equatorial regions; deadly heat waves; the forced migrations of hundreds of millions of people (the phenomenon of environmental refugees or climate refugees), due to fresh water shortages, extreme weather events that are expected to increase in frequency and intensity (e.g. wildfires, floods, hurricanes), regional
conflicts over scarce resources, and the flooding of coastlines; the spread of pandemic diseases, exacerbated by the breakdown of health infrastructures; and not least, a rapid acceleration in the rate of extinction of biodiverse species. The sixth mass extinction of species on Earth (the Holocene extinction event) is already under way, due to human activities. The rate of extinction is said to be one thousand times more than the usual background rate, and is expected to worsen significantly. The loss of most life in the oceans, expected this century, will have a detrimental effect on human welfare. The net effect is a radical disruption of “the biophysical conditions that make Earth a suitable home for all natural species, including humans,” thus threatening “the future of society.” Rentmeester comments that “we do not know exactly what will happen in the future with regard to climate change or how severe the changes are going to be. We do, however, know that there will be an increase in temperature, an increase in severe weather, a decrease in habitable land, and an increase in tropical diseases. If we keep going in the direction that we have been with regard to our unsustainable practices, it is certain we will both reduce the quality of life of future generations and imperil the existence of our species.”

An IPPC report notes that climate change is likely to be a source of growing political and military conflict, because of rivalry over scarce resources, both international and within national borders, resulting in displacement and migration (creating the problem of eco-refugees). Conflicts over scarce resources in past civilizations point to this conclusion, as do recent civil wars where competition over water and land have occurred (e.g. Syria, Sudan): “climate change can exacerbate major political changes given certain social conditions, including a predominance of subsistence producers, conflict over territory, and autocratic systems of government with limited power in peripheral regions” (ibid). Among the factors that contribute to civil wars are “low levels of per capita income, low rates of economic growth, economic shocks, inconsistent political
institutions, and the existence of conflict in neighboring countries” (ibid). It is expected that as climate change worsens, it will result, in certain regions of the world where there is already political instability, in “slow rates of economic growth” and “will impede efforts to grow per capita incomes in some low-income countries, particularly in Africa where the risk of conflict is highest” (ibid). The Sudanese civil war, concentrated in the area of Darfur, is a case in point, since it thought to have begun due to conflicts over water resources, exacerbated by drought – though there were other factors present, including political instability and pre-existing ethnic and religious conflicts. The second Sudanese civil war (1983-2005), fought over control of oil fields and water rights, is also said to be the world’s first identifiable climate war, inasmuch it was precipitated by drought.  

As global temperatures increase, they result in positive (reinforcing) “climate-carbon cycle feedbacks” in nature (e.g. the release of methane from the tundra and from underwater hydrothermal vents; the albedo effect, in which decreasing sea ice decreases the total reflection of solar radiation by ice surfaces; the further loss of trees, through drought, reducing carbon sinks; decrease in oceanic carbon absorption rates), accelerating warming. There is a spectrum of tipping points, accelerating the changes, although it should be added that mitigation efforts will always be of value to some degree – but it could be argued that there is a decreasing marginal utility of such efforts as tipping points are exceeded. Increasingly, adaptation measures will be invested in and implemented. There is a moral dimension to both mitigation and adaptation efforts, made the more urgent by the decreasing utility of some mitigation efforts due to positive feedbacks from nature (typically symbolized by the idea of tipping points). At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that climate models are exceedingly complex and the actual results will depend on emission scenarios, climatic sensitivity, the inherent strength of the carbon cycle, affecting climate
feedbacks. However, let us say that there is a decreasing marginal utility to mitigation efforts. If so, this places a great deal of moral responsibility on those most responsible for GHG emissions (in particular the political, business, religious, educational, and other leaders of industrialized societies), living within the roughly eighty year time period when climate science made the phenomenon of global warming widely known and the time when human efforts to mitigate it will be rendered increasingly less effective by natural feedbacks (roughly 1970 to 2050). As of this writing, we are still within that time period (2017), so the moral responsibility to engage in mitigation efforts still pertains, especially for so-called “rich nations” deemed most responsible for GHG emissions. As noted above, mitigation efforts will almost certainly always be of value, given the variability and complexity of the climate, but there is an urgency to implement many of them sooner than later, for optimal effect.

There are two basic types of available remedies: those designed for mitigation, to reduce GHG rates (e.g. carbon taxes), and adaptation to changing conditions (e.g. building dykes against flooding; developing alternative sources of food and energy and transportation not reliant on fossil fuels). Another important issue is the distinction between behavioural / individual mitigation efforts, and structural / systemic mitigation efforts. Examples of behavioural changes adopted by individuals, of their own volition, include reducing use of fossil fuels (e.g. in transportation); reducing wasteful or unnecessary consumption (e.g. buying fewer things, and buying ‘green’ products); consuming fewer animal products; recycling; and energy conservation. Numerous climate ethicists and commentators (e.g. Monbiot, Garvey) argue that individual / behavioural change is insufficient. It is easy to conclude from this that structural change (also termed systemic change) is therefore necessary. There are two basic types of structural changes: the first are reforms of the existing economic order, including political measures to reduce fossil fuel use, such as
carbon taxes; legal regulation and restrictions to fossil fuel production; tax incentives to increase renewable energy infrastructure; and energy conservation through public policy measures. Rentmeester, for example, says: “we need to rely on political leaders to respond to this crisis through political action.” Reform is thought of as too optimistic by some, who despair of political leadership and disparage reforms as inadequate, and who are therefore more inclined to the second type of structural change: the revolutionary option, entailing the overthrow of the existing economic and political order. This option advocated is chosen by what Appleby terms violent “militants.” This too, however, is naive, insofar as it assumes the goodness of the revolutionaries, and it cannot be considered universalizable, because it requires violence. Kant supported “the revolution of a gifted people which we have seen unfolding in our day,” as of 1794 (CF, 7:84-85). Subsequently, following the regicide, he takes a position against the French Revolution (MS, 6: 320ff.). Kantian ethics is aligned with political reform, not revolution: “A change in a (defective) constitution, which may certainly be necessary at times, can therefore be carried out only through reform by the sovereign itself…” (MS, 6:321-22). Furthermore, Kant’s ethics supports both behavioural change (because CI is non-consequentialist), and political reforms (as a moral imperative).

The non-consequentialist position (see 4.17) implied by philosophy of the good will is that even if reforms and individual change may be ineffective in the long term, they are still worth pursuing because they issue from a sense of moral duty. There may be a way in which behavioural and systemic mitigation ideals can be reconciled. Christian Baatz, in “Climate Change and Individual Duties to Reduce GHG Emissions” argues that individuals “have a Kantian imperfect duty to reduce their emissions as far as can reasonably be demanded of them. In addition, they should press governments to introduce proper regulation.” The moral duty of the individual of
good will is therefore to reduce emissions as much as possible, and also to participate in the
political process to effect reforms, whether or not these efforts may result in sufficient change to
avert a climate catastrophe. Distinct from both behavioural and structural mitigation efforts are
technological solutions, informed by the perspective termed technological optimism (or what
David Orr terms “technological sustainability”). These solutions include energy efficiency and
renewable energy, but could also include more controversial technologies, including geo-
engineering, nuclear energy, and carbon sequestration, some of which have inspired NIMBY (not
in my backyard) responses, and raised ethical questions regarding their long-term environmental
impacts. For example, nuclear energy does not meet the test of universalizability, according to
some ethicists. Technological solutions of this sort are favoured by politicians and business
leaders, because they allow the economic status quo and paradigm of unlimited economic growth
to continue unchallenged. While most commentators argue that a combination of all solutions is
needed, the distinctions between behavioural, structural (both reformist and revolutionary), and
technological solutions provide the context for an ethical analysis of different and sometimes
conflicting mitigation efforts.

“Technological sustainability” receives almost unanimous consent from governments
because we live in a technological society where such solutions are the norm. Two prominent
examples are geoengineering and nuclear energy. According to Han Jonas, hi-tech technological
solutions may be understood as a kind of gamble. They may work, but if not, the risk of failure
is so great it may not be worth the risk. This makes them “high risk, low probability” options.
The risks of nuclear energy are already evident in Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters. There is
also the problem of waste disposal, which has never fully been solved, and never will be,
according to nuclear expert Gordon Edwards. The risks with geo-engineering are less clear. For
example, sulphur particles spread in the upper atmosphere might contribute to ozone loss. This is not to argue that technological solutions are not needed; indeed, they are necessary for mitigation, but they should undergo ethical scrutiny prior to their adoption and implementation, in accordance with the precautionary principle. They should also be examined using Kantian ethics, in addition to or instead of the more commonly used cost-benefit analysis. Bill Gates argues that geoengineering might give humanity a couple of decades, enough time to develop better technological solutions. But what is really needed is a paradigm shift towards sustainable sufficiency. Climate change is not just an engineering problem to be solved; it invites a moral and cosmological shift in fundamental values and norms. This shift should retain and make use of Enlightenment values (e.g., egalitarianism, human rights) to the greatest degree possible, and not forego them, because the alternatives will not be better, as history should serve to demonstrate; they will be worse.

1.4 Intergenerational ethics

Dale Jamison, in “Ethics, public policy, and global warming” offers an explanation for why people find it difficult to grasp why global warming should be a compelling moral issue. Human beings can empathize with an individual easily enough, but have difficulty doing so with large numbers of people. He argues that human values evolved in a “low-tech, disconnected world of plenty. Now, cumulative and apparently innocent acts [e.g. driving, eating] can have consequences undreamt of by our forebears.” James Garvey notes that the harm of climate change is unequal, being greater in some places than others, and is also spread out over time, creating both a temporal and spatial distance from the action causing the harm and its effect. Garvey notes that these distances and complexities, which result in serious inequalities, are easily ignored precisely because the victims are distant and not seen, and because the issues seem too
complex, so it is easy to brush it aside.\textsuperscript{174} The spatial distance between those who are most responsible for GHG emissions and those most impacted (and least responsible) results in the phenomenon of climate injustice; for example, Canadians will be among the persons least impacted, due to being in a northern climate with abundant fresh water, but on a per capita basis are among those most responsible, while those in Bangladesh will experience flooding and displacement, but on a per capita basis are among the least responsible. The problem of climate injustice can be summed up as follows: “some of the harshest effects are striking (or predicted to strike) regions whose inhabitants have contributed least to the problem.”\textsuperscript{175} Temporal distance also results in climate injustice across generations, since future generations are most impacted but least responsible. For these reasons, the application of Kantian ethics is well suited to the important task of addressing the moral quandaries of climate change. It implies a simple thought experiment to determine sustainability: the application of the principle of universalizability. Rentmeester argues that Kantian ethics is directly applicable to these issues because the principle of universalizability is applicable “not only in space but through time—which points to the intergenerational aspect of climate change.”\textsuperscript{176}

Importantly, CI does not imply coercion; it implies a freely chosen and self-imposed limitation on one’s own actions. In the case of consideration for future generations that would mean a voluntary limitation on resource consumption. The idea of universal rights, if properly understood, does not imply unlimited freedom to indulge one’s own appetites; rights (at least in the Kantian sense) entail responsibilities and moral duties. Kant writes that: “a constitution providing for the greatest human freedom according to the laws that permit the freedom of each to exist together with that of others (not the one providing for the greatest happiness, since that would follow of itself) is at least a necessary idea . . .” (A316/B373). Another expression of this principle,
from Kant, is as follows: “Just external laws . . . must represent the good of the people as a whole, or the general will. On the juridico-civil level, taken from Kant’s reference to the “juridico-civil (political) state,” legislation therefore proceeds from the principle of *limiting the freedoms of each to the conditions under which it can coexist with the freedom of everyone else, in conformity with universal law . . . the universal will . . . thus establishes an external legal constraint.*” It is important to note that this juridico-civil level of coercion by the state can be used to enforce universalizable laws supporting rights. DiCenso notes that, for the ethico-civil level, the principle of universalizability is the same, but with the key difference that there is free internal adoption of lawful maxims. In Kant’s political thought, coercive laws remain necessary until humanity (in some remote future time) can act morally by free choice alone. It can be added, by way of comment that the juridico-civil state, through its use of coercive laws, takes on a similar role to that of traditional religions, as a sort of institutional vehicle for conveyance of universalizable principles. It does so in defense of rights, to prevent harm. In so doing, sometimes even the most enlightened examples of governance will invariably cause harm (e.g. wrongful conviction or suppression of free speech), for which reason the state should be scrutinized and held accountable, and never considered above reproach. Kant himself was censored for his views, and advocated the right to dissent from prevailing views, lawfully. The role of religions and other cultural institutions, as envisaged by Kant, is to help internalize the ethical principles to the point that the juridico-civil state is no longer necessary. It does not seem very likely that humanity will ever get to that point, but there are degrees; we can observe a wide spectrum of approximation to the ideal of the ethical community (and of course, deviance from it).

The ethico-civil society as an expression of the principle of universalizability implies that in the exercise of one’s own freedom, one must take into account the freedom (and rights) of
everyone else, and thereby self-impose limitations on one’s behaviour accordingly. If we are all “ends” and thereby equal on that account, our moral duty is not only to ourselves, but to everyone with whom we share the world. Logically, this extends to those in the future as well. In practice, the concern of the public typically does not extend that far, so that for the universalizable principle of environmental sustainability to be observed, it requires environmental regulations, to provide incentives and disincentives (such as tax concessions, carbon taxes, or fines), which are impositions on the public and on businesses and institutions by the juridico-civil society. These regulations will not always be welcomed, because of their costs, and may be interpreted as restrictions on personal freedom, even when they are legislated and imposed with future generations in mind. Their success or failure, politically, depends on the degree to which the public agrees with their necessity or believes that the measures are effective, and the degree to which the public is concerned for the fate of future generations. For example, one can observe a greater concern of this kind in Scandinavian countries than many other industrialized nations. One of the biggest objections to environmental regulations and tariffs is that they are ineffective because countries such as China are not implementing them, or that they are not fairly applied across society. Garvey addresses the issue of Western countries using Chinese emissions as an excuse by arguing that “morally demanded action” is “not contingent upon the actions of others . . . If doing something is the right thing do, it remains the right thing to do whether or not others are doing it too. If it’s wrong, it will still be wrong even if everyone does it.” We can find support for this position with Kant’s argument that the foundation of moral judgement exists a priori, and is not based on contingent factors. To allow the actions of other to determine our own actions is a form of heteronomy of the will.

Against this backdrop of political dissent, and the failure of governments to implement
rigorous environmental regulations, the importance of the role of religious traditions, in terms of their potential to awaken ethical concerns on a mass scale should be apparent: where concerned politicians and scientists often fail to reach the public, religious leaders can potentially play an active role, due to their influence as moral authorities. As DiCenso notes, they ideally help people internalize ethical principles, to the point that the juridico-civil state would no longer be necessary. In the meantime, however, the mechanisms of the state appear to be necessary, contributing to the political contest over the necessity and efficacy of environmental regulations. These are conflicts that traditions religions can weigh in, although they often choose not to.

James Garvey argues that our moral concern should include those who live in the future, especially if the technologies we use have impacts on them.\textsuperscript{183} The idea of voluntary self-imposition of limitations is that we have the freedom to pursue happiness (see A.15), prosperity, and our own interests, but within limits so as not to infringe on the rights and interests of others. Kant’s expression in R 6:98 (“the principle of limiting the freedom of each”) is often summed up in a more colloquial phrase, popular among public speakers in the American temperance movement: “your right to swing your fist ends where your fist meets my face.” Philosopher John Rawls has a similar thought: “Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.”\textsuperscript{184} This ethical principle might, for example, be applied to freedom of speech, or even freedom of movement (as in the case of barrier-free access for the handicapped). Its applications are multiple. In a world of finite resources, this principle could be interpreted to mean that we ought to take into consideration the basic needs that arise from the predisposition to animality in both ourselves and others – including future generations, when technologies that we use today have an impact on their well-being. It has been argued that the reach of technologies that have impacts far into the future – such as nuclear energy
– necessitate the application of universal ethical principles in consideration of the interests of future generations.\textsuperscript{185}

Interestingly, the political application of the principle of universalizability to the juridico-civil level of society can be interpreted in more than one way: it can favour those on both the political ‘left’ and ‘right.’ In terms of the Left, it could be applied to argue for democratic socialism and a welfare state, in which the interests of all citizens (the “common good”) are taken into account by the state, as summed up in Marx’s dictum “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” Conversely, it could be applied to argue for a politically conservative “meritocracy” in which everyone has the freedom and opportunity to advance their own interests, and equality means equal opportunity, not equal benefit or outcome. Which of these two senses is more consistent with the application of Kant’s principle to the question of future generations? It could be that neither is, by itself, because absolute power, given to those who wield a set of powerful political or religious ideals, corrupts, and the value of a democracy, in which multiple competing ideals are discussed in the public arena, is that the power it gives the leaders is (theoretically at least) provisional on their responsible use of it. If either side of the political spectrum is given too much power, it tends towards totalitarianism. In such a society, civil political opposition is thus a necessary good, to protect against corruption.

Moreover, the answer to this question of which type of system is best depends on how we define freedoms, rights, and interests. If we define them as the freedom and right to have access to a finite resource, such as water, and if profligate consumerism in the present endangers that freedom and right for those in the future, then allowing the ethos of profligate consumerism to determine one’s maxims of actions in the present can be said to violate the principle. The problem with environmental regulations to mitigate profligate consumerism is that if imposed unevenly,
they can favour parochial interests. This is what public protests against so-called austerity measures are about: protestors are incensed that they must endure high energy and water bills while corporations have access to cheap electricity and water. According to biologist Marc Bekoff, fair play is at the root of sociality for many species, so it should not be surprising that it is important for human beings as well. For regulations to conform to universal ethical principles they must be fairly applied to all. Kant is not against the use of legislation, as his discussion of the “universal will” imposing “external constraint” in the juridico-civil society should indicate (R, 6:98). While the ideal of RE suggests no need of it, Kant recognizes that RE is an ideal to aspire to, and is not a reality that will ever be fully achieved, so interim measures are needed to guide society in the right direction, imposed by the juridico-civil society. The problem with legislation is that it can be subject to parochial interests, as some examples of morally bankrupt positive law illustrate.

DiCenso provides an example of positive law in the laws of National Socialism: “Nazism employed the instruments of state legislation to corrupt principles of legality . . . [which is a] manipulation of positive laws for evil ends.” These laws illustrate for us an extreme example of “how state power provides a means of propagating radically evil maxims among the general populace.” We should keep in mind that this is an extreme example, meant to illustrate the principle; a more benign example, applicable in this context, is laws that protect environmentally destructive practices by corporations.

This example begs the question of how freedom ought to be interpreted, because some of the corporations invoke the idea of freedom to argue against regulations that increase the cost of business for them, and which consequently may retard economic growth. If freedom is understood in this way, as the freedom of limitless economic opportunity, and if the economic prosperity that the current generation builds up benefits those in the future, then Kant’s principle
might be interpreted to argue for a suspension of environmental limitations. The problem with this argument is twofold: (i) it presupposes an infinite amount of resources, or an unlimited ability to technologically exploit these resources in such a way that they will never run out; and (ii) it conflates freedom, happiness, and economic prosperity uncritically.\textsuperscript{191} The first presupposition is informed by \textit{technological optimism}. This term refers to a belief that we are able exploit nature limitlessly by means of technological innovations, many not yet invented, and that the future of humanity is best ensured by means of technological innovation.\textsuperscript{192} The IPCC itself seems to subscribe to this perspective, noting that “all stabilization levels assessed can be achieved by deployment of a portfolio of technologies that are either currently available or expected to be commercialized in coming decades, assuming appropriate and effective incentives are in place for their development, acquisition, deployment and diffusion and addressing related barriers.”\textsuperscript{193} This thinking, regarding the consumption of resources, is also applicable to the use of the atmosphere as a ‘carbon sink’ (a repository for pollution and greenhouse gas emissions). If a way can be found to remove GHGs from the atmosphere and to stabilize the climate, would it absolve humanity of the responsibility to limit or eliminate practices that contribute to GHG emissions? Self-imposed or state-imposed limitations may not be necessary if engineers and scientists can manipulate nature sufficiently to allow for limitless consumption and pollution for present and future generations. A significant problem with faith in technological optimism is that it represents a gamble that may not work. If we have not tried other methods and rely only on technological solutions, this risk of failure is high. Nature has limits and some would argue that this has already happened, giving us the idea of ‘ecological overshoot’.\textsuperscript{194} This leaves us with the practical necessity of seeking multiple solutions, not relying solely on one. One way or another, we have to curb our emissions radically, which requires a substantially different worldview, because human values are based on how we see
the world: cosmologies affect moral norms. Bill Gates, who supports and finances geoengineering, points out that even if it does succeed, it may only buy us a few decades, during which time we must shift entirely from fossil fuels to renewable energy.\textsuperscript{195} If none of this happens, and if paradigmatic change does not occur, then those in the present essentially condemn those in the future to unnecessary privation and death, which is morally reprehensible, especially when we still have an opportunity to prevent it. James Krier believes that “the technological optimists may be wrong” and that they “may be deluding humanity by predicting the continual emergence of technological breakthroughs at ever-increasing rates.”\textsuperscript{196}

The counterview is that at the time of this writing (2017), there have been (according to Danny Harvey), “breathtaking and unexpected improvements in wind and solar energy, and battery storage, that justify technological optimism.”\textsuperscript{197} The ethical problem is when technological optimism is advanced at the expense of needed behavioural and systemic change. Technological optimism can be a heteronomous belief, not unlike the way that religious delusion is used: to absolve individuals of moral responsibility. And it may not be universalizable, because it represents a utilitarian gamble that could harm people. On the other hand, if it works, and if it does not cause these harms, it may (as Gates notes) buy humanity the time it needs to implement needed paradigmatic change. Massive social and political reforms take time. Religions can play a crucial role in implementing them, as they have throughout human history, through moral education. Among these traditions, the Jewish prophetic tradition for social justice is very useful for giving expression to the moral imperative of environmental advocacy. It is an important representation of ML, and provides expression for one of the two major branches of thought within Abrahamic traditions regarding environmental conservation. The other branch is the sanctity of Creation.

As for the uncritical conflation of liberty, happiness, and economic freedom, it can be
disputed if the principle of universalizability is applied and instances of violation of FH are found to have been excused in service to this ideal. The ideal is in fact a combination of several supersensible ideals, used to justify unfettered capitalism and corporate hegemony, and taken as a prescription for society, without regard for human rights or the environment. Sam Adelman comments that “The notion that the market is a private sphere subject to different rules from the public domain was always specious, but the border between the state and civil society has become increasingly blurred [in recent years], as areas previously in the domain of the state are privatized, they escape regulation and accountability.”

It is true that capitalism increased material wealth and allows many people to enjoy unprecedented benefits, due to technological advancements, and it is also true that it has increased happiness and an economic good for many, but as the no-growth economic model suggests, happiness peaks at a certain point, so wealth beyond that point is unnecessary. Therefore, a more environmentally sustainable model – one that places limits on profligate consumption and corporate hegemony, but in such a way as to not violate FH or place restrictions on basic civil liberties – would seem to be in order. Ideally, this is voluntarily undertaken by citizens themselves, for which reason the potential of religion for effecting cultural transformation is of great value, but what if citizens do not adopt this moral duty voluntarily? The principle of universalizability and limitations in consideration of all others, noted above, implies voluntary responsibility, in consideration of the rights of others, but should this principle be enforced by law? Does it represent a heteronomous imposition by the state to set limits on consumption, especially when those limits can be unevenly distributed across society (which, as noted above, has led to protests against so-called austerity measures)? One can argue that ideally, there would be no need of laws to ensure an equal distribution of resources, but because of the propensity to evil in human nature, such laws are in fact required because not everyone is going to
voluntarily abstain from overconsumption. The ideal society that abides by RE is one in which every member acts in consideration of every other member, voluntarily, without coercion. In reality, this does not happen, for which reason the juridico-civil society may be deemed practically necessary. The necessity of environmental regulations provides a strong argument in favour of the coercive use of the juridico-civil state. Those who support unfettered capitalism often argue that freedom includes economic freedom. Kant’s position in support of property rights, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, and his view that nonhuman nature may be used as a means to an end, would *prima facie* seem to support the idea of economic freedom. However, given the fact that a healthy environment is a basic precondition for any freedoms to exist in the first place, it stands to reason that this infringement on the freedom of corporations is necessary to protect the freedom of all. This is a universalizable definition of freedom: “the freedom of each to exist together with that of others” (A316/B373). This is the essence of the argument provided by Attila Ataner, in “Kant on Freedom, Property Rights and Environmental Protection”:

> . . . via coercion, can be justified only in terms of the requirements of a system of freedom. . . the permissibility of environmental destruction ultimately entails the permissibility of the annihilation of the material preconditions of any possible exercise of freedom. As such, environmentally destructive acts must be intolerable within a system of Right, and environmental preservation is an imperative of Right.”

Tying this into CI, we can say that the corporate freedom to pollute is non-universalizable. One way of imposing environmental regulations and limiting consumption of finite resources is through a carbon tax. This has proven unpopular, because even if a government has the best of intentions, one can argue that it is politically perilous to impose restrictions or additional taxes on a populace. Many politicians are governed more by the *self-love* reflected in re-election efforts than by a public duty which may be politically unpopular or misunderstood. And when they are not, and act from moral duty, it can come with a political price. Canadian politician Stéphan Dion is a good
example of this: he lost an election for the post of prime minister because he focused on climate change (in particular a carbon tax), which proved unpopular. Adopting this position runs contrary to the widely accepted and politically popular ethos of economic growth. Economic growth has been granted a transcendent status, such that we can “never have enough,” according to David Loy, in “The Religion of the Market.” Northcott says that “modern humans identify their salvation with progress in economic development, material wealth, and technological control.” Paul Tillich refers to financial gain as a form of idolatry. Taxation is unpopular (according to this theory) because it challenges the goal of the accumulation of material wealth as a means of salvation – a goal that entire societies work in concert to collectively achieve, as the political dominance and worldwide popularity of the idea of limitless economic growth illustrates.

Kant, in his analysis of the juridico-civil society, discusses the ineffectiveness of coercive laws (R, 6:95-96). This is why historical religions can play a valuable role that governments cannot: they can provide moral arguments and leadership that can persuade people to act voluntarily, in consideration of future generations, when they might not otherwise do so. Religions can articulate and transmit supersensible objects, which can inspire large numbers of people to support morally good positions that they might not otherwise support (e.g. the recent acceptance of Syrian war refugees, based on Christian charity, in Germany, by many of the people there). The only way to combat non-universalizable ideals that have been given transcendent status is to usurp them with universalizable ideals that also have transcendent status. Practical reason gives us universal ethical principles, but Kant recognizes that these principles need to be represented to make them accessible, and historically a primary role of religious traditions has been to provide accessible representations to advance morality. Kant believes that in this way – and in this way alone – historical traditions have practical value.
Finally, a clarification is in order regarding the difference between climate and environmental ethics. They are not synonymous, although they can merge. Climate ethics is primarily concerned with the ethics of the social and political implications of climate change and climate change policies, whereas environmental ethics might include deep ecology, or ecological feminism. Climate ethics and climate policy are the greater concerns here. Since religion, as a social phenomenon, has a large role to play in many emerging social and political analysis of climate change, it is important that scholars from many fields have access to critical tools for assessing religious responses to such issues.

1.5 In defense of universal rational principles

Kant says that “there can be only one human reason . . . [and therefore] only one true system of philosophy from principles, in however many different and even conflicting ways one has philosophized about one and the same proposition” (MM 6:207). Since Kant’s time there have been ethical systems and explanations for morality that explicitly rejected the primacy of practical reason. It therefore seems necessary to provide an argument for the application of universal rational principles to social and political formations. Two arguments are provided: (i) the need for an ethical assessment from outside the tradition, and (ii) the superiority of reason to emotion in terms of arriving at moral judgements.

First, the defense of the use of rational principles is that they represent independence of thought (which it to say autonomy) from the ideologies of social formations which foster what sociologists refer to as groupthink (the opposite of independent thinking). If one is embedded within a social formation and adopts the identity of that group, it is difficult to independently exercise impartial moral judgement with regard to it without fear of offending those in the group and risking isolation, and this can serve to skew, soften, or silence the judgement, even though it
may be needed in some cases (e.g., to come to the defense of someone who is wrongly maligned, or in some cases to question the core tenets and beliefs of a religious or political ideology as unfounded or in some way lacking merit). Fear and desire for social inclusion and identity are powerful incentives that may have an effect on judgement. The very purpose of a totalizing ideology is self-reinforcement and protection against heterodox influences; it is thus the totalizing ideologies most in need of ethical assessment.

It should be added that the prescription of a regulative interpretation using rational principles could be applied not only to traditional religious worldviews and systems, but also to any and every worldview, including fascism, socialism, capitalism, consumerism, technocracies and bureaucracies, and even movements that might on the surface appear blameless and forthright to those who subscribe to social progressivism: e.g. social justice activism, feminism, animal rights, environmentalism, or intersectionality. Social justice movements certainly should not be considered free of irrationality or ethical shortcoming. Social justice, if understood through the framework of intersectionality theory, is inegalitarian. According to Christine F. Sommers, it is based on a conspiracy theory of hidden interlocking oppressions, the existence of which are speculative, and for which there is sufficient counter-evidence to warrant skepticism.\textsuperscript{210}

There is in fact no human worldview that is free from the potential for corruption of self-love, parochial interests, or hypocrisy. This is because all these social formations rely on supersensible cognition for the production of the ideals that unite them, and when this type of cognition is involved it can inspire people to pursue a common good with selflessness and to devote themselves to others, but it can also compel people to engage in a collective hysteria, demonization, censorship, intolerance, scapegoating, and violence – all in defense of the symbols of the sacred supersensible object or the ideology in which it is enshrined, or in defense of the
community that identifies with it.

The second argument for rational principles to be explored here is that moral decision making from emotion is insufficient. There are three types of emotion worth considering in this respect: compassion, collective expressions of anger (which are instrumental in scapegoating), and ecstatic zeal or group euphoria (enthusiasm). Of morality that stems from emotion, Kant says:

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\ldots \text{we cannot derive or convey the recognition of laws . . . on the basis of any sort of feeling [and] we do not wish to open wide the gates to every kind of enthusiasm [Schwärmerie], and even cause the unequivocally moral feeling to lose dignity through association with all sorts of fanciful ones.} \quad \text{– Feeling is private to each individual and cannot be expected of others, even when we have advance cognition of the law from which or according to which it arises . . . [feeling] teaches absolutely nothing but only contains the manner in which a subject is affected as regards his pleasure or displeasure . . . (R, 6:114).}
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Precisely because feeling is private to each person, and can vary wildly, it does not supply the basis for which universalizable maxims of actions can be formulated, which in Kant’s view is crucial for moral decision-making that hopes to rise above the status of parochial interests. This is important in the political climate created by anti-oppression and intersectional activism, which is largely emotion based. Rational principles alone ought to be the basis upon which moral decisions are made, because moral decision making based on emotion is subject to corruption by self-love (and by extension parochial interests that utilize enthusiasm to control mass sentiment for political ends). A similar idea is reflected in the axiom used by jurists, “hard cases make bad law”\(^\text{211}\) – which means that laws based on empathy for individual cases do not take into account all the ramifications that the law might have in the future, and risk becoming laws that do not advance the public good. Just as empathy or attempting to appease the emotions of the public can distort the perspective of a jurist, who may be tempted to violate the principle of natural justice because it is politically expedient to do so, so too can religious faith be distorted by emotion. Paul Tillich refers to the “emotionalistic distortion of faith,”\(^\text{212}\) which is in fact just enthusiasm. Tillich advocates
“moral faith” instead, which utilizes reason, and which may be thought of as another expression of
ML. One of Tillich’s important contributions to this discussion is his concept of “idolatry” as
“ultimate concern for that which is less than ultimate”\textsuperscript{213} – an idea that accords with Kant’s
description of heteronomous forms of faith, insofar as counterfeit service could be thought of as
“ultimate concern” for something other than ML. Kant says that “enthusiastic religious delusion is
. . . the moral death of the reason without which there can be no religion, because like all morality
in general, religion must be founded on principles” (R, 6:175). Any part of historical religions not
founded on universal ethical principles, or not in some way reflecting or advancing universalizable
principles, is, for Kant, counter-purposive (see A.16) and to be dispensed with, lest it run the risk
of impeding morality. It runs the risk of becoming idolatrous faith, which Kant refers to as “false
devotion” (R, 6:185): “If reverence for God comes first, and the human being subordinates virtue
to it, then this object [of reverence] is an \textit{idol} . . . religion is then idolatry” (R, 6:185). Another
important point is that rational principles are predicated on autonomy of the will, whereas altruism
may very well be predicated on contingent evolutionary factors, such as group identity, necessary
for survival in tribes: according to Robert W. Sussman and C. Robert Cloninger, cooperative and
altruistic behaviors are not just by-products of competition but rather they are essential ingredients
in evolution, ecology, and development . . . and are the glue that underlies the ability for primates
and humans to live in groups.”\textsuperscript{214} Rational principles have important social and political
implications, but the subjective ground of moral decision making is antecedent to the contingent
factors of evolutionary incentives, or anything part of the sensible world (R, 6:21). This is not to
say, however, that autonomous ethical judgement is individualistic in a self-interested way. On the
contrary, it is what allows rational beings to be able to understand the position of others
sufficiently to universalize the maxims of his or her actions: Kant describes the process of moral
reason as that of a person reflecting on his own judgement “from a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by putting himself into the standpoint of others), and that this “consistent way of thinking” is very hard to achieve (CJ, 5:295). To say that a law or rule is universalizable is to say, very broadly, that it takes into account the rights of everyone else, but in order to be able to do this, a person must autonomously form judgements that are not influenced by everyone else.

Veldman et al note that a tradition may react to climate change in one way in one part of the world, but will react in an entirely different way elsewhere. Instead of deferring to cultural relativism, which can have the effect of neutralizing moral judgement, universal ethical principles, if properly mediated through moral judgement, are flexible enough to acknowledge and account for diversity within traditions, while at the same time holding them up to a common ethical standard.
Chapter II: Historical religions and Kant’s philosophy of religion

The objective of Chapter I was to introduce Kantian ethics and show how it can be applied to climate change issues, in various ways. Chapter II argues for the need for the ethical assessment of religious traditions, and offers an assessment of diverse responses from religious traditions to climate change, including eco-theology and religious climate change denial. It will also examine the way in which the creation and maintenance of cosmologies (a primary function of religions) shapes and maintains value systems within societies. Additionally, this chapter provides an ethical assessment of dispensationalist (end-times) theology. The objective of Chapter II is to provide a conceptual foundation for the way in which Kant’s philosophy of religion may be applied to the emerging responses of historical religious traditions to climate change issues, and to provide examples of the same.

2.0 The true church and the ethical community

The true church is the term given by Kant to a smaller version of the ethical community than what is represented by the ethico-political society; the church acts as a vanguard, within the larger society, helping the larger society progress morally. It is that element of historical religions bound together through sociality and collective identity, and like other elements of historical religions, the church community has a dual nature, because it has the capacity to help advance RE, but it also at the same time can impede it by contributing to heteronomy of the will through patterns of socialization, such as religious violence. The term “true church” refers to the mere idea of a faith community through whom shared representations help advance the ideal of a good society. Kant states that “the idea of a people of God [where God is understood as a postulate of reason, so a ‘people of God’ refers to the ethical community] cannot be realized (by human organization) except in the form of a church” (R, 6:100). The true church is a faith community that acts perfectly in accordance with ML. It is the same as the universal church. “The distinguishing mark of the true church is its universality . . .” (R, 6:115). By this Kant means that its members adhere to the principle of universalizability (CI, FUL).

Kant provides four criteria for the true church “1. Universality . . . it is founded on principles that necessarily lead it to universal union in a single church (hence, no sectarian
schisms). 2. Its *make-up* (quality), i.e., *purity*: union under no other incentives than moral ones (cleansed of the nonsense of superstition and the madness of enthusiasm). 3. *Relation* under the principle of *freedom* . . . (hence neither a hierarchy, nor an *illuminatism* – which is a kind of democracy through individual inspirations, which can vary greatly from one another, according to each mind). 4. *Its modality*, the *unchangeableness* of its *constitution* . . . [as distinct from] arbitrary creeds which, since they lack authority, are fortuitous, exposed to contradiction, and changeable” (R, 6:101-102). These are very specific criteria, perhaps the result of Kant’s observation of the problems in religious groups, but they are useful to providing an ethical assessment of religious formations. The first criterion is a statement against sectarianism, recalling the constitutive interpretation of scriptures, which contributes to religious exclusivism. *Universality*, in the sense given above, means being united by a common underlying moral vision, informed by ML, one that helps its practitioners rise above petty power struggles and political schisms. *Make-up or purity* is a statement against superstition and enthusiasm, which is still very relevant today: the prosperity gospel, for example, suggests that spiritual salvation is dependent on monetary contributions to certain religious leaders, recalling Kant’s critique of priestcraft and fetish-service: “this always obtains where statutory commands, rules of faith and observances, rather than principles of morality, make up the groundwork and essence of the church” (R, 6:179-180). Moreover, Kant is critical of enthusiasm, which describes the way in which charismatic denominations conduct services. Enthusiasm also could be used to describe the excessive reliance on emotion that some political activist movements utilize to gain power and attention to their cause, and which for some activists becomes the incentive (rather than moral faith) which attracts them to it. The third criterion, which refers to the postulate of *freedom*, seems to issue from Kant’s critical observation of religious movements that he terms
“despotic” (R, 6:180). Religious cults are an extreme example of this, but religious despotism can occur on a larger scale as well, through the imposition of repressive values and norms within a theocracy by ecclesiastical authorities, or within a religious institution as reflected in the fact that obedience to the will of ecclesiastical authorities is expected of clergy and lay people in prominent positions. Moreover, as noted in the discussion of the nomos, heteronomy of the will can occur at the level of values and norms that issue from hierarchical cosmologies, and which are internalized by members of a society at an early age, and reified through rituals, customs, and language. This too can represent an abrogation of freedom, and infringement on free will, in some situations. Interestingly, Kant also refers to illuminatism – which is essentially people coming up with their own subjective “inspirations.” In so doing, Kant anticipates New Age spiritualism, which William James might describe as an example of a ‘healthy minded’ religion (based on his assessment of theosophy as such). New Age spirituality describes a very broad and diverse spectrum of beliefs and rituals, which certainly could include moral faith, but Kant’s critique of counterfeit service and statutory observances, directed at heteronomous forms of Christianity, could also be applied to New Age rituals that lack any moral value. Kant’s critique of superstition and ecclesiastical authorities could also be applied. These criteria will be revisited in section 3.3, to gain a better understanding of the secular climate justice movement.

Presumably, Kant uses the term “visible church” in reference to a Christian religious community, but given the universality implied by the term he could as easily utilize terms that describe faith communities from other world religions (e.g. umma, sangha). In fact, he says that his analysis applies to all religions: “in the various churches divided from one another . . . one and the same true religion can nevertheless be met with (R, 6:107-08). DiCenso comments that this statement “accommodates a plurality of historical religions” which are united by the “underlying
universalizable moral law as the one true religion variably manifested by each.”216 This is not to say, however, that all historical faiths are equal in the ability to reflect ML. An ethical assessment of them may better advance religious relativism than religious pluralism (where the former ranks religious faiths according to merit). To complicate this task, the world religious traditions would further have to be broken down by denomination or sub-tradition and each assessed individually, according to their position and practices in relation to different ethically-charged issues, and each issue in turn would have to be interpreted with as much impartiality as possible, through the prism of ML. However, this is an undertaking beyond the scope of this thesis.

The invisible church is a postulate of pure practical reason; it is an ideal of what is possible for a community of people who exemplify perfect autonomous ethical conduct. It is the supersensible object of the true church, as distinct from its actualization in the sensible world. The invisible church should be understood only as a supersensible ideal, and not as fully actualizable in the sensible world. As with all Kantian ideals, it serves a practical purpose, which is to provide a supersensible ideal through which we are able envisage the possibility of its actualization, which in turn provides impetus for the effort of progressive moral striving towards the ideal. In this sense, it is similar to RE. The visible church is also representative of an ideal, but refers to an ideal faith community operative in the sensible world. Actual faith communities fall short of the ideal of the true church, but their true value and purpose lies in proportion to the degree that they come close to supporting and fostering autonomous ethical action.

The ideal of the true church could be applied as heuristic tool in the ethical assessment of historical churches, in terms of their conformity (or lack thereof) in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, as a measure of their conformity with ML. Previous to the emergence of applied sociological and anthropological studies of actual faith communities grappling with
climate change issues (mostly within the last few years), our best measure of this standard was the degree to which different theologies and statements by religious leaders could be said to engage with the climate crisis. The limitation of the ethical assessment of faith traditions by this measure was that statements do not necessarily have the same moral worth as actions, contributing to a gulf between statements of the theologians and religious leaders and the degree of conformity to those ideals within their traditions. The gulf between rhetoric and action in the Roman Catholic Church is a good example of this.\textsuperscript{217} With the emergence of sociological studies of faith communities, we now have a more empirically grounded means of applying an ethical assessment – although the exact methodology for the application of such an assessment according to social scientific measures has yet to be formulated.

Using Kant’s ethical hermeneutics (his system for the ethical assessment of historical faiths, see 4.18), we can begin to rank faith communities in terms of their conformity to ML as concerns the climate crisis. For example, the churches of the Solomon Islands do not engage in mitigation efforts to speak of, and are not major contributors to the crisis, but they are perfectly suited for helping the people there adapt to the increasingly life-threatening effects of climate change. Enormous waves threaten to drown ocean-side communities, and the social network enabled by the church takes on the role of rescuing people at risk from harsh weather.\textsuperscript{218} From this we can arrive at the lesson that the ideal role of different faith communities vis-à-vis the climate crisis should be assessed based on two things: (i) mitigation efforts, in proportion to the degree to which they are responsible for the climate crisis, and (ii) adaptation efforts. A faith community in the global north (e.g. Canada), where per capita emissions are relatively high, has a greater degree of moral responsibility for helping to advance mitigation efforts than a community in the global south, where there are much fewer per capita emissions. The so-called
global North faith communities would have greater responsibility for helping to assist adaptation efforts globally, for this reason – which is the principle of distributive justice as applied to the climate crisis.\textsuperscript{219} One expression of this idea is to give “people of developing countries higher emission rights than people of industrialized countries” and under a cap-and-trade system this means industrialized nations paying non-industrialized nations.\textsuperscript{220} Whether that would in fact be effective is not fully known, although there is considerable criticism of cap-and-trade schemes as ineffective and subject to corruption and abuse.\textsuperscript{221}

Adaptation, in the short term, is not as pressing an issue for the global North (although adequate water sources are increasingly threatened by drought in some regions, such as California). The moral responsibility of the faith community is primarily that of assisting in adaptation, and articulating the idea of climate justice and the ideal of a just and sustainable society, to help practitioners understand the global context of their struggle to survive, and to help them prepare for survival in a rapidly changing world in which drought or flooding or extreme weather events are more common. The main point here is that an ethical assessment of faith communities in the context of climate change relies not only an assessment of the theological statements of religious leaders, but also more importantly on the performance of individual faith communities in terms of mitigation and adaptation efforts; and, further, this assessment must be made in proportion to the degree of responsibility of specific societies and the challenges they face, and this will vary according to their geographic and historical contexts. An ethical assessment of a tradition (or sub-tradition) must be made in accordance with universal principles, but at the same time it must be made according to particular historical contexts it occurs within, as the case of the Solomon Islands (where mitigation is not the issue) serves to illustrate. It is possible to objectively study the performance of different faith communities in
terms of their mitigation and adaptation efforts. It is also possible to do an assessment of the respective theological statements of different traditions, where the extreme end of one side of the spectrum is represented by religious climate change denial and complete disregard for the social impact of environmental destruction, and the other end is represented by unconditional commitment to climate mitigation efforts in a way that can be considered just and equitable. Most religious traditions are somewhere in the middle, tactically as well as ideologically.

Ideally, religious traditions can aspire to the role of the true church, dedicated to the ideal of the ethical community, which is an ideal that “embodies laws of freedom, in which every member is an end in themselves” (see A.2). As such, it is a representation of the principle of RE in the sensible world (just as the visible church is a sensible representation of the invisible church) towards which humanity may aspire, through moral striving, towards the ideal of an enlightened society. The true church (or church universal – R, 6:127) is a manifestation of the visible church which pursues ML. The task of the ethical community is “the promotion of the highest good as a good common to all” (R, 6:97). If it is to accord with the principle of universalizability, the highest good in this sense cannot mean the greatest aggregate happiness, as it would for those who subscribe to utilitarianism. In practical terms, this ideal, although open to interpretation, is more consistent with safeguarding universal human rights, based on the principle of FH: each member of the society is an end in himself or herself. DiCenso remarks that “the conflict between good predispositions and evil propensities within human souls, as symbolized in religious narratives of two warring powers, is enacted on the level of interpersonal dynamics and social institutions.” What occurs at the level of the individual is reflected at a political level; according to Peter Berger, this occurs as a result of the individual internalizing and then externalizing (acting out) norms, values, and practices. The moral aspect of this
dynamic is reflected in the myths and narratives of numerous cultures and religions, precisely because the underlying conflicts occur universally within all rational beings at the level of the determining power of choice.

The true church serves as a vanguard for a shift in cultural attitudes, and thus potentially can have a greater impact in effecting a paradigm shift than can taxes or legislation. Whether or not historical religions can live up to that potential in time to avert a climate catastrophe is another matter. The potential is certainly there: social scientists at Renessalaer Polytechnic Institute's Social Cognitive Networks Academic Research Center conclude that once “ten percent of a population is committed to an idea, it's inevitable that it will eventually become the prevailing opinion of the entire group.”224 For example, the history of the civil rights movement in the U.S. shows how a relatively small number of activists were able to bring about a seismic shift in general attitudes, legislation, and social norms. In another, more recent example, the gay rights movement won major concessions within a few decades, based on the principle of equity, despite the dominance of fixed gender roles for millennia prior.225 These two historical examples— and there are others— should serve to illustrate the potential of supersensible objects, regulatively employed, to effect relatively rapid paradigmatic change within a complex society. It is also the case that within a theocratic or despotic society, small groups of people may be able to greatly influence millions by skillfully utilizing representations of supersensible objects to specific political ends. Small committed groups, driven by unconditional commitment, have had an enormous effect on society, for good or ill, and historical religions can provide many examples of this from history.226 Kant’s emphasis is on the true church as an ethical vanguard for the social and political transformation of society. The commitment of such groups ensures that their impact is disproportionate to their numbers. Jose Casanova, in describing some of the forms
that Christian political activism takes in the United States, notes that “a well-organized militant minority can take advantage of the element of surprise or using stealth methods can score early victories.”

Sociologist of religion R. Scott Appleby, in *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, refers to militant nonviolent and militant violent groups dedicated to the total transformation of society. One could argue that Kant’s reference to the true church, as a viable social and political force, is borne out by real-life examples of nonviolent groups, to the degree that they are driven by a moral imperative to actualize, through their efforts, universalizable social and political objectives, and to do so by means that do not violate ML. Appleby calls these groups “militants for peace . . . militants of this kind reject the use of deadly force, identify enemies according to their deeds rather than their ethnicity or religion, and seek reconciliation with those enemies.”

We can certainly see this type of militant in the so-called ‘climate justice’ movements, although in such movements the line between violent and nonviolent militancy is sometimes blurred through the “diversity of tactics” argument. The asymptotic character of CI ensures that no single individual or group will ever fully attain moral perfection. There is always a very real danger that militant groups will fall into an agonistic or competitive model rather than communicative or dialogical model (see 3.3). Casanova argues that militant Christian fundamentalists, such as the Cornwall Alliance, who take up the climate change denial banner, are agonic. Proof of their agonistic stance is their defaming of environmentalism as idolatrous.

The agonistic stance is also found, on the other side of the political spectrum, among climate justice activists who adopt an “anti-oppression” and/or “indigenous sovereignty” worldview that tends to identify perceived enemies on the basis of race. Within such groups there is intense social pressure to conform to a dogmatic political ideology, which obviates autonomous ethical
thought, despite the fact that the ostensible goal of climate justice (at least in theory) is universally inclusive. In reality, the agonic nature of ambiguously violent militancy creates a dynamic in which non-universalizable tactics and perspectives become permitted if they further the political objectives. Malcolm X’s famous slogan was that he would achieve his political ideal “by any means necessary.” That potentially could include violence. There are also militant religious and political groups unambiguously nonviolent and actively involved in attempts to mitigate violence (e.g. Christian Peacemakers Team, which in principle takes a nonviolent stance). A good example of the regulative interpretation of traditional religions to nonviolently advance the goal of ‘climate justice’ is an ecumenical and inter-faith group in Canada called KAIROS. We may expect that many more groups, both violent and nonviolent – and some ambiguous – will become active as the climate crisis worsens.

Appleby argues that religious traditions, such as Christianity or Islam, are diverse enough to have both violent and nonviolent militant actors in them; in his words, these traditions are thus “internally contested” and may be characterized as possessing “ambiguity and internal pluralism.” Among the militants, there are extremes of violence and nonviolence. Kant’s binary model of historical religious traditions can be applied to sub-groups within existing traditions, underscoring the fact that these traditions are internally contested along moral fault lines, expressed through violence and nonviolence. The true church or church universal represents the ideal of the group as it ought to be, exercising its true purpose (e.g. nonviolent, peace-oriented groups), and contrary to it are examples of delusory faith, some of whom engage in religious violence, or endorse it. What’s interesting in this dual model of religion, for the purposes explored here, is that the moral spectrum that Kant provides allows us to ethically assess the militant groups, as well as the larger traditions. Perhaps what is most striking is the
similarity of violent and nonviolent militants in terms of their motivations (to radically transform the world) and great sense commitment (by virtue of which they are both militant). Kant’s distinction between types of historical faith is a useful heuristic tool for helping to identify upon what the essential difference between them turns. A key difference, this thesis argues, is how they interpret scriptures: regulatively, in the case of nonviolent actors, or constitutively, in the case of violent actors. Another important contribution that Kant makes for the student of religious militancy is the way in which the universal ethical principles that he identifies may be used to ethically assess the moral inconsistency of groups that form to promote supersensible ideals – ideals, such as social justice or sustainability that few people would think to question – but whose conduct falls far short of the ideal they aspire to.

Veldman et al note that “while some religions are mobilizing in response to climate change . . . others are directly or indirectly obstructive. Both helpful and obstructive responses may be actively present within the same institutional religions . . . sparking conflicts that reduce their adherents' ability to adapt to climate change.”235 This seems to confirm Appleby’s thesis regarding the internal contestation within traditions, and which Kant’s dual theory of religion can help us to ethically assess. An important idea here is that the idea of internal contestation, in combination with the application of Kantian ethics, not only points to diversity within a tradition, allowing us to assess entire groups, but it also should allow us to assess the often morally conflicted positions within sub-groups, and on the part of individuals within them. Paul Waldau uses the example of the Chartists, a nineteenth-century group of English social reformers, who “fell silent when they were confronted with the fact that their campaign, allegedly based on equality, failed to include women . . . John Stuart Mill was one of the few who pointed out that the Chartists’ silence on the larger issue reflected the possibility that they were not really
Kant’s philosophy of religion provides a solid theoretical foundation for making ethical assessments of traditions, precisely because it refers to principles generated by pure practical reason *a priori*, and as such can make a claim to universality, as well as impartiality – which is to say that the moral standard this system applies is not biased in favour of any one tradition (or sub-group within it, or individual) and cannot be undermined by appeal to any authority other than to the authority of reason itself. This is distinct from moral argumentation based on revelation, as Kant presents it, because revelation relies on the authority of the individuals through whom it issues. Reason, on the other hand, is the birthright of all rational beings, and thus universally accessible.

### 2.1 Kant’s doubling of religion

Kant presents us with a binary theory of religion. There is “rational religion” (also called moral faith, the pure religion of reason, and true religious faith). These are synonymous with ML. On the other side of the equation are historical religious traditions, referred to variously as revealed religion, revelation, historical faith, statutory faith, and ecclesiastical faith. These terms for historical religions are used interchangeably by Kant; they refer to exoteric elements of socially constructed religious traditions, such as rituals, beliefs, religious laws, and religious texts. There is a further doubling that applies to historical religious traditions: they have the potential to either advance or impede moral faith. This theory of the duality of religion is Kant’s main concern in *Religion*. For example, he suggests that “moral religion” (ML) is not to be “cast” in “dogmas and observances” [the elements of statutory faith, based on revelation] but in the heart’s disposition to observe all human duties as divine commands” (R, 6:84). By “human duties” he means the moral duty to act in accordance with ML. The use of the term “divine
command” represents an appropriation of a religious idea to describe a moral duty that emanates from reason, not from any external, heteronomous source.

Kant describes the comparison of the two major forms of religion (ML and revealed religion) in terms of concentric circles, one inside the other. ML is inside revelation: “the philosopher, purely as a teacher of reason (from mere principles a priori), must keep within the inner circle . . .” (R, 6:12). The point of the circle imagery is to convey the idea that morality is the only truly important element of historical religions, and can be “clothed” by the representations that historical religions provide. This is provided that historical religions serve to convey universal ethical principles, but as Kant notes “morality in no way needs religion . . . but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of pure practical reason” (R, 6:3). The danger of the outer circle (historical religion/revelation) is that its elements may be thought of as paramount, and morality ignored or violated by slavish observance to historical religion. Religion appropriates religious language in this way because human beings need what Kant refers to as supersensible objects to represent and convey universal ethical principles both to themselves and to others. That is its practical function. As DiCenso notes, “Kant repeatedly discusses the issue of religious representations that can help disseminate rational ethical principles to a wider audience.”

Supersensible objects, which form the foundation of transcendental beliefs within religious traditions, are generated by pure practical reason for this very purpose, according to Kant. They are “purposive” – meaning that they have a moral value for humanity. Kant’s interpretation of religion, in a sense, reclaims their practical purpose, away from abuse by parochial interests.

What emerges from Religion is a portrait of the way in which historical religions go in two opposite directions simultaneously, and are thus internally contested. In one direction, we see elements of religious traditions that serve the creation of an ethically good society – which is
to say, a society that collectively strives to uphold the universalizable principle of human rights and the good of all. In the other direction, or at the other end of the moral spectrum, we see elements of historical religions that demonstrate heteronomous, hypocritical, delusory, and in some cases violent sides of religion – what Kant refers to through such terms as counterfeit faith, counterfeit service, priestcraft, dogmatic faith, fetish faith, statutory faith, ecclesiastical faith, and slavish faith (see A.5). These types of faith are consistent with the type of religious fundamentalism that results in religious violence and the violation of human rights, as shown by Kant’s passage on the Inquisitor (see 4.5), a hypothetical character who murders in the name of statutory religion even though this act violates the certainty of moral conscience (R 6:186-187). Accordingly, Kant’s critical analysis of the Inquisitor, and the heteronomous type of faith he symbolizes, can be interpreted as an argument for the defense of universal human rights against violent religious orthodoxy based on a constitutive interpretation of divine will. This is relevant for an ethical analysis of the climate crisis, which has already resulted in many human rights violations, in the form of displaced persons (eco-refugees), and is expected to result in many more. Some religious practitioners exacerbate the conditions that worsen climate change, or even impede efforts to mitigate it. Some elements of historical religion are, according to Kant, “worthless” and even “dangerous” (R, 6:171). Similarly, religious actors may in some cases enable and justify violence that emerges from the climate conflicts, by conflating religious duty and national self-interest or ethno-cultural self-interest. Historically, this is often the way that religions have served to inflame and legitimize violence,238 so it should not be surprising if it occurs this century in the course of resource conflicts. However, it should also be noted that the widely accepted connection between climate change and military conflicts over scarce resources is contested. David Livingston, in “The climate of war: violence, warfare, and climatic
reductionism” says that “a strong sense of predestined inevitability pervades a good deal of current thinking about climate change by the national security industry.” He questions this tendency by suggesting that war is not inevitable. Livingston’s point has merit, because as we have already established, through Kant’s theory of free will, engaging in violence is a moral choice, so it cannot properly be said to be inevitable. For the U. S. State Department and Pentagon to refer to future climate conflicts as inevitable suggests intentionality – that is an intention to engage in such conflicts, defensively, but perhaps also offensively.\(^{239}\) Gwynne Dyer, in *Climate Wars*, reports that the Pentagon (a branch of the U. S. military) is building plans for such contingencies in the expectation that they may happen.\(^{240}\) Livingston’s point is that planning for this contingency actually facilitates it (much as the so-called war on terror is alleged to contribute to the growth of anti-U. S. terrorism).\(^{241}\) The issue of borders and eco-refugees is clearly an area where traditional religions can play an active role in alleviating tensions by promoting the moral lessons from within their traditions that promote charity (e.g. the parable of the Good Samaritan). At the same time, historical religions can and are playing an active role in nationalist policies that exclude immigrants and promote xenophobia; Juergensmeyer notes that the so-called “cultures of violence” that support religious violence begin with the “perception that their communities are already under attack—are being violated—and that their acts are therefore simply responses to the violence that they have experienced.”\(^{242}\)

Kant’s *Religion* analyzes this dual role of historical religions on the world stage. Perhaps this should not be surprising, since in the eighteenth century, Christianity also ran the gamut of the moral spectrum, in terms of its positions on colonialism, human slavery, and support for or resistance to despotism, in stark contrast to Christian abolitionism (against slavery). One can look at any period in human history and find examples of religious traditions both advancing
ethical principles and violating them. These patterns are perennial and universal precisely because they issue from common propensities and predispositions in human nature – propensities and predispositions that Kant identifies in *Religion*.

### 2.2 The case for an ethical assessment of historical religious traditions

Kantian ethics is typically treated as relating to individual ethics. Breaking from this tradition, DiCenso argues that Kant’s philosophy of religion subtends a social and political meaning – one that this thesis argues is perfectly suited to the important task of addressing issues and problems that arise from climate change, and as such forms part of the emerging intersection of religious studies and environmental ethics. Kant in fact provides necessary insights and solutions to some of the difficult and urgent problems facing humanity, and as such his work should be considered an important part of the public discourse on these issues. Kant provides a system with which we may be able to ethically assess all religious traditions, using an ethical framework outside those traditions and independent of them (what social scientists call the *etic* perspective\(^{243}\)). Kant’s philosophy of religion is ideally suited to this task because it acknowledges the moral impetus that informs religious ethics, but at the same time, is able to cast an independent critical eye on them. The result is the rational foundation for the ethical assessment of religious historical traditions that clearly acknowledges their moral shortcomings, which can be applied to troubling climate change issues (e.g. silence regarding climate change, religious climate change denial, and the role of religion in amplifying climate conflicts). In contrast, eco-theology (from within religious traditions) may give us an uncritical and overly optimistic view of the potential of religious doctrines to help advance climate mitigation goals. Eco-theology best represents the regulative interpretation of scriptures as applied to environmental issues, but Kantian ethics is useful to complement and also assess it. The focus of
Eco-theology is often an abstract exploration of the human relationship with nature, through the prism of scriptural interpretations (e.g. Northcott). It is typically not a description or analysis of actual religious responses occurring in the world, from a social-scientific perspective. Eco-theology can sometimes make the error of an appeal to authority (e.g. scriptural authority, or the moral and political authority of religious leaders). Kant is critical of the heteronomy of revealed religion, so appeals to authority would have no moral worth, even if their outcome seems consistent with what practical reason might otherwise prescribe. He says that “whenever an object of the will has to be laid down as the basis for prescribing the rule that determines the will, there the rule is none other than heteronomy . . .” (GR, 4:444).

The advantage of a morality that issues autonomously from practical reason is that it is accessible to all rational beings. Revelation issues from ecclesial authorities, whose judgement is often shaped by parochial interests – but if scriptures are interpreted in a way that gleans pro-environmental (or “green”) ideas, and if these ideas are universalizable, and finally if scriptural authority is not appealed to (insofar as the value of the scripture is seen as its ability to convey ethical principles), then this kind of approach aligns with Kant’s prescription for the practical use of historical religions. Typically, eco-theological interpretations try to strike a balance between human interests and environmental sustainability by locating the proper role of humanity within the cosmos, as an ordered reality, and through reference to a scriptural understanding of social justice. Scharper notes that this is being done within several different traditions: in Hinduism, the notion of dharma is applied to argue against consumerism; in Confucianism, a non-dualistic worldview is interpreted in terms of a “holistic ecological cosmology,” etc. Other examples include environmentally conscious engaged Buddhism, engaged Jainism, and eco-liberation theologies for different traditions. Fortunately, all world religious traditions have eco-
theologians interpreting their traditions in light of the environmental crisis, illustrating an attempt to apply what are essentially regulative ideals within the framework of their respective traditions.

Kant’s system complements efforts by social scientists to objectively assess the emerging role of historical religions, but with the critical difference that Kant’s analysis includes an ethical component based on rational principles. The social sciences are constrained by the expectation of moral neutrality in order to ensure the greatest degree of objectivity. Kant’s ethical system has the advantage of resting on an objective, systematic, and universally valid foundation.

Postmodernist thought militates against the idea of objectivity in truth, and favours cultural relativism, especially with regard to values, which are thought to be entirely subjective or culturally conditioned.\textsuperscript{246} for this reason, postmodernism dispenses with the Enlightenment project of arriving at some form of objective truth through scientific inquiry.\textsuperscript{247} Kant’s claim that his system has universal validity (predicated on the concept of pure practical reason \textit{a priori}), is contested by postmodernist thinkers, such as Talal Asad, who believe his definition of religion can make no claim to objectivity.\textsuperscript{248} As noted previously, eco-theology frequently contains an ethical component, but it is often mediated through biblical authority. Interestingly, Kant acknowledges that revealed religion can contain elements of natural religion, i.e., rational moral religion (R, 6:155). The advantage of Kant’s approach is that it represents a robust ethical system independent of religious traditions, but at the same time is able to locate their ethical value for application to any conceivable historical contingency.

Religious violence and tyranny over human beings represent one extreme on a moral spectrum. At the other end, we may find elements of religion that call for peace and social justice. There is a need to be able to ethically assess historical faith traditions, to not only classify them according to type, but also according to their capacity to harm humanity or help it. Kant’s
philosophy of religion provides a template for that assessment. Religion is not rejected entirely by Kant, but nor is it accepted uncritically. We are encouraged to view it critically and take from it that which is of practical value. Anthony Leiserowitz and Nicholas Smith of the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication argue that for the American public to accept the necessity of climate change mitigation policies it is necessary to speak to them about it with ideas they already understand and accept. Specifically, they argue for the use of eco-theology to make the case to Christians in the U.S. Religion may be regarded as an important cultural resource for needed political transformation. Although some industrial societies have become increasingly secularized, religions have never entirely gone away; in fact, they have experienced resurgence in the form of politically active religious fundamentalism within the missionary religions (principally the missionary faiths of Christianity and Islam).

Religious fundamentalism, it is theorized, arose in response to secularization, as an explicit rejection of it, including a rejection of the separation of church and state. In the Muslim world, this strengthened existing theocracies or led to new ones (e.g. Iran, 1979), and in the U.S. it has led to attempts to create a Christian theocracy. The political movement behind the latter effort (Dominion theology, advanced by Christian Right coalitions) has been politically powerful enough to influence U.S. presidencies and to shift public policy on climate change away from the rhetoric of mitigation to open denial, which is now essentially the position of the U.S. Republican Party. Secularization theory, simply put, is the idea that religions would eventually fade away, becoming marginal movements. This theory did not anticipate the rise of fundamentalism. One of the proponents of the theory, sociologist Peter Berger, acknowledges this. Religion traditions are not going away, as once supposed. Kant’s approach to religion, in
this context, takes on importance because he seems to acknowledge its staying power, and then proceeds to try to discover its practical use for the project of ethical enlightenment of society.

Religious traditions can potentially play an enormously positive role in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Adaptation can be defined as the reduction of “damage from impacts that cannot be avoided” and mitigation strategies “decrease the amount of climate change that occurs.” Although this potential has certainly not reached fruition, it may yet do so, as greater numbers of people turn to religious traditions for answers and moral guidance in the face of climate-change induced catastrophes. At the same time, the potential for religions to distract or persuade people to ignore these crises, or to legitimate violence as societies experience collapse in the face of climate catastrophe, also exists. It stands to reason that the moral elements within religious traditions should be emphasized, for the sake of effecting social and political changes necessary to help avert – or adequately adapt to – climate catastrophe. The task of identifying them has generally fallen to eco-theologians. Kant’s philosophy of religion is uniquely poised to support this sort of argument, in part because it is a philosophy that stands independent of theology, and in particular revelation, which Kant regards as an heteronomous source of moral authority. The principle of universalizability, at the heart of CI, is what gives this philosophy its credibility.

The ethical community that Kant refers to in Religion tries to approximate the purely rational ideal of RE, just as the visible church tries to approximate the ideal represented by the invisible church to act as a vanguard for the ethical advancement of society as a whole. Kant’s philosophy of religion may be understood as an expression of his social and political vision. His approach, according to DiCenso, “facilitates a method of interpretation [of scriptures] and questioning with the potential to engage multiple religions in relation to ethical and political
concerns, such as the furtherance of distributive and restorative forms of justice and of human rights and freedoms.”

Religion is at its best a cultural resource for helping to actualize an ethical society. It can also severely inhibit social progress by leading both individuals and society into remarkably destructive ways of thinking and acting. For example, the implementation of an autocratic theocracy by indoctrination and coercion goes squarely against the ethical potential of religions, because it robs people of their capacity to autonomously realize their own ethical potential. Heteronomous forms of religion are facilitated by a literal interpretation of religious, rather than seeing them as representations of ethical ideals. Accordingly, historical religions may be said to have a dual potential, vis-à-vis the climate crisis: both to mitigate it and to exacerbate the conditions that make it possible.

The doubling of religion is a phrase used by DiCenso to describe Kant’s binary theory of religion: on one side is “the moral faith within” (ML), synonymous with rational religion, and on the other hand, historical faith, synonymous with ecclesiastical faith, and statutory faith describing exoteric religious formations. The difference between the two seems to be in how the supersensible objects generated by practical reason are interpreted. If they are interpreted constitutively (if they are seen as objectively real), this contributes to heteronomy of the will; if they are interpreted regulatively, as representations of universal ethical principles, this helps to advance autonomy of the will. This is true of supersensible objects associated with traditional historical religions, as Kant demonstrates, but the argument can also be extended to supersensible objects that arise in the context of secular political movements (e.g. social justice activism, utopianism), that according to the functional definition of religion can also be understood as religions of a type. Exoteric forms of historical faith are valuable insofar as they assist in the formation of an ideal society (the ethical community) and are detrimental when they are ethically
neutral or inhibiting the formation of such a society. The ethically detrimental forms of historical faith include slavish faith, fetish faith, counterfeit faith, counterfeit service, priestcraft, and more ambiguously, revealed religion. Kant believes that religious rituals are empty of moral content and are thus dispensable. Religious scriptures have a more ambiguous status: they could either be of value or could be detrimental, depending on their moral content or lack thereof, and this partially depends how scriptures are interpreted.

Applied to the climate crisis, historical faith traditions have a dual potential for good (advancing autonomous ethical action) and evil (despotism and religious delusion, counterfeit faith). Moral progress, at both the level of the individual and the society, is an asymptotic (never-ending) process (see 4.3), requiring moral striving. Kant is describing religion, as it is happening in the world, through an ethical lens, and at the same time suggesting what ought to happen, prescriptively. What concerns us is the distinction between the two major types of historical faith – that which advances ML and that which fails to advance or actually violates it, as in the case of religious violence and human rights violations. The propensity to evil in human nature is the root cause of this violation.

Kant refers to “counterfeit faith of God in a statutory religion” (R, 6:185). This type of historical faith is inauthentic because it relies on “statutes, i.e., ordinances held to be divine, though to our purely moral judgement they are arbitrary and contingent” (R, 6:168). An example of this is biblical literalism, the belief that the bible contains the inerrant word of God, to be obeyed without question. Kant refers to the fact that said scriptures (statutes) seem arbitrary and contingent in the light of “purely moral judgement” (judgement in accordance with ML). We now have historical and archaeological evidence from the scholarly field of Christian origins, in support of the fact that the New Testament is the product of an historical process, influenced by
cultural and political elements, which certainly may be viewed as “arbitrary and contingent.”

This evidence supports the implication of Kant's argument regarding revealed religion: that it is not the inerrant word of God, but is in fact written by human beings who themselves were influenced by contingent factors and in some cases motivated by parochial interests – but also, in other cases, motivated by ML to convey ethical principles figuratively, through scriptures. Revealed religion relies on belief in divine revelation, in contrast to natural religion, which denies faith in the supernatural (R, 6:154-7). However, Kant does not wholly reject revelation, insofar as some parts of it “contain principles of natural religion” (R, 6:156), and if the revelation “is so constituted that human beings could and ought to have arrived at it on their own through the mere use of reason . . .” (R, 6:155). This statement, of itself, encapsulates a key element of Kant’s philosophy of religion: historical religions must be judged against the benchmark of universal ethical principles.

A cornerstone of Kant’s ethical system is the principle of universalizability contained in the categorical imperative. One expression of it is: “Act only according to that maxim through which you at the same time can will that it should become a universal law.” Using this principle, we can assess different traditions according to the degree to which they conform or deviate from that principle in how they interact with society on issues pertaining to climate change. For example, does the tradition promote needless consumerism or caution against it? The Christian prosperity gospel seems to promote consumerism and capitalism. Such unbridled consumption violates FH because it endangers future generations. By contrast, the Christian social gospel and Christian liberation theology are both focused on the material conditions of this world. They are like the prosperity gospel in this respect, but run counter to it, ideologically and politically, by taking an approach more in line with the ideal of social and environmental justice,
and what is often termed political progressivism. They argue for social justice, whereas prosperity theology argues for greater individual “health and wealth.” The prosperity gospel conflates salvation with the material conditions of the world and influences its members in the direction of consumerism in a way that can be interpreted using Kant’s term ‘fetish-faith.’ Kant defines fetish faith as “the persuasion that what cannot effect a certain thing, either according to nature or through the moral laws of reason, will through it alone [i.e., the statutory observance] nonetheless affect the thing wished for, if only we firmly believe that it will indeed affect it, and we accompany our belief with certain formalities” (R, 6:193). The prosperity gospel is based on the idea that through correct belief and through the act of giving monetary donations to a pastor (termed ‘gifts’) the practitioner will receive, in return, spiritual and material abundance. Kant’s criticism of fetish-faith is that it oversteps “the boundaries of reason with respect to the supernatural” (R, 6:194) and that it is a way for the practitioner to avoid the hard work of striving for good moral conduct, which is actually the true purpose of religion. Interestingly, Kant makes an exception for almsgiving among Muslims, if it “occurred from a truly virtuous and at the same time religious disposition to human duty . . .” (ibid). However, by almsgiving we must suppose him to mean charitable donations to the poor, and not ‘gifts’ to the missions of wealthy televangelists, supposedly in exchange for God’s blessings. It should be noted that this is not only a North American phenomenon; it is also popular in South America, and Africa, and we may well suppose that as human populations grow and as climate change worsens, the prosperity gospel will attract more adherents.

Hence we must pose the following key questions: Does the tradition inflame resource conflicts or does it attempt to prevent or mitigate them? Does it provide the kind of moral authority and political networks needed to respond to emergencies? In reality, all religious
traditions have the potential to result in multiple and conflicting responses to these impending crises. Within major world historical traditions, we may observe multiple kinds of responses to the climate crisis, emblematic of divergent and opposing perspectives. As noted previously, “militant” groups – both violent and nonviolent – have similar methods and levels of commitment, despite diverging worldviews. This is reflected in the symbolic actions of radical groups: for violent militants, it is reflected in religious terrorism, whereas for nonviolent militants, it can be reflected in nonviolent civil disobedience or peace building efforts. The latter type of symbolic action actually has bearing on the climate crisis, insofar as it is being utilized to oppose coal plants, and is being encouraged by people like Bill McKibben and Naomi Klein.²⁶¹ Kant’s philosophy of religion is valuable in terms of describing the way in which militants utilize supersensible cognition, and in terms of how they regard the moral imperative implied by those ideals. The key difference lies in the fact that violent militants – which can include religious terrorists, but also those who want to see the purification of the world through a divinely ordained apocalypse²⁶² – adopt an ethic that is non-universalizable. Their counterparts, the nonviolent militants (which describes many climate and peace activists), also adopt a utopian ideal for society, but one that is more universalizable (more inclusive of the interests of others, as reflected in the idea of a universal law given by reason). There is also militancy that falls somewhere between, taking a position that can be described as either violent or nonviolent, or oscillating between the two, tactically; in fact, they adopt an explicit “diversity of tactics” approach, which sees value in the ritual of militant symbolic protests, even if the significance of these actions is lost on the general public. Their approach is essentially that of limited symbolic violence.²⁶³
Kant’s *Religion* helps us to ethically assess all historical religious traditions, based on the criteria established through his ethical system. We see that religious traditions can form into collectives; Kant refers to these collectives as the visible church, which is the variably imperfect manifestation in the world of the ideal of the invisible church, or true church, or church universal: “The distinguishing mark of the true church is its *universality* . . .” (R, 6:115). The model applies universally to collectives within all religious traditions that have as their purpose the advancement of an ethical vision for society. It could describe liberationist and social justice movements and nonviolence movements within religious traditions that utilize these historical religious traditions to advance an inclusive social and political vision – although, these movements will always necessarily fall short of the ideals to which they subscribe – a fact which is anticipated in Kant’s philosophy. This is because the principle of universalizability can never be fully actualized, only aspired to and actualized in part. Recognition of the perpetually incomplete character of moral progress – its asymptotic character – is actually crucial for the regulative interpretation of religious traditions. If interpreted constitutively, the supersensible objects associated with the tradition – which in fact have their origin in pure practical reason – are thought to be objectively real, and this belief lends itself to a totalizing worldview, in which the highest good is thought to be manifest in what is in fact only a representation or postulate of practical reason. A totalizing worldview does not admit of any further need for moral improvement, discards moral imperatives as unnecessary, and declares unlimited allegiance to that specific representation, contributing to religious exclusivism and orthodoxy, and ultimately to religious intolerance and violence. If, however, endless moral progress is understood as the actual purpose of these representations, this allows for religious pluralism, and the understanding that there can be multiple and complementary representations of supersensible cognition.
An example of religious heteronomy is religiously motivated climate change denial, coupled with advocacy for consumerism, which is a position promoted by the Cornwall Alliance. It falls short of the principle of universalizability because it does not take into account those whose interests are excluded by its mandate – principally, future generations. Kant provides the template for assessing religious traditions outside the framework of those traditions, utilizing a universal ethical system applicable to the many divergent elements within those traditions. It recognizes the fact that historical religious traditions represent a social and political reality and proposes a method for assessing them, but at the same time is cognizant of their unique potential to advance ML.

Social scientists have “focused on religion as having a social function, such as providing shared values, producing social cohesion, ritualizing life stages, or legitimizing social order.” This thesis adopts that working (albeit limited) definition of religion, because it complements Kant’s concept of historical religious traditions, especially with regard to the way in which they have the potential to disseminate values, and to legitimate a social order, both of which traits relate to their social and political manifestations and potentialities. Given that many secular political movements also employ supersensible cognition, his analysis can be extended to any given number of social and political movements and phenomena, including consumerism and environmental activism. They arguably all serve some of the same social functions as traditional religions, and thus can be thought of as religions of a kind. Utopian secular political movements that employ this type of cognition (in the form idealized nationalism or ethno-centrism) are yet another important example. Like consumerism and environmental activism, utopian nationalism may be thought of as instrumental in the unfolding of climate politics, insofar it contributes to resource conflicts and human rights violations within that context.
Supersensible objects have the power to inspire social and political movements and to shape entire cultures in ways that can amplify our predispositions to good and evil. Kant’s explanation of the supersensible imagination relates directly to his epistemology (namely the first Critique), in which he makes it clear that this type of imagination has no objective correlative in apodictic reality. In other words, God is a postulate of pure practical reason, but one that he feels has tremendous practical value that can be actualized through the agency of historical faiths. Historical faith traditions can act as vehicles for communicating and advancing shared representations of ethical ideals. When we ethically assess traditions, it is apparent that many of them fall short of the ideal set forth by the principle of universalizability. No religion or social movement can ever hope to meet the high standard set by this ethical system. The asymptotic character of this principle, to a very great degree, informs the unconditional language of religious symbols, including the word God itself. Kant says that this postulate should never be confused with something in the world that is apodictically certain (CPrR, 5:133ff.). To commit this error of reason contributes to heteronomous deference to statutory faith and ecclesiastical authorities who orchestrate it, and it delimits the meaning of the supersensible object, robbing it of its potential to convey the limitlessness and unconditional character of the moral imperative that is its true purpose. Religious texts should be understood figuratively, not literally (R, 6:147), and, more specifically they should be understood regulatively, with regard to their moral meaning. Supersensible cognition exists only to help guide us ethically, toward the creation of the good society. This is the ideal of a society in which every individual aspires to what Kant refers to as good life conduct. This is the true purpose or function of religion, as Kant sees it. To give another example, Kant refers to Jesus as an Urbild, an archetypical image, who represents the highest ideals. Such images, representations and postulates, all part of historical faith, are valuable for
helping to guide and educate moral minors (E, 8:35), but they also pose a great danger if they are understood as literal embodiments of the highest good. This confusion can lead to serious errors of reason, including subservient faith and justification of violence in defense of dogmatic ideologies (as the phenomenon of religious violence illustrates). If climate change is a moral issue of the first importance, and if religious traditions can help guide society (as is its potential, as argued by Berry, Scharper, Northcott, et al), then we need a means for assessing the degree to which religious traditions – and social movements that serve the role of functional religions – conform to or deviate from that role. Kantian ethics addresses not only individual ethics, as is often argued, but also entire social and political movements.266 Religion provides the arguments that specifically inform the latter, and thus are applicable to the climate crisis.

The universality and ahistoricality of Kant’s arguments, which are as relevant today as when they were made in the late eighteenth century, lends them a certain authority applicable to this task. However, the arguments do not lend themselves automatically to this task, but must be interpreted in light of the findings of the social sciences and our modern understanding of religion and culture. For example, the problem of conflicts over scarce resources, or so-called ‘climate wars’,267 may be both inflamed by and ameliorated by religious traditions. Kant’s particular focus is largely on Christianity, largely because he was largely unfamiliar with other traditions, but he notes that his approach to religion (with respect to its practical value in helping to create or inhibit an ethical society) is universal and applicable to all religions, which can be divided into two types: “the religion of rogation (of mere cult), and moral religion, i.e., the religion of good life conduct” (R, 6:51). This invites the development of a critical assessment of all historical faith traditions, and beyond that, all worldviews and cultural formations that share key characteristics with religion. Kant argues that religions can be of use in this way because of
“the natural need of all human beings to demand for even the highest concepts and grounds of reason something that the senses can hold on to . . .” (R, 6:109). For this reason, to bring about a “confirmation of experience” (through the representation of ethical principles), “some historical ecclesiastical faith or other, usually already at hand, must be used” (ibid). Religions and religious worldviews and movements (that meet the criteria of functional religions) can potentially have a profound impact on how humanity responds to the climate crisis.

2.3 The failure of the potential of religion, to date

A paper on climate change policy by Scott Barrett from 2009 declares that “by any reasonable measure, the steps taken so far to address climate change have failed.” If it is true in 2009, then it is still true as of 2017: in September of 2016, the global 400 parts per million threshold for carbon dioxide was reached. In 1992 the Rio Climate Summit (one of the first major climate talks) was conducted, and there have been annual talks on this issue among representatives of G20 nations ever since, which means that a quarter century of international climate talks has not resulted in negative emissions. Danny Harvey states that “that there is almost no chance of limiting the warming to 1.5°C and very little chance of limiting it to 2.0°C.” The most publicized tipping point -- two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures – is expected to be exceeded in coming years. The world will experience many of the adverse effects of climate change, to a great degree, this century – and this process has already begun. To be accurate, two degrees Celsius is not the only threshold: they are different critical temperature thresholds for different impacts, and they are all highly uncertain. For example, the threshold for significant damage to coral reefs has already occurred. On the plus side of the ledger, significant positive developments in the last few years include the decreasing cost of production and increased profitability of renewable energy in the marketplace, and the
decreasing cost of renewable energy, especially concerning cars. However, there is a serious concern that the rate of change on this front will be insufficient. International climate change talks, arguably, have failed, despite a wealth of ideas and solutions put forward at them. For example, the results of the Paris climate talks in 2015 are that “emissions-reduction targets are not binding and there are no penalties for transgressors.” This is because, according to climate ethicist Donald Brown, national interests have consistently undermined global interests, and the interests of those in the future, and one could add that national interests are aligned with the interests of multi-national corporations, who ultimately are beholden only to stakeholders, and not to public or global interests. Climate talks are where a global juridico-civil society is needed, because the ideal of the ethico-civil society is not being adhered to; instead, the prevailing ethos is that of a systematic evasion of moral duty, even though the moral duty to address climate change is ostensibly why the talks exist in the first place. Brown says that “claims that national interest alone can be justification for climate change policy, is implicitly a denial of the ethical responsibilities to the victims of climate change.” Brown’s thought concerning national interests also apply to any parochial interests influencing decisions as climate talks. Doug MacDonald’s analysis of why Canada has been unsuccessful in implementing a climate-change policy attributes the problem to “the weakness of the intergovernmental system used to develop co-ordinated federal-provincial policy.” In other words, there is lack of coordination both between nations and within them. To paraphrase Rentmeester’s comment on this point, Kant’s global vision, for unified world governance, in “Towards Perpetual Peace,” seems especially prescient, given the lack of international (and intergovernmental) cooperation we are now witnessing, and the degree to which this deficiency puts at grave risk the very conditions that
make life on Earth possible. McDonald puts it more succinctly: “intergovernmental systems must be strengthened.”

This has not only been a failure of governments: historical religious traditions have an enormous potential to engage with climate change issues and to help transform societies toward more sustainable models. As noted above, these traditions have not managed to do so as yet, despite the great efforts of a few denominations and individuals. This may be because, as Veldman et al note, “no matter how inspiring their creeds . . . [the influence of religious] leaders may not be sufficient to counter well-entrenched habits and social structures . . .” What are the causes of this apparent failure? Veldman et al, citing Haluza-Delay (2008), list four impediments or obstacles to religious engagement in environmental issues. (i) “paradigmatic barriers”, which refers to religious worldviews (or cosmologies) that do not include environmental concern; (ii) competing issues and moral concerns, which place environmental concern low on the list of priorities; (iii) lack of an adequate social critique of climate change issues; and (iv) lack of conviction, due to social and political standing or consumer habits. The paradigmatic barrier can be understood in two ways: the first, represented by Lynn White Jr.’s famous essay on the negative environmental effect of Christianity, argues that religious cosmologies themselves have shaped the dominant paradigm of modern industrial societies, both reflecting and advancing entrenched beliefs and practices that are ultimately unsustainable. The second way it can be understood is that some religious leaders, such as Pope Francis, have attempted to change these dominant beliefs and practices (through eco-theology), and have not met with success sufficient to significantly alter the status quo, because as Veldman et al note, climate skeptics have cast doubt on climate change. In fact, religious climate change deniers directly addressed Francis on this point. This has had the effect of leaving millions of people
in doubt regarding the necessity of mitigation efforts, and there are few politicians who will risk their careers to implement more taxation and ‘austerity measures’ if there is insufficient support from the electorate for these environmentally necessary but politically controversial remedies. Some of these skeptics and deniers are evangelical Christians (principally the Cornwall Alliance), which illustrates that religious traditions are internally contested when it comes to this issue. If no one part of the tradition can claim moral authority, as is evident from the multiple and conflicting interpretations of scriptures from different denominations, this should indicate the need for an independent ethical assessment.

The second barrier to engagement of religions with climate issues – competing interests – has fostered a “debate about the appropriate level of attention to give environmental concerns – or whether to give them any attention at all. Often, environmental concerns compete with other foci, like hunger, poverty, housing, or evangelism.” This type of barrier is influenced by the first type of barrier noted above: the paradigmatic barrier that shapes societal values and consequently determines political priorities. It would be more consistent with an evangelical Christian cosmology to do charity work than to focus on the systemic changes needed to address how we produce energy and food and transportation in a more sustainable manner: charity does not challenge the dominant economic and political paradigm, while the transformation of energy systems does. The argument for competing interests is made by economist and author Bjørn Lomberg: he says that if there is a limited amount of public funding available, it should go to the alleviation of preventable diseases, rather than to investment in renewable energy. While many religious organizations engaged in poverty alleviation use private (not public) funds, they also believe that human-centered problems should take precedence over climate mitigation efforts. They mistakenly view environmental concerns as distinct from human concerns. The
countervailing economic argument for climate change mitigation as a priority, from economist Nicholas Stern, says that if we do not address climate change, the economic costs of mitigation and adaptation will far outweigh every other concern, and will represent a vastly greater cost later than preventative measures in the present. The conflict between the economic arguments from Lomberg and Stern, articulated as different moral priorities, almost seems to rest on the difference between conflicting worldviews: the worldview that downplays climate change as a priority – which Lomberg is representative of – also argues that economic growth is a boon to humanity, and posits a conflict between economic and environmental goals. Lomberg is not wrong to argue that consumer capitalism has brought great prosperity to humanity, and continues to do so, lifting great portions of humanity out of debilitating poverty. The problem with his line of argumentation is that the economic system he defends is not universalizable. This is not to say that socialism, the historical rival to capitalism, is the better alternative. Economist Thomas Sowell comments wryly that “socialism, in general, has a record of failure so blatant that only an intellectual could ignore or evade it.” Proponents of unfettered capitalism, such as former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, have pejoratively labeled climate change activism as “socialist” in order to dismiss the necessity of climate change mitigation, but this dismissal of climate concerns overlooks two important points: (i) without climate change mitigation, human civilization will not in the long run be possible (i.e., the economy cannot function optimally without a stable environment); and (ii) the ideal of so-called ‘green capitalism’ represents a potentially viable solution, one that is already proving to be effective, as demonstrated by the success of renewable energy technologies in the marketplace.

Kant can be brought into the discussion through his theory of moral judgement. This helps us to ascertain the best course of action by incorporating universalizable ethical principles
into our maxims of action. One advantage of this ethical system is that its application, like the scientific method, is entirely impartial, and does not give preference to any single worldview or economic philosophy, political or religious in orientation, underscoring the importance of Kant’s emphasis on the status of pure practical reason as independent from contingent factors. The course of action that is most deserving of our focus is that which best advances the ideal of an ethically good society, not only in the present, but also for the future, and this ideal of a good society is one that is universalizable, which is to say that it must be predicated on maxims of actions that could become a universal law. These maxims would not, as such, violate human rights in any way – and it is important to note this, because visions of an ideal society have led to utopianism, which historically has contributed to such violations. A basic prerequisite for the possibility of an ideal society is a world in which there is a reasonable expectation of survival of our species, which rules out unfettered capitalism. Classical socialism, however, might also not be ethically or practically viable. It seems probable that humanity will experiment with multiple economic and political systems in coming decades, and will almost certainly in some cases revert to totalitarian models, in response to resource depletion and conflicts. This is why universal ethical principles are needed to assess the different religious, economic, and political responses that are emerging and that will continue to emerge. It should also be added that there is a closing window of opportunity for climate change mitigation efforts to be optimal – although they will always be of benefit to some degree. As the spectrum of tipping points is exceeded, one by one, humanity will tend to increasingly focus on adaptation efforts as the optimal use of resources, rather than mitigation efforts. Many local governments have already gone in the direction. Danny Harvey argues that mitigation will always be of benefit to some degree, especially if we go all
the way into negative emissions (with the help of improvements in renewable energy and energy efficiency), but it is also the case that adaptation efforts are needed.

There are several examples of adaptation efforts as local communities around the world contend with extreme weather events. Fortunately, Kantian ethics is as applicable to adaptation as to mitigation efforts, precisely because it is non-consequentialist: the good of a given action depends on the volition of the maxim of action of the will from which it emanates, not from the consequence of the action, which means that there are endless opportunities for the good will (see 4.17) to be enacted for the duration of human existence on Earth, and in whatever social or political or economic form that existence takes, including subsistence economies and tribalism. However, the application of moral judgement in the here and now would dictate that every effort ought to be directed towards mitigation efforts, but also – importantly – not efforts that in any way might violate ML, since to do so would violate the very point of universal ethical concern. DiCenzo notes that “our capacity to make principled judgements in relation to specific dilemmas and contexts is essential to ethical practice” and “the task of judgement requires independent reflection in context, concerning whether or not an intended action is good or evil . . . Kant specifies that ethical rules require individual acts of judgement for application in the phenomenal world.” With the unfolding of the climate crisis, everyone on Earth who is a rational being (and thus a moral agent) is required, on a daily basis, to engage in moral decision making regarding energy consumption, waste, governance, business, transportation, food, etc. These are all “individual acts of judgement” in the phenomenal world, for which reason a universal ethical system is needed. Given that not everyone will subscribe to and adhere to one system, and that religious traditions with billions of adherents already exist, it is pragmatic to suggest that these religions be interpreted regulatively.
The third reason given by Veldman et al for the failure of religious traditions to engage with climate issues is lack of an adequate social critique of climate change issues. The prevailing economic and political system is predicated on a worldview that prevents religions from developing a robust “social critique” that takes into account the “societal and cultural factors that affect the human-earth relationship,” and this then prevents them from developing campaigns that can address “the roots of the problem.”293 Along the same lines, Thomas Berry provides an analysis of our present situation, urging a shift from an anthropocentric to a biocentric worldview, which he believes will bring about needed inquiry into environmental issues. This does not necessarily mean that religions ought to prefer human interests over nonhuman interests, as though the two are mutually exclusive; rather, it could be understood to mean that human beings need to acknowledge their complete dependence upon the natural world. As Berry puts it “the Earth story is not part of the human story; the human story is part of the Earth story.”294 He also argues for a new cosmology: “the universe is not a collection of objects; it is a communion of subjects.”295 Currently, our society seems to lack understanding that human beings are not separate from the natural world, and that our interests are entirely dependent on it. Human interests are best protected by efforts to stabilize the climate and protect natural resources from waste or overconsumption. Or it may be the case that even if we are aware, few people identify with the whole of humanity, except as a way to justify predatory human superiorism, and fewer still identify as Earthlings, as members of the egalitarian ideal of “the communion of subjects.” It may very well be that as a result of evolutionary forces, human beings are predisposed to tribalism, and if so this predisposition is fatal for us now, as a species, because of our large numbers and the wide reach and impact of our technological systems. These new realities have global implications and thus require a global sense of self and responsibility.
Religious ethics that in some way reflect ML (e.g., Jesus’ ethical teachings, Jain ethics, Buddhist ethics, the Jewish concept of social justice, etc.) can provide a needed universal perspective, if understood regulatively. A biocentric worldview need not negate the importance of humanity. The politically and economically dominant worldviews that humanity subscribes to tend to give little or no importance to environmental questions, at present, despite the dire consequences for humanity, and even despite widespread knowledge of these consequences (the result of climate scientists speaking out for several decades). To be sure, there have been religious authorities who took it upon themselves to become vocal on the issue of climate justice (e.g. Pope Francis, Bishop Bouchard, the World Council of Churches, the United Church of Canada, and the U.S. Presbyterian Church). They have issued statements that eloquently address these issues, but these efforts have not had a sufficient political impact, at least to the degree needed to help avoid the negative impacts of warming that are now upon us and are expected to worsen. The economic and cultural causes of climate change are deeply embedded in the dominant worldview and daily practices of industrialized consumer-oriented societies (what Northcott terms “neoliberal” societies). There is a general “lack of conviction [iv, above], because of attachment to one's current lifestyle, or lack of knowledge or motivation.” This particular barrier has been identified by psychologists as one of the reasons why the general populace is open to the message of climate change deniers and skeptics. In “The dragons of inaction: Psychological barriers that limit climate change mitigation and adaptation,” Robert Gifford lists “seven categories of psychological barriers, or ‘dragons of inaction’: limited cognition about the problem, ideological worldviews that tend to preclude pro-environmental attitudes and behavior, comparisons with key other people, sunk costs and behavioral momentum discredence toward experts and authorities, perceived risks of change, and positive but
inadequate behavior change.” Gifford adds that “structural barriers must be removed wherever possible, but this is unlikely to be sufficient. Psychologists must work with other scientists, technical experts, and policymakers to help citizens overcome these psychological barriers.” Notably, Gifford’s identification of “ideological worldviews that tend to preclude pro-environmental attitudes and behavior” relates to the conclusion by Veldman et al that religions have a significant impact on worldviews, and that they can, as a result, present paradigmatic barriers to social and political change. It is almost certainly the case that pre-existing cultural norms and worldviews have an ethically detrimental impact on the formation of religions, including revealed religion. Even though regulative interpretations of scriptures are possible, literal interpretations may be more appealing because they require no moral effort on the part of practitioners, and because they reinforce pre-existing prejudices. Take, for example, the widespread prejudice against homosexuality: there are scriptures in the Abrahamic traditions that explicitly forbid homosexuality. They reflected prevailing cultural norms when written, and have since served to reinforce those norms among scriptural literalists and fundamentalists. It requires a moral effort on the part of believers to ignore those passages, to recognize them not as examples of revelation to be obeyed, but as passages written by men, to be ignored, while at the same time interpreting other passages – those the ones that promote ML in some way – as affirming the humanity of all persons. In the same way, it requires a moral effort to interpret scriptures written long before the environmental crisis within a framework of environmental justice. It is easier to ignore the regulative interpretation because it requires a difficult paradigmatic shift. Perhaps for this reason, even though Abrahamic religious traditions can be interpreted regulatively, the denominations of those traditions that opt for literal interpretations are growing in numbers, while the liberal denominations that typically require a greater
interpretative effort of parishoners are diminishing in numbers. Perhaps not coincidentally, the liberal denominations are also those most interested in combatting climate change.

As a result of the lack of conviction of the general populace, religious leaders are hesitant to step forward: for example, Michael Agliardo notes that Catholic bishops in the U.S. “are hesitant to take action on climate change because they worry that tackling such a controversial issue would squander their political capital.” In Kantian terms, they make a moral decision that places self-love ahead of obedience to the command of duty, which presumably would dictate forthrightness on matters of such grave importance by religious leaders. It is for this reason that Bishop Bouchard’s stance, in a culture (Alberta) generally hostile to opposition to the oil sands, could be said to be an act of moral courage and duty.

To assess this state of affairs using Kantian principles, we can say that the lack of insight into the way that human interests are adversely affected by environmental conditions, despite public access to the conclusions of climate scientists, and willingness to listen to those who reject climate science because it favours one’s own incentives at the expense of future generations, may be described as an example of heteronomy of the will and of succumbing to the propensity to evil in human nature. This is also a good example of Kant’s pejorative description of the unthinking masses as moral minors (E, 8:35). The phenomenon of religious leaders, motivated by their own incentives to retain political capital (i.e., the status they enjoy as leaders, which they risk by talking about the need to take great measures to mitigate climate change), provides us with an example of putting self-love ahead of their duty to provide moral leadership. In so doing they also allow self-love to unduly influence their maxims of actions. The priority that such ecclesiastical authorities give the symbols and rituals of their tradition over their moral duty, may be thought of as counterfeit service, defined by Kant as reversal of the “moral order” of means.
and ends: “what is mere means is unconditionally commanded (as an end)” (R, 6:165). The symbols of the religious historical tradition, at their best, and if properly understood, are conducive to good life conduct, and the creation of an ethical community (an ethico-civil society) – which, it can be argued, must also in the context of modernity be a society in which there is a sincere aspiration towards sustainable sufficiency. The representations of supersensible objects, which form the basis of religious traditions, are (or ought to be) only “mere means” for the advancement of ML, but heteronomous deference to the incentives that serve self-love is given priority over moral concerns when the maxims of action that safeguard political capital are given priority over moral concern for the interests of those born in the future (which would be given priority if they universalized the maxims of their actions). Moral courage arising from autonomy of the will is always demonstrated by a few individuals in every period of history; it is needed to advance our collective progress towards a morally good society in the present cultural moment.

The deviation from what Kant calls the “good principle” (see A.4) by ecclesiastical authorities is evident in the way that most religious traditions address – or more precisely fail to address – climate change: with a few exceptions, most historical religious traditions are silent on the matter, despite the fact that knowledge of climate change is now universal. Historically, many religious observances by practitioners could not rightly be considered ethically purposive, and in some cases blatantly violate FH (e.g. sati, witch-burning, torture of heretics, or any example of human sacrifice); these are prevalent throughout all traditions. Silence in the face of a grave moral issue is not explicitly evil, but it could be thought of as complicit with the status quo, which has driven a great many people to succumb to the propensity to evil in the same way. Part IV of Religion is titled “Concerning service and counterfeit service under the dominion of the
good principle” (R, 6:151). “Service” is any aspect of religion that advances true religious faith (i.e., ML and the formation of the ethical community). Importantly, both service and counterfeit service are subsumed under “under the dominion of the good principle” – which is to say that both authentic and inauthentic forms of faith appear to be good. Evil does not proclaim that it is evil; it almost always proclaims itself as good. Kant gives the example of the Inquisitor, who believes that the torture and murder of alleged heretics is justified by divine will. He also refers to this phenomenon in the comment on “vices yet hidden under the appearance of virtue” (R, 6:34) and in his critique of “the habit of hypocrisy” evident in the “unconditional obedience” and patriotic duty as a religious duty (R, 6:180). The problems identified by Veldman et al, and Gifford (i.e., the paradigmatic and psychological barriers) are emblematic of the role that the propensity to evil plays in the unfolding of world-shaping events. This propensity occurs at the level of the individual, but can have world-shaping impacts, if amplified and externalized into conventions, traditions, customs, practices, rituals, institutions, and laws – as they commonly are.

2.4 Cosmologies and ethics

Northcott, in A Moral Climate, argues that interpreting long-standing and popular religious traditions, such as Christianity, in light of the climate crisis, is necessary and practically useful, because such traditions provide the lens through which a great portion of humanity sees the world and derives its values. Veldman et al argue that “religions may be able to encourage a response to climate change via their influence on believers' worldviews or cosmologies. These narratives provide meaning and purpose, and explain the individual's and group's place in the world, thereby creating the context for ethical deliberation. Such narratives establish what is sacred, [and that which is considered sacred] is often set aside to be preserved, respected, and protected. Considerable research shows that religions shape adherents' perceptions of and
behavior toward the natural environment . . . so the idea that this influence extends to climate change seems plausible. Cosmologies—and by extension, the religions that construct, maintain, and enforce cosmologies—affect and shape values because of what or who they designate as sacred or ultimately important. Lynn White Jr. writes that “what people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny - that is, by religion . . . More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecologic crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink our old one.” Eco-theology, it should be added, is a sincere effort to “rethink the old one” and White Jr.’s essay is credited for helping that field of study emerge from 1967 onward (when his essay was published). Cosmologies have the “potential to motivate concern and activism.” As noted previously, they have failed in actualizing this potential, as least with regard to climate activism, on the scale that’s needed. To understand why, it is necessary to explore so-called paradigmatic barriers. This exploration reveals the degree to which traditional religious cosmologies affect our values, practices, and worldviews, even in secular societies in which we imagine we may be relatively free from them. James Rachels, for instance, argues that Judeo-Christian anthropocentrism informs our attitudes towards animals, and that our society has not caught up with the moral implications of Darwin’s discovery that human beings are animals of a kind. The implication of this understanding is that we ought to restructure our society in a way that does not exploit other living beings, which would also have enormous environmental benefits.

Underlying Kant’s philosophy of religion is recognition of the relationship between cosmologies and ethics. Cosmologies help to designate what could be considered to be sacred or profane. This can be an entirely arbitrary designation, varying from culture to culture, for which
reason rational principles (and in particular Kant’s universal ethical principles), may be considered important for establishing a moral baseline against which varied cultural practices may be assessed. The degree of variation between cultures should be an indication that these designations are socially constructed, and do not reflect an objectively real divine order. In fact, Kant designates the idea of the cosmos as a supersensible object not as a part of the sensible world (but like supersensible objects, employing elements of the sensible world). Any hierarchical version of natural law predicated on such cosmologies lacks moral authority, especially if it can be assessed by practical reason as wanting because it violates human rights, or sanctions inegalitarian examples of instrumental reason in violation of ML. According to Veldman et al, “religious cosmologies make substantive epistemic and ontological claims about the nature of reality and the sources of knowledge . . . These meaning systems are not only ideational, but may also be embodied through social practices, such as prayer, ritual, good works, and fidelity to the church, mosque, temple, or tribe . . .” In other words, it is not only beliefs that can be subject to ethical analysis utilizing universal ethical principles, but also standard social practices, such as eating – which as we now know, can have an enormous impact on climate change. Good works and actions done with a consequence in mind can still lack good will, which is only good “because of its volition” and not the end it seeks to accomplish (GR, 4:394). There are many examples of practices that lack good will, as such, but appear on the face of it to be good; it is for this reason that Kant, in Religion, is interested in exposing religious hypocrisy; for example, he distinguishes between “true (moral) service . . . a service of the heart” and the “misconstruction” through which “a delusion . . . creeps upon us” and is “easily taken for the service of God itself . . .” (R, 6:192). The cognitive dissonance that allows religious
hypocrisy to persist also facilitates humanity’s persistent denial of climate change and eventual resignation in the face of the environmental crisis.

Ontological systems are constructed through a hierarchical taxonomy which designates a fixed order to things; they are usually taught to children at an early age and accepted at face value by practitioners as a natural and unquestionable order. Parts of the whole are assigned greater and lesser value, and these values are embedded in daily life through ritualized practices. The sum total of beliefs and practices, through which we negotiate the world, is what Berger terms a nomos, which is created and maintained through a cyclic process of internalization of norms and beliefs and practices, objectivation (referring to ritualization of practices), and externalization (referring to the construction of institutions and cultural practices and codifications, including historical religious traditions). The most important element of the nomos, in terms of this thesis, is that its success depends on the false belief that it is the result of either divine will or natural law (or some variant thereof, e.g. dharma). A regulative understanding makes it transparent and mitigates its potential for heteronomously imposing itself. An awareness of the constructedness of the nomos endangers its efficacy for maintaining unjust and inegalitarian social orders. It should be added, by way of comment, that Kant is not envisaging a world in which everyone is forced, by social engineering and legislation, into absolutely equal roles. Arguably, there is room in his account for what political conservatives like to term a “meritocracy” (a society based on advancement through merit). Egalitarianism, in the context of Kant’s thought, does not mean equal outcome in terms of life circumstances; rather, it should be understood as the idea that all human beings deserve equal moral consideration, as (for example) reflected in the idea of human rights or within judicial systems in which everyone (in principle, at least) is considered equal in the eyes of the law, ensuring
impartiality of judgement, and guarding against parochialism. Janice Fiamengo argues that the Leftist ideal of social justice “has very little to do with justice as traditionally understood, meanings [such as] equality before the law, non-discrimination, the protection of freedoms such as freedom of expression and freedom of association . . . Social justice [from the political Left] has much more to do with state mandated and guaranteed equality of outcome [which is] a utopian community forged through propaganda and the suppression of dissent, by force if necessary.”316 She calls it “cultural suicide.” Her strong critique of what she terms “soft totalitarianism” in the name of social justice underscores the argument in this thesis that any supersensible ideal, however noble in conception, can be used in service to ethically questionable ends, for which reason an emphasis on regulative interpretation of any and all social and political ideals is necessary, to guard against their corruption.

Kant’s prescription for religion – which is applicable more broadly to any social formation that utilizes supersensible cognition – is that regulative understanding of the elements of historical faiths begins with a recognition that they are the products of human artifice, and on the basis of that understanding – which demystifies religion, and dethrones its authority figures – it is only then possible to extract from it those elements which are of practical value. If we understand that ‘God’ is a postulate of practical reason, and that other postulates and representations exist, generated by the mind, this helps us to better assess their use in the world. The regulative interpretation of religion, and the ability to distinguish which of its elements are conducive to heteronomy or autonomy of the will requires a universal system of ethics that stands outside these traditions. Kant provides this sort of system (as summarized in the principles at the outset of this thesis: ML, CI, FH, RE). Autonomy of the will, in this interpretation, is the ability to stand apart from or separate oneself from the nomos. The nomos is created and
maintained through language. Through it there is an “imposition of order upon experience. Language nomizes [creates the nomos] by imposing differentiation and structure upon the ongoing flux of experience . . . Language provides a fundamental order of relationship . . . It is impossible to use language without participating in its order. Every empirical language may be said to constitute a nomos in the making . . .”

A good historical example of this is the way in which language has been used to dehumanize, e.g. Nazis calling Jews “vermin” or Communists referring to “class enemies” in order to provide the justification for their elimination. The history of religious orthodoxy was predicated on the identification of alleged “heretics,” and the reduction of human beings to symbols of evil, to be annihilated. These differentiations and designations, through which our perception of reality is ordered, have important ethical implications when they result in hierarchical cosmologies and the designation of what Kant calls means and ends. FH, as an egalitarian principle, challenges the reduction of human beings to the status of means.

All traditional religious cosmologies are hierarchical in some way or another. Even in the most holistic cosmology, there is some subtle degree of differentiation and hierarchical thinking. It may very well be that human beings are incapable of operating without such systems of thought. These systems are needed to make moral decisions, and simply to negotiate all the complexities of life. Kant seems to recognize this in his treatment of historical religions, and instead of calling for their abolition, he calls for a regulative interpretation of them, to glean from them those parts that best reflect ML, and to dispense with the rest. It might not be that hierarchical systems of thought are inherently evil, but rather that we need to subject them to ethical analysis, which requires autonomously standing outside them and recognizing their constructedness within historical contexts. The same process of regulative interpretation could, in theory, be applied to
all aspects of human experience, since there is no practice or belief that is not part of a nomos and thus beyond the reach of analysis through practical reason. Importantly, this includes social justice activism. An assessment of this kind can easily be seen as a challenge to cherished beliefs and a threat to the identity of those who hold those beliefs, and what Freud refers to as a defense mechanism may occur in response.\textsuperscript{319}

One theory of religious fundamentalism is that it is driven by this unconscious defense mechanism against the perceived threat of modernity.\textsuperscript{320} Constitutive interpretations of historical traditions may result from a fear of the kind of freedom that autonomy of the will represents. Kant’s Inquisitor is a case in point; Kant uses him to illustrate poor moral judgement and lack of conscience, based on his absolute certainty regarding religious convictions (R, 6:186-7).

Regulative interpretations remain, in contrast, open-ended, but also for that reason they do not provide the sense of security and certainty that biblical literalism (or for that matter, Qu’ranic literalism) provides. Kant refers to the maxim of safety (argument from safety) to describe this dynamic: “If what I profess regarding God is true, I have hit the mark; if not true . . . I have only burdened myself perhaps with an inconvenience which is no crime. The danger arising from the dishonesty of his pretension [is] the violation of conscience in proclaiming as certain, even before God, something of which . . . cannot be asserted with unconditional confidence . . .” (R, 6:188-9). The only real remedy for this self-delusion is regulative interpretation, derived from autonomy of the will, even though it cannot satisfy the deep need for security and certainty or assuage the fears that human beings seem prone to. As Kant notes there is always “the possibility” of “coming across an error [in one’s interpretation of matters of faith]; consequently it is unconscientious to act upon it, granted that this possibility that what it requires or permits is perhaps wrong, i.e., at the risk of violation a human duty in itself certain” (R, 6:188-9). Kant is
advocating a healthy skepticism regarding the prescriptions of traditional faiths – which may be described as autonomously standing back from them, ceasing to identify with them, and assessing them according to the degree that they might permit a “violation of a human duty” (i.e., violate our duty to observe human rights, or permit a human rights violation).

The caste system in India is an important example for illustrating cosmological hierarchies which perpetuate social inequality among human beings: predicated on the doctrine of dharma, which allocates to each person a proper role within the cosmos, it maintains that by virtue of birth a person in Indian society is either higher or lower than others in that society, which results in the assigning of a labour function, social status and degree of supposed spiritual purity to each person. The caste system, as such, is inegalitarian and thus can be juxtaposed to the Enlightenment worldview, in which all human beings are equal by virtue of reason – a view much more consistent with the notion of universal human rights. Aristotle’s Great Chain of Being, which was eventually incorporated into an anthropocentric Christian cosmology by the scholastics, is another important example of a widely influential hierarchical cosmology. It is perhaps no mistake that Aristotle believed in slavery, which is logically justified by his cosmology, and in this he may have been simply reflecting the values of his culture. Its main purpose is to rank the elements of the cosmos hierarchically, which can provide the justification for conceptions of natural law that differentiate and rank classes of human beings. DiCenso, in describing Charles Taylor’s commentary on the way in which Plato’s Republic was incorporated into pre-modern worldviews, says that “this social-political ordering is understood as ontologically fixed . . . Moreover, political structures of this sort weld themselves to an order of virtues, so that people learn to attribute a normative quality to their allotted rank . . . This worldview, augmented by Aristotle’s hierarchical model of natural law and often fused with
Roman and biblical influences, subtends hierarchical ethical-political orders within Western intellectual and social history.\textsuperscript{\textit{325}} DiCenso notes that Kant’s more egalitarian worldview was influenced by “Rousseau’s critique of these oppressive systems.”\textsuperscript{\textit{326}} It should be noted that the way in which totalizing worldviews may be said to facilitate oppression is their tendency to reduce a person to a category viewed as less than human in some way and therefore expendable. This is the triumph of ideologies over persons.

As regards the lower ranking of the nonhuman parts of the world, Lynn White Jr. notes that Christianity “not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.”\textsuperscript{\textit{327}} Kant would not be in disagreement with the idea of nature and animals as \textit{means}, but FH, which stands against human inequality, can be extended beyond Kant’s original purpose, to include nonhuman animals, according to Julian Franklin, because they can be viewed as moral subjects.\textsuperscript{\textit{328}} Gender inequality has a long history of support from traditional religions that employ hierarchical cosmologies, and continues to this day in Islamic theocracies, but a strong argument has been that this is no longer in liberal democracies,\textsuperscript{\textit{329}} despite feminist claims to the contrary. Secularization has arguably played a strong role in women’s emancipation from traditional roles.\textsuperscript{\textit{330}} The Enlightenment emphasis on egalitarianism, although anthropocentric in both an epistemological and ethical sense, represents a challenge to hierarchical cosmologies. Social Darwinism, based on a profound misunderstanding of evolutionary theory (one that wrongly sees evolution as increasing improvement, rather than as an adaptation to environments), is a modern secular example of the human propensity to construct hierarchical cosmologies even in the absence of supernatural beliefs. Evolutionism (as distinct from evolutionary theory, of which social Darwinism is an example) reifies the hierarchicalism of biblical anthropomorphism, according to James
How do we account for this recurring and universal propensity to rank the elements of the world, and which seems to have mutated into secular formations that are now reflected in institutions, laws, and dominant social norms and customs, and upon which entire societies are built? Kant provides part of an answer (at least with regard to the human tendency to create intra-species social ranking) through his theory of the vice of asocial sociality: the tendency to place oneself above others, which is a corruption of the predisposition to humanity (R, 6:27). This predisposition, in its original form, describes our normal and healthy human social needs. The corruption occurs as a result of the propensity to evil. Hierarchical cosmologies, whether ancient or modern, religious or secular, can become vehicles through which the propensity to evil in human nature is amplified. The arrangement of other persons in a way that allows instrumental use of them (e.g. slavery, exploitation) contributes to a reduction of them as persons. This kind of arrangement or ordering becomes codified and incorporated into the norms and structures of a society in order to legitimate a human desire to inflate one’s own importance (or just as commonly, the importance of the group to which one belongs and identifies with) in relation to other individuals or groups. The social and psychological function of the hierarchical cosmology is to affirm a sense of human identity and purpose. Traditionally this has been done via historical faiths, which designate which parts of the world may be considered sacred, and which profane. Religious orthodoxy and heterodoxy and its social function, which is to rank persons according to purity of belief, is a good example of this, as is the designation of certain spaces or symbols as sacred, as compared to others. Jonathan Z. Smith explores the way that the designations of sacred and profane are applied to spaces, in To Take Place, and shows that the designations are fluid, precisely because they are constructed; they are not ontologically fixed. Hierarchical cosmologies reflect notions of both divine and natural law, which may originally be based on
observations of instrumental use in nature, but then are given normative value, in violation of the fact-value distinction. Thus, for example, the instrumental use of one animal species by another may be used to provide justification for the instrumental use of one human group by another, in violation of FH.

The vice of asocial sociality, like all the propensities and predispositions (and their corruptions), described by Kant, is perennial, but in the modern age it has taken on a form worth noting because of its contribution to the environmental crisis: consumerism, which is said to have begun in the nineteenth century, concurrent with the industrial revolution and the creation of a permanent middle-class, who adopted the identity of consumers. While this can be considered to be a good thing for humanity, insofar as it has lifted countless people out of poverty and lives of suffering, it has also contributed to environmental crises and it has become another way for social hierarchicalism to manifest itself. The vice of asocial sociality, in dynamic relation with hierarchical cosmologies, is also evident when it comes to nonhuman animals, whose inferior position in relation to human beings is in no small way due to what has been called ‘human superiorism’, which arose in prehistory as a way for human beings to distinguish themselves as separate from and superior to other animals. Human superiorism is often defended through a type of argument known as the Appeal to Nature fallacy. Animal ethicists argue that this type of argument, used to defend instrumental use, is a poor one, because appeals to nature have also been made in defense of human slavery, which is clearly morally indefensible – unless one concedes the moral inferiority of enslaved human beings, but there is no logical or empirical basis for doing so. Cultures may be different, but difference does not imply inferiority or superiority; animal ethicists argue the same of species difference, at least with regard to sentient beings. Their moral baseline is typically sentience, not the ability to use
reason, which renders them moral subjects, but not necessarily moral agents.\textsuperscript{338} Interestingly, on this point, Kant does adopt a hierarchical worldview, based in part on the biological sciences of the day (e.g. Linne/Linnaeus’ taxonomy, CJ, 5:427), who was still influenced, in part, by Genesis 1:27-8. Thus, Kant argues that a human being is “the ultimate end of the creation here on earth because he is the only being on earth who forms a concept of ends for himself and who by means of his reason can make a system of ends out of an aggregate of purposively formed things” (CJ, 5:426-7). Based on this and FH, which also refers to means and ends, it is clear that Kant is not dispensing with the idea of hierarchies in nature altogether (a task which in the twentieth century was attempted through Arnie Naess’ holistic environmental philosophy of ‘deep ecology’\textsuperscript{339}); instead, he is dispensing with the ancien régime of human hierarchies, to be replaced with a rights-based ethic, in which human beings, by virtue of being ends in themselves, may regard nonhuman nature (and animals, which are collapsed into it) as means. Animal ethicists Tom Regan, Julian Franklin, Paul Waldau, and others, accept that basic framework, but simply change the designation of who may count as ends, to include nonhuman animals, essentially replacing Kant’s criterion (rationality) with sentience. It should also be stated here, in defense of the move by Franklin \textit{et al} to expand on Kant’s ethics to include animals that Kant himself is in favour of critical inquiry of established worldviews and open inquiry into the natural order: DiCenso says that Kant is critical of what he calls “perverted reason,” which “takes the regulative principle of the unity of nature and misuses it literally for ‘grounding things hypostatically on the actuality of the principle of purposive unity.’ This hypostatic rendering of the principle of unity formulates a determinate substantial ground ordering all reality.”\textsuperscript{340} Just as Kant questions biblical literalism, he also questions the way in which human beings tend to interpret nature according to a preordained conception of divine creation, which blindly serves to impose human will on it,
rather than examining it through science: “one imposes ends on nature forcibly and dictatorially. . . instead of seeking for them reasonably on the path of physical investigation.” “Perverted reason” does to our conception of the unity of nature—which should be understood regulatively—what delusory faith does to religious traditions. In this way, Kant himself could be said to be opening the door to a re-investigation of widely accepted worldviews, as pertains to animals. Implicit in Kant’s critique of religious cosmologies, as perpetuated and maintained by ecclesiastical faiths, is an understanding of the fact that they do not reflect any sort of objective reality, but are in fact socially constructed—much in the way that certain notions of natural law do not reflect objective reality. Kant’s critiques of statutory religion, revelation and priestcraft indicate an acute awareness of the fact that historical religions are constructed by religious authorities, and willingly adopted by the masses; the latter often prefer to remain moral minors rather than think for themselves. They prefer to be told what to think rather than to practice autonomy of the will, because it is easier to do so (E, 8:35). It should be added that not all hierarchical models of reality are inherently evil. In fact, they are practically necessary in many circumstances, to be able to negotiate the world and survive in—and this is no doubt why the tendency to create hierarchies and models of nature evolved—but they can be and are frequently used to justify what Johan Galtung has termed “structural violence” of various kinds. This phrase “structural violence” is somewhat vague and has been misused to suggest that all gendered interactions, for instance, are inherently violent. That is not the sense in which it is used here: it is used simply only to convey the idea that in the production of goods in a consumer society, there are hidden costs, not seen by the consumer, which include: pollution and GHG emissions, the waste of materials spent on unnecessary goods, the environmental destruction
from extraction industries, the cost to animals (both wild and domestic), as well economic
exploitation if the goods are produced through child labour or slave labour.

This relates to Religion in several ways: first, Kant advocates autonomy of the will,
which necessarily entails standing apart from established order and questioning it. By contrast, a
common form of heteronomy of the will is the internalization of worldviews that excuse or are
used to justify structural violence (such as it is defined above). The uncritical acceptance of
supersensible objects as possessing objective reality contributes to heteronomy of the will. For
example, if it is thought that there is a divinely ordained order to reality (based on an
anthropomorphized conception of God, and codified in scriptures, which are taken as literal
instructions), moral decision making will be affected by those beliefs (e.g. the literal
interpretation of Genesis 1:27-8, which gives man “dominion” over Creation). Such a belief
might relieve the practitioner of any moral responsibility to act in any way other than what was
expected of him by religious authorities, or by the society of which he is a part. Kant offers
insight into this issue; he describes how obedience to “actions conforming to the law” – if it does
not issue from ML – are motivated by “fear, only a few from hope, and none at all from duty”
and such actions lack moral worth according (CPrR, 5:147). He adds, presciently, that “as long
as human nature remains as it is, human conduct thus would be changed into mere mechanism in
which, as in a puppet show, everything would gesticulate well but there would be no life in the
figures” (ibid). We may observe this reduction of the human being to unthinking, functional
automaton (what V. I. Lenin is reputed to have called “the useful idiot”) within modern social
and political movements today, both Left and Right, who is content to all political leaders to
determine what is right or wrong. Orwell, in the novel Animal Farm, portrays this through the
character of Boxer the horse, who obediently works himself to death, then as his reward is shipped off to slaughter.\textsuperscript{343}

Paradigmatic barriers to historical religions’ engagement with climate change include “theological beliefs or worldviews that disable environmental concern. This includes having otherworldly goals such as salvation, rather than this-worldly ones such as the maintenance of the biosphere. Accordingly, leaders may encourage adherents to believe that the weather or climate is not directly influenced by people, or that a divine force is in control of the cosmos.”\textsuperscript{344} This is an example of what Kant calls \textit{fetish-faith}: “the persuasion that what cannot effect a certain thing, either according to nature or the moral laws of reason, will through it alone nonetheless effect the thing wished for, if only we firmly believe that it will indeed effect it, and we accompany our beliefs with certain formalities” (R, 6:193). Another key way in which paradigmatic barriers may be said to inhibit engagement of religions with climate change issues is in the assignment of value to the nonhuman. Historical religious traditions construct and maintain what Thomas Berry refers to as anthropocentric worldview, one that allows for or overlooks what Paul Shepherd calls “zero-sum humanism,”\textsuperscript{345} which is the most extreme form of anthropocentrism, and quite distinct from the epistemological anthropocentrism that German Idealism exemplifies. It can certainly be argued that these traditions, in their past, had more reverent views of nature. Berry makes this argument, suggesting that we ought to interpret these ancient traditions in light environmental issues. He prescribes a biocentric worldview as a remedy.\textsuperscript{346} Hathaway and Boff refer to “the cosmology of domination,”\textsuperscript{347} which allows for the natural world to be dominated, and which is predicated on a hierarchical model of exploitation and instrumental use, including an exploitative hierarchy among human beings, perpetuated by inegalitarian economic and political systems. The most obvious way in which Kantian ethics has
a bearing on instrumental reason and the idea of the “cosmology of domination” is the
prescription for FH, against using others as a means to an end. FH suggests an egalitarian
worldview consistent with universal human rights, but it is still an anthropocentric worldview.
Can FH be interpreted to include environmental concern or animal related concerns? A
reconciliation of anthropocentric and biocentric worldviews, in consideration of the fact that
humanity is dependent on the natural world, is certainly possible. Climate and environmental
science tells us that nature has limits, and that if we surpass them we endanger not only the
nonhuman world, but also ourselves. In other words, an argument for the indirect rights of
nonhuman nature could be made, to argue for environmental concern, insofar as it benefits
humanity (although properly speaking, rights accrue only to moral subjects, not natural systems;
thus, the argument for the “rights of nature”348 rests on a logical error). Kant views human beings
as ends in themselves, and nonhuman nature as means.349 Perhaps a better expression of the
argument is social ecology,350 which is sometimes juxtaposed to deep ecology and the idea of
nature’s intrinsic worth. Social ecology still retains room for an instrumental view of nature, and
human instrumental use of nature, but with an understanding that human welfare depends on
ecological concern, conservation, and sustainable sufficiency.

Kant views nonhuman nature as a means to an end, where the ends are human beings
endowed with rights. Can the idea of individual rights be reconciled with environmental
concern? Yes, provided that there are limits on rights, in consideration of the rights of all others,
the recognition of their status as ends.351 The idea of rights, as understood by Kant, does not
imply unlimited freedom to indulge one’s own appetites, or to seek one’s own happiness; the
concept of rights entails moral duty, responsibilities and self-imposed limitations. As noted
previously, there are key statements on limitations from Kant: (i) “the freedom of each to exist
together with that of others” (A316/B373); and (ii) “the principle of limiting the freedoms of each to the conditions under which it can coexist with the freedom of everyone else, in conformity with universal law” (R, 6: 98). These are expressions of the ideal of self-imposed limitations, but it should be added that because we do not live in a perfectly good society (as envisaged by the ideal of RE), external laws are necessary: “just external laws . . . must represent the good of the people as a whole, or the general will. On the juridico-civil level, legislation therefore, ‘proceeds from the principle of limiting the freedoms . . . the universal will . . . thus establishes an external legal constraint.’”352 Kant supports coercive laws by the state to protect the freedoms of all (MS, 6:231-2). This would necessarily entail environmental regulations, provided they do not infringe on basic human rights (meaning negative rights). The implications of the idea of the limitations implied by the concept of rights for environmental issues should be apparent. If we are all “ends” and thereby equal, our moral duty is not only to ourselves, but to everyone with whom we share the world, including (logically), all those born in the future who may be impacted by our actions and technologies in the present. Any universalizable maxim of action applied to resource consumption (e.g. fossil fuels, minerals, wood, water, land, fish), therefore ought to include an intergenerational form of the principle of universalizability. Our increasing understanding of environmental and climate science underscores these points: the survival of our species cannot be separated from environmental concerns, and this logically entails consideration of the rights of future generations adversely affected by overconsumption of resources in the present.

The most pragmatic ideal is the ethico-civil state, in which there are laws, but they are not coercive. Legislators who design laws that provide incentives, such as tax subsidies for investment in renewable energy or carbon taxes, or who finance public education campaigns to
promote energy conservation, seem to understand this. They are attempting to bring about change without coercion. In contrast, so-called “austerity measures” (especially those unevenly applied across classes), are unpopular with the electorate, and there is a strong disincentive for politicians seeking re-election to impose them. In every aspect of the legislative process, in almost every aspect of life (e.g. transportation, food production, housing, energy production and consumption), the lure of incentives that advance self-love, in one way or another, seems to stand in conflict with the moral imperative to create an ethical community but this does not mean that self-love and ML cannot be harmonized. Kant argues that they need not be in conflict, if ML is always given priority in the formation of the maxims of actions. The ideal of ‘green capitalism’ seeks exactly that, arguing that the good of society (including sustainable sufficiency) can be reconciled with financial interests of individuals. The costs savings from renewable energy and energy conservation, and health benefits of less reliance on motor vehicles and plant-based diets, seem to confirm that argument. These ‘co-benefits’ of climate mitigation are examples of the way in which happiness and self-love can be reconciled with the moral responsibility to those born in the future. Laws that advance the co-benefits, and that are implemented without coercion, best reflect the ideal of the ethico-civil state. ‘Green capitalism,’ like eco-socialism or the steady-state economy, may be regarded as a political and economic ideal, never fully achievable but worth aspiring to. At the same, time, green capitalism can also become a smokescreen for ‘greenwashing’ and ineffective solutions which maintain an unsustainable status quo; for example, ‘cap-and-trade’ (carbon trading) is widely criticized as ineffective, as violating human rights, and as a way to avoid one’s moral duty to reduce emissions; it has even been satirically compared to the Roman Catholic church’s past practice of ‘indulgences,’ which Kant’s critique of “fetish-faith” seems to address. Sam Adelman comments that “under
capitalism, markets violate rights obliquely as well as directly. It therefore borders on the perverse that a market in carbon trading forms the centrepiece of the regime regulating climate change but, *faute de mieux*, that is what the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol provide.”

Carbon trading is a controversial issue – one that has been the topic of debate by proponents and critics – but for the sake of argument, let us say that Adelman’s position against it is valid. This then raises the question of whether the United Nations and IPCC lack ethical coherency or not, since these bodies seem divided in their allegiance to often competing models of values – notably deference to national interests and markets, sometimes at the expense of human rights. This is due to the enormous political pressure brought to bear at climate talks by parochial interests (corporations, nation states) whose ethical perspective is non-universalizable. Any idealistic religious or political ideology can be subverted by the propensity to evil. Whatever economic or political system human beings create for themselves should be subject to independent ethical assessment. There is no need to destroy these systems if they can be remedied through reforms, to bring the system more into alignment with universal ethical principles.

### 2.5 Schematisms of analogy and biblical literalism

Schematisms of analogy are representations derived from sense intuitions. DiCenso says that schematism “brings synthesis generated by the imagination into the form of logical concepts.” This process occurs instantaneously. It unifies a manifold of pure intuition. The synthesis of this manifold by means of the imagination into concepts gives the intuitions a unity which “depends on understanding” and judgement. Schematisms of analogy are related to representations, and are necessary to convey moral concepts between rational beings. It is important to understand that these concepts originate in imagination, so as not to interpret them
literally – a tendency in the practice of religion of which Kant is highly critical. He emphasizes their status as products of imagination, and their practical use, which is negated when that status is not recognized. Many of these maxims might be socially conditioned elements of culture and tradition, and obeyed by a majority of persons, in accordance with existing laws, but those laws – if they are universalizable – originate from pure practical reason. Many of these maxims might be thought of as socially conditioned elements of culture and tradition, and obeyed by a majority of persons, in accordance with existing laws, but those laws – if they are universalizable – originate from pure practical reason.

Schematisms of analogy are an indispensable “means of elucidation” for making supersensible ideas intelligible through an appropriate analogy with the sensible world, with “something of the senses” (R, 6:65). In this sense, they are like representations (*Vorstellung*), except that an analogy is somewhat more complex. Kant notes that “for the human being the invisible needs to be represented through something visible (sensible), indeed what is more, it must be accompanied by the visible for the sake of practice, and though intellectual, made as it were an object of intuition (according to a certain analogy)” (R, 6:192). DiCenso refers to this as the “hermeneutical strategy of working with the existing cultural resources of religion to further autonomous ethical practice.” The Bible, like other scriptures from world religions, has numerous schematisms of analogy in it. They can help further autonomous ethical practice, but there is also a danger, as with all elements of historical religions, that this cognitive device for practical reason can be given constitutive interpretation, and if so, this misunderstanding transforms it into a “schematism of object-determination” which Kant says constitutes anthropomorphism, and which he regards as contributing to heteronomy. God is viewed as an external personified deity, part of constitutive reality, and not understood as a supersensible
object, a postulate generated by reason, the purpose of which is to convey an ethical meaning. Kant distinguishes rational religion from revealed religion, viewing the latter as contributing to heteronomy, but at the same time he acknowledges the potential of revealed religion, if properly understood, to serve as a “representational means for working with our moral potentiality . . .” Schematisms of analogy, commonly employed in revealed religion, can be “helpful to personify ethical ideas to make them intuitively accessible.” Let us take the example given by Kant: God’s love is illustrated through the idea of the sacrifice of his only son, Jesus, who was crucified. Perhaps the purpose of the analogy, at the time it was conceived, was to make a supersensible idea comprehensible to ancient rural peoples for whom animal sacrifice was a sign of religious devotion. To be effective, schematisms of analogy, like religious symbols, must be appropriate for the cultural and historical context in which they are used. What may be appropriate for the ancient world may not be for the modern world. Sacrifice, regulatively understood, could indicate unconditional moral duty. If constitutively understood, the imagery of sacrifice could become a form of fetish faith: seeking the favour of an external deity through ritual observances. The verse, at best, has only a figurative / regulative meaning, which sets limits on how far the analogy can be carried. Those who understand biblical verses literally, constitutively see them as statements supporting religious exclusivism. The schematism of analogy Kant refers to (the crucifixion), instead, could be understood regulatively as an example of God’s unconditional love, which Kant as a rationalist would interpret as the unconditional duty to obey the command of reason by “emulating [the] moral goodness” of the Urbild (“the Holy One”) to the extent that that is possible (R, 6:64). The crucifixion is also understood, regulatively, as a primary example of countermimesis – a term used by René Girard, to mean exposing ritualized sacrificial violence and scapegoating as morally wrong through the sacrifice
of an entirely innocent person: Jesus is “the ultimate scapegoat because . . . he is innocent, he exposes all the myths of scapegoating and shows that the victims were innocent and the communities guilty.” And Peter Berger describes social isolation as follows: “radical separation from the social world, or anomie, constitutes . . . a powerful threat to the individual . . . in extreme cases he loses his sense of reality and identity.”

David Hume showed the errors of thinking within the intelligent design proof for God’s existence, through the analogy of a clock, arguing that to infer the existence of a Creator God as analogous to the existence of a human clockmaker does not follow, because the physical universe and the clock are not identical. The theist argument stretches the analogy beyond what it intends. Kant refers to this same analogy of the clock, and argues something similar. He says “between the relationship of a schema to its concept and the relationship of this very schema of the concept to the thing itself there is no analogy, but a formidable leap . . . which leads straight into anthropomorphism” (R, 6:65). The leap is that of inferring certain knowledge of the supersensible objects used in the analogy, as though they were part of the sensible world, even though they are only used in order to convey a moral meaning. We may thus say that schematisms of analogy can as easily be misunderstood, if the analogy is not held in check by reason, through an understanding of the limits and purpose of the analogy. DiCenso notes that “as socially formed and fallible beings, we require the pedagogical assistance of cultural representations to make principles and laws accessible. The danger in appropriating traditions concerns straying from an autonomous ethical focus into groundless theological speculation and reliance on heteronomous powers.”

To understand how schema relates to climate change, we first have to explore Kant’s concept of biblical literalism. It is indicative of the common practice of religious actors to apply
a constitutive interpretation to what should in fact be thought of as schematism of analogy. There are numerous schematisms of analogy in the Bible that have a regulative meaning appropriate for the climate crisis. Northcott has effectively done the work of identifying them; he writes that “humans and communities are ‘story-formed.’” By listening to stories humans learn the kinds of behaviours that are to be admired and mirrored, and the kinds that are to be proscribed and avoided. This is why reading scriptural stories is central to Christian and Jewish worship. In the public retelling of biblical narratives worshippers find resources for moral discernment and wisdom . . .”

This is an essentially regulative understanding of the value of scriptures, one that recognizes the need for moral concepts to be made comprehensible through narratives that practically utilize divine imagery. There are numerous possible regulative and constitutive meanings that one can ascribe to any piece of scripture, and these meanings may exist quite independently of the purpose intended by the scripture’s authors – even to the point that we could say that original intent is irrelevant. What is relevant, from a Kantian perspective, is the degree to which the interpretation helps advance ML. The efficacy of a piece of scripture may depend on the extent to which it allows open-ended interpretations that are of practical use in any given historical context. Each regulative interpretation is necessarily open-ended and an exercise in practical reason, whereas each constitutive meaning is totalizing (reducing the meaning to literalism) and may be said to transgress the limits of reason (in some cases, involving supernatural imagery). These interpretations may change and shift over time, and differ in each culture or historical period. Eco-theologians such as Northcott attempt to apply regulative meaning to Biblical narratives that are appropriate to the climate crisis. For example, the story of Noah, in Genesis, for Northcott, imparts a moral lesson to us to view the natural world with more respect, which has a regulative meaning vis-a-vis social ecology and environmental justice (the
idea that there is direct correlation between environmental conservation and social justice, because human welfare is dependent on a stable climate and the conservation of finite resources.\textsuperscript{366} In contrast to this moral meaning, Biblical literalists see the story of Noah’s ark as an historical occurrence.\textsuperscript{367} They view God as a personified external being whose wrath destroyed the world because of the sinfulness of man. This belief in divine agency impedes the progress of a society based autonomous ethical principles because it negates human agency and free will, and is used heteronomously to impose social control through fear, to enforce statutory laws generated by ecclesiastical authorities. This interpretation loses any moral meaning of any value: the literalist interpretation transforms it from a schematism of analogy to that of object-determination by granting constitutive reality to God and historical existence to the participants of the story. Kant says that “we can schematize (render a concept comprehensible through analogy with something of the senses) but in no way infer by analogy that what pertains to the sensible must also be attributed to the supersensible . . .” (R, 6:65). That is, there is no reason why we ought to grant the supersensible status as objective reality. Doing so is a tendency that makes it easier for human beings to order reality in a simplistic way, absolving them of the moral responsibility to arrive a decision based on practical reason, which requires effort.

An important example of this is tendency is the way in which practitioners of dispensationalist theology see Biblical prophecy as literal historical predictions. This theology consists of an eschatology in which the end-times are foretold by revealed prophecy. It entails premillennialism, a belief in the literal second coming of Christ, and has the same meaning as the term that Kant uses: chiliasm.\textsuperscript{368} Eco-theology that describes a moral imperative is adept at gleaning the regulative meanings from Biblical verses, and identifying schema. Biblical literalism has the converse effect. Tillich notes that symbols can lose their effectiveness over
time and may need to be replaced. This is also true of schematisms of analogy. Thomas Berry argues that in a post-Enlightenment society, Biblical symbols are ineffective, resulting in a dysfunctional cosmology, and that we therefore need a “new story,” a functional cosmology, in order to progress morally as a species. This new cosmology, he argues, is to be based on science, but still benefits from being interpreted through ancient cosmologies. The efficacy of the ancient schema is questionable in the modern era, and interestingly, the emphasis on biblical literalism among religious fundamentalists – in particular those who embrace dispensationalist theology – may be understood as reactionary, against the threat to their collective identity posed by the veracity of empirical science. Religious climate change denial issues from that reactionary affirmation of Biblical literalism and concomitant rejection of the veracity of science. It may be understood as reactionary, arising as a response to secularization. Jose Casanova traces its historical evolution, as a response to the “loss of Protestant cultural hegemony over the public sphere of American civil society” and the cultural implications of Darwinism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both considered a threat, leading to revivalism and dispensationalism. Today, climate change denial builds on earlier rejection of evolutionary science. Kant notes that the heteronomy of religion represents a danger, and nowhere is this more evident than in the denial of the moral implications of climate science. This is accomplished most often by a denial of the validity of the science itself and by scapegoating the climate scientists to undermine their authority by ascribing ulterior motives to them.

How does the schematism of analogy transform into that of object-determination? Biblical schema can be of practical value, as Northcott shows, but they can also pose a danger if the “leap” of inference is made that sees the supersensible objects in the analogy as sensible. The schema appropriates elements of the sensible world to convey a moral meaning that is not
otherwise easily made comprehensible, but that does not mean that the supersensible objects used have constitutive reality and can be located within history (past, present, or future). Dispensationalist theology rests on an error of reason, viewing the supersensible objects within schema as having constitutive or historical reality: Biblical prophecy, which should only be granted moral meaning, is given historical meaning, as historical prediction. Implicit in this interpretation of biblical prophecy is a rejection of the value of this (physical) world, and a consequent denial of the moral implications of one’s own actions in this world. This has serious implications as illustrated by the fact that the majority of U.S. Republican politicians have adopted climate change denial due to the political influence of what has been termed the “the Christian Right”, to whom they feel beholden politically. It should be added that “The Christian Right” can be defined as a “loose-fitting and diverse group of competing religious and political organizations that form a broad social network . . . expressing politically conservative ideas and policies grounded loosely in theologically conservative Protestant thought.” Because the United States has a powerful role, internationally, in terms of climate policy, and is a top emitter of GHGs (both nationally, and per capita), climate change denial has had a stalling effect on global mitigation efforts since the 1990s. Moreover “the American way of life” (a phrase that refers, in part, to profligate consumerism, and in part to civil freedoms) is emulated and aspired to globally. Climate change denial (religious or secular in orientation) affirms this type of consumerism as desirable; it is based on the false premise of limitless natural resources and disregard for the social and environmental impacts of limitless growth, and also on human superiority. The ideal of limitless economic growth has gained transcendent status, and has become an end in itself. According to Vincent Taylor consumerism is “a pervasive worldview that affects our construction as persons, what motivates us, how we relate to others, to culture, and to
religion.” In China, for example, nationalism and cultural chauvinism are conflated with a vast economic system of industrial production and consumerism, modelled after capitalism but lacking democracy, to serve a growing middle-class, now making it the world’s largest emitter of GHG emissions. It is perhaps for this reason that the threat of climate change is marginalized because “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.” Renmeester notes that objections to the application of Kant’s ethics to climate change, which challenges profligate consumerism as a viable way to live, is “probably rooted in an inability to see easy alternatives.” It is an axiom among commentators on climate change that what’s lacking is not solutions to remedy the crisis; what’s lacking is the political will to bring solutions to the fore. Political will must be understood as a reflection of the values, norms, and standard practices of a society, the totality of which constitutes the nomos. Haluza-Dey describes something similar with the term paradigm, and Scharper refers to ontology. Once internalized by the members of a society, the nomos is normalized and externalized in the form of laws, public policies, and institutions. Historical religions have the ability to construct and maintain cosmologies. Cosmologies have ethical implications. In the current historical context of industrialized societies, the use of fossil fuels for energy is a dominant practice, one that is protected by the legal system and subsidized by governments. The underlying worldview informing the widespread use of fossil fuels is consumerism, predicated on a cosmology in which human interests take priority over all other considerations, and these interests are understood as synonymous with the paradigm of endless economic growth. Many people choose to give this particular worldview their unconditional commitment, even in the face of scientific evidence demonstrating that it is not socially or environmentally viable – perhaps not in a willfully evil way, but more often for the sake of their children, whom they wish to have a higher standard of
living than they did. For this reason, modern consumerism has been compared to the environmentally destructive practice of Easter Island natives, who destroyed their natural environment and ultimately their own society, in order to construct large stone idols, emblems of their religion and of social status.\(^{379}\)

Consumerism, like traditional religions, relies on supersensible cognition, in the sense that it promises transcendence through consumption, and is sold as such. Walter Benjamin refers to capitalism as a kind of religion, but it would be more correct to refer to the worldview in question as consumerism, which the economic system of capitalism facilitates. Thomas Berry argues that the narrowly anthropocentric cosmology upon which consumerism is predicated is in large part responsible for the current environmental crises.\(^{380}\) A biocentric (or cosmo-centric) worldview, argues Berry, is more in alignment with the protection of humanity’s best interests. If we are to discuss the correct use of reason, it seems irrational to destroy the conditions necessary for the continued survival of our species, such that every worldview that contributes to this destruction needs to be ethically assessed. This is clearly what motivated Lynn White Jr. to attempt a critical assessment of Christianity. His respondents, the eco-theologians, have tried to salvage those elements of Christianity in which respect for Creation and social and environmental justice concerns are reflected.\(^{381}\) Some thinkers have argued for an alignment of economic and environmental concerns, trying to reconcile the two clashing worldviews through the argument for ‘green jobs.’ In all of these examples, we can see how cosmologies and worldviews arise as a function of the human need for an ordering of the world, and how they can have profound ethical and environmental implications.
2.6 Theological chiliasm and dispensationalism

The term *theological chiliasm* is used to refer to a deterministic view of history, as ordained by biblical prophecy. A secular version of the same sort of deterministic outlook, in the modern era, is historical materialism as a progressivist ideology, shared by both capitalism and Marxism. A modern expression of theological chiliasm is Christian dispensationalist theology. In the essay “The End of All Things” Kant argues that the idea of a judgement day, and the end of time, as concepts, should not be given the status of objective reality: such concepts do not refer to physical or historical realities; they should be understood as referring to “the moral course of things in the world” (ED, 8:328). Biblical prophecy of the end times is a representation “of those last things which are supposed to come after the last day” in order to “make sensible” the supersensible (which is only to be understood morally)” because without such representations these moral concepts are “otherwise not theoretically comprehensible to us” (ibid).

The designation of *immortality* as a postulate of pure practical reason (CPrR, 5:5) can be understood as a response to those want to prove that supersensible cognition is speculative (i.e., concerns theoretical knowledge). Kant makes it clear that a constitutive interpretation cannot be considered viable: “speculation does not find sufficient guarantee” for the concepts of God, freedom, and immortality, and a “moral use of reason” to interpret these concepts is needed instead (CPrR, 5:5). The idea of an afterlife, common to the eschatologies of many religious traditions, is to be viewed as a practically necessary illusion, not as real in any objective sense. Its proper role is to advance good life conduct. If interpreted constitutively, it would be an example of delusory faith and superstition, which oversteps “the boundaries of our reason with respect to the supernatural (which according to the laws of reason is neither an object of theoretical or practical use)” (R, 6:193). In contrast, true religious faith (ML) requires rejection
of faith in the supernatural; supersensible cognition issues from pure reason alone, and has no objective reality as such. In Kant’s discussion of the ethical community, he refers to “the gradual coming of the Kingdom of God” (R, 6:93). The Kingdom of Heaven (or alternately Realm of Heaven) is “coming nearer” but its approach is “delayed” and yet at the same time “never wholly interrupted” (R, 6:133), indicating the asymptotic and endless character of moral progress for human societies. Kant interprets biblical imagery of this type as a representation of the ethical progress that is possible for any given society: “all this may be interpreted as a symbolical representation intended merely to enliven hope and courage and to increase our endeavors to that [moral] end” (R, 6:134). The “coming of the Kingdom of Heaven” is further said to refer to the moral progress that Jesus, through his teachings, advocates, not only on a personal level, but also on a social-political level, to advance “the value of citizenship in a divine state” (R, 6:135). We must keep in mind here that the divine state being referred to is not an actual afterlife; it is a representation of the ideal of an ethically good society: “The teacher of the Gospel manifested the kingdom of God on earth [i.e., the good society] to his disciples only from its glorious, elevating, and moral side, namely, namely in terms of the merits of being citizens of a divine state, and he instructed them as to what they had to do, not only that they attain to it themselves but that they be united with others of like mind, and if possible with the whole human race” (R, 6:134). Here we see Kant’s advocacy of egalitarian values, the idea of moral duty (the command of reason, represented by “the teacher of the Gospel”), in order to create the ethical community, and finally the principle of universalizability expressed through reference to “the whole human race.” Reference to heaven and a divine state serve as shared representations to help with moral guidance for humanity. Reference to Jesus is to be understood strictly as an Urbild, as a moral guide to emulate, not as an object of ‘slavish faith.’
Kant repeatedly stresses the progressive, unfinished nature of the project of moral progress for society, which points to the fact that it can never be fully actualized, contrary to biblical literalism, which interprets apocalyptic prophecy as the foretelling of an historical event. Christian Apocalypticism of this kind, in its modern form, is referred to as dispensationalist theology, which describes a broad range of views regarding future historical events, based on a literalist interpretation of biblical prophecy. In contrast to the use of biblical apocalyptic imagery to convey moral progress, dispensationalist theologians interpret biblical apocalyptic imagery literally, as the foretelling of current or impending historical events. Specifically, many evangelicals now believe that climate change is God’s will. Kant was aware of “theological chiliasm” (which could be understood as an early version of dispensationalism), is critical of it, and contrasts his own ethical vision with it, saying that the ideal of moral progress is a “beautiful ideal of a moral world-epoch, brought about by the introduction of a true universal religion” (R, 6:134). The idea of a true universal religion (i.e., moral faith), we may recall, is not the triumph of any particular historical religion; it actually envisages the end of historical religious traditions, which at best only serve to represent RE — and certainly not a hardening of those traditions into orthodoxies based on biblical literalism. The ideal end will never fully be achieved, because of the propensity to evil in our natures, which is why it is a “beautiful ideal,” never fully actualized. This is important to note, because in the dispensationalist account, the final end is viewed as constitutively real. Importantly, Kant notes that the final end or culmination is not “in experience” (literally, historically, in any objective sense); its culmination is to be understood as an ideal that serves a function, which is to help us continually progress towards it, in “approximation” of “the highest good possible on earth (and in all of this there is nothing mystical, but everything moves quite naturally in a moral fashion)” (R, 6:134). Biblical
apocalyptic symbols must “take on . . . their right symbolic meaning,” which is to express “the necessity of standing ready at all times for the end” and “to consider ourselves always as chosen citizens of a divine (ethical) state.” There is, however, a strong tendency for some Christians to misunderstand these narratives as in reference to literal historical fact, influenced by biblical literalism.

As climate change worsens, it has given dispensationalist preachers, such as Jack van Impe, Pat Robertson, and John Hagee, the opportunity to interpret natural disasters, such as hurricanes, as the result of divine retribution for the sinfulness of secular society and as signs of the coming Apocalypse, as foretold in the Book of Revelations. Climate scientists have interpreted the same events in light of empirical data, which indicates increased intensity and frequency of natural disasters as a result of anthropogenic causes. Hurricane Katrina, in particular, was subject to both interpretations. For example, preacher John Hagee blames human sin for natural disaster: “all hurricanes are acts of God, because God controls the heavens. I believe that New Orleans had a level of sin that was offensive to God, and they were recipients of the judgement of God for that . . . I believe that the Hurricane Katrina was, in fact, the judgement of God against the city of New Orleans.” The negative ethical implication of dispensationalist theology is that it ignores the scientifically established causes of climate change, and this absolves humanity of the moral responsibility to find a remedy for it. The dispensationalists subscribe to a deterministic perspective, in which the end result is divinely preordained and thus beyond human agency, in contrast to the non-deterministic position that climate change is a moral issue that we can still choose to remedy. There is a moral argument embedded in the dispensationalist understanding of “premillennial” natural disasters, which attributes them to supposed human sinfulness, but unlike the moral argument against fossil fuel
use and in favour of progress towards a ‘soft energy path,’ the moral argument of the dispensationalist preachers cannot be causally supported, except through reference to divine will as an objectively real phenomenon, and Kant argues that this superstitious view of God is an example of religious delusion: “to want to perceive heavenly influences is a kind of madness [and a] . . . self-deception detrimental to religion” (R, 6:174). Recall that Kant’s use of the word “religion” here refers to the “true pure religion” of morality.

Kant directly addresses the idea of a judgement day and “omens of the last days,” in the form of human strife and extreme weather events (ED, 8:332). These ideas, he says, are in fact created by reason, as representations for the need for moral progress for humanity, and ought not to be understood through the “slavish cast of mind.” In fact, this representation, properly understood, can facilitate “the feeling of freedom in the choice of the final end” (ED, 8:338). This is an emphasis on free will, in relation to the moral choices that humanity faces – choices that we now know have world-saving or world-ending consequences. Apocalypticism, in this regulative sense can have moral worth, but as understood superstitiously it is morally regressive. Belief in supernatural causes of weather events is detrimental to moral faith because it fosters disregard for the necessity of mitigation efforts, in favour of a focus on a speculative afterlife. David Hume, August Comte, and Karl Marx are some of the many atheist thinkers who have provided a similar critique of belief in the afterlife; Comte, for example, writes that this belief produces “slaves of God” and that in order to develop “servants of Humanity” men have to turn away from this fiction. The following passage, from Religion, reveals that, for Kant, morality in this life is of supreme importance: “Practical reason is in fact saying only this much: We can conclude that we are human beings pleasing to God, or not, only the basis of the conduct of the life we have led so far; and since this conduct ends with our life, so does the reckoning, the
balance of which alone must yield whether we may regard ourselves as justified or not” (R, 6:71). One can interpret this to mean that it is in this life alone that ultimate meaning consists, and that meaning must be understood in terms of moral decision making. If we abandon our moral duty in this life for the sake of a speculative afterlife, that is not “well pleasing to God” (i.e., not in accordance with ML). U.S. climate mitigation efforts are being hindered by the collective force of this superstitious evasion of moral duty by millions of religious adherents: Timothy Leduc, in “Fueling America’s Climatic Apocalypse” notes that “apocalyptic Christian beliefs are informing America’s political economic and public understanding of environmental issues, thus allowing climate change to be interpreted from a religious frame of reference that could impact a viable response in a country whose greenhouse gas emissions are amongst the highest in the world.” It would be a mistake to believe that Christian dispensationalism is a marginal movement of no political influence: according to Bernard Daley Zaleha and Andrew Szasz, “an analysis of resolutions and campaigns by evangelicals over the past 40 years shows that anti-environmentalism within conservative Christianity stems from fears that ‘stewardship’ of God’s creation is drifting toward neo-pagan nature worship, and from apocalyptic beliefs about ‘end times’ that make it pointless to worry about global warming. As the climate crisis deepens, the moral authority of Christian leaders and organizations may play a decisive role in swaying public policy toward (or away from) action to mitigate global warming.” One study on this topic found that religious belief in the end times (dispensationalist theology) impedes climate change action because it “reduces the probability of strongly agreeing that the government should take action by more than twelve percent. In a corresponding manner, a belief in the Second Coming increases the probability of disagreeing with government action to curb global warming by more than ten percent.”
This raises a number of issues that appear in *Religion*, including the negative role that religious authorities can play. It is no coincidence that dispensationalism entails a rejection of empirical science. The history of Christian fundamentalism in the U.S. includes the rejection of evolutionary science in favour of biblical literalism as an orthodox cosmology, indicating the importance of cosmologies in terms of shaping ethics. Biblical literalism requires a willing suspension of reason, a rejection of empirical facts, deference to ecclesiastical authority, and it also relies in large part on enthusiasm. Some religious practitioners who dare to question these teachings and think for themselves on this matter may feel a sense of guilt and inward conflict, as though committing heresy. Technically speaking, within the context of their sub-tradition, they are. In this way, religious climate change denial has become an article of faith, influencing U.S. politicians and the political process. Even if the practitioner has inward doubts about the truth of the claims by the ecclesiastical authority, fear of social isolation by the group for speaking heretical beliefs may keep him or her in line with orthodox belief. According to Jacques Berlinerbau, orthodoxy is defined in a relational way through the identification and isolation of heresy.\textsuperscript{392}

Kant is critical of historical determinism precisely because it serves to relieve us of moral imperative to take necessary actions for the common good. He is critical of a *theological* chiliasm, which is essentially the same thing as *millenarianism*: a belief in the future realization of the “Kingdom of God” (R, 6:34). Kant interprets the idea of the judgement day regulatively: “the representation of those last things . . . are to be regarded only as a way of making sensible this latter [the supersensible (which is to be understood only morally)] together with its moral consequences, which are otherwise not theoretically comprehensible to us” (ED, 8:328). The idea of what Kant terms “human progress” (meaning moral progress) requires a supersensible
representation (ibid). In contrast, literal apocalypticism negates any moral obligation to take any steps other than blind profession of faith in order to be “saved.”

Some critics of climate science argue that it feeds irrational apocalyptic narratives, which have long been part of human history, and have always proved to be wrong (at least in an objective sense, since the world is still here). While it may be true that climate science does this, at least for some people who are predisposed to belief in such narratives, and there may even be an element of enthusiasm in overly sensationalist narratives, there are two ways in which anthropogenic climate change scenarios can be regarded as consistent with a rationally defensible standpoint: (i) they are based on falsifiable scientific data, and (ii) scientists and policy makers are urging an ethically motivated response to mitigate the effects of industrialization, which if undertaken in time can avert disaster. Unlike dispensationalist end-times theology, climate science allows for human agency and the role of free will. A true apocalyptic narrative invites the opposite conclusions than those adopted by a rational perspective: it has a supernatural cause, and humans are powerless in the face of it. Dispensationalism invites what Kant terms “slavish faith” (R, 6:115) and not ethically motivated actions to avert the disaster for the good of humanity.

The ethical implication of dispensationalism is not only disregard for the necessity of mitigation efforts; a further implication is the support of Christian Zionists for military conflict in the Middle East. The religious meaning of the state of Israel is granted constitutive reality within history, and viewed as a state that must be protected for religious reasons, including waging an international holy war. Its regulative meaning as a symbol of an ethical society, living in accordance with God’s law, which includes a pluralist policy of inclusivity for Palestinian residents of the region, as favoured by Jewish theologian Marc Ellis, is ignored or dispensed with.
by militant Christian Zionists.\textsuperscript{393} The regulative understanding of Israel as a symbol of a universal ethical community, favoured by liberation theologians, is displaced by biblical literalism, which gives the task of safeguarding the symbol precedence over any other consideration, including human lives. Militant Christian Zionists, such as pastor John Hagee, are openly pro-war and favour the use of nuclear weapons against political opponents such as North Korea or Iran, perhaps hoping to precipitate Armageddon.\textsuperscript{394}

Kant, as a philosopher who advocates free will, is explicitly against the idea of an inevitable outcome for history. The Kingdom of Heaven is an ideal, useful for guiding us ethically by giving us hope for the possibility of a good society. The ideal of the good society itself may be understood as a guide to inspire rational hope, and thus should not be understood constitutively as an objectively real \textit{telos} – which is the conceptual error of violent utopian ideologies. Kant’s objection to both theological and philosophical forms of chiliasm makes this clear: he calls them both “sheer fantasy” (R, 6:34). Philosophical chiliasm is the belief in the inevitability of a perfect society, determined by unfolding historical forces. A modern secular example of this thinking is the Marxist doctrine of historical materialism, which some critics contend is still politically influential in capitalist societies in the form of subversive or sometimes openly revolutionary forms of “anti-oppression” and “intersectional” political ideologies.\textsuperscript{395} Janice Fiamengo says that what lies behind much of this activism is the belief that “if we just think the right thoughts, and force everyone else to think them too, we can create a social utopia in which no one is ever unhappy.”\textsuperscript{396} Using coercive tactics to force someone to think a certain way, rather than persuasion through reasoned argument, contributes to heteronomy, comparable to the imposition of religious orthodoxy.
Kant’s argument for autonomy of the will could be understood as a stance against the imposition on thought itself by irrational dogmas, based on presuppositions and beliefs that cannot be proved, and yet on the basis of which the entire society seems to operate, and which one is not allowed to question for fear of censure. He writes that “To want to perceive heavenly influences is a kind of madness in which, no doubt, there can also be method (since those alleged inner revelations must always attach themselves to moral, and hence rational, ideas), but which nonetheless always remain a self-deception detrimental to religion” (R, 6:174). While in liberal democracies, freedom of thought and speech and the right to dissent from church or the state is for the most part tolerated, this is not the case in theocracies, where people cannot question the prevailing worldview without risking their own safety. There efforts within the liberal democracies from ideologues to radically reshape the society into a utopia they believe it should be, through the censure of thought and speech. Similar to religion, the tenets of such ideologies cannot withstand rational debate, which is precisely why they permit coercive methods to impose correct thinking in others. This was also the case following the French Revolution, resulting in the Terror. Kant was wary of the way in which the French Revolution resulted in human rights violations in the name of secular political ideals: Allen Wood notes that “while confessing to a ‘wishful participation approaching enthusiasm’ for the French Revolution, Kant nevertheless sees revolutionary upheavals as both wrongful and counterproductive. Progressive reform, he maintains, is most effective when it proceeds gradually and is instituted from above.” Even if a revolution were successful at replacing despotism with democracy, it would be insufficient to ensure a good society, according to Kant: “a revolution may well bring about a falling off of personal despotism . . . but never a true reform in one’s way of thinking; instead, new prejudices will serve just as well as old ones to harness the great unthinking masses” (E, 8:36). It should be
added that political revolutionaries do not only use force to bring them about: a more typical
scenario are political movements, aimed at taking over public institutions, to use them to impose
a sweeping political or religious ideology through the manipulation of emotions through
supersensible objects. This is happening in the United States through the use of Dominion
theology, which envisages the ideal of Christian theocracy, and has greatly influenced the
Republican Party, leading Thomas Mann and Norman J. Ornstein to refer to that Party as an
“insurgency movement.”\textsuperscript{398} To be fair, the entire Republican Party cannot be correctly
characterized this way, but what has happened is that right-wing radicals in the Party, many of
whom are evangelical Christians whose principles do not allow for political compromise, have
influenced it greatly. Unconditional commitment to supersensible ideals, interpreted through the
lens of partisan politics, has effectively ended any chance for a meaningful U.S. climate policy in
the immediate future. The polarized efforts of the far Left and Right are indicative of an internal
erosion of a society based on Enlightenment ideals into irrational political factionalism. Political
insurgency movements, as they may be termed, are less violent or immediate than traditional
forms of revolutionary activity that use violent force, but they have in common with the use of
force, an abandonment of the use of reason and rational debate which are the hallmarks of an
open and civil society.

Applied to the climate crisis, Kantian political philosophy may be understood as a
warning against militant revolutionary activities to replace the unsustainable \textit{ancien régime}, in
favour of gradual and nonviolent and rationally debated reforms to our existing political,
economic, and legislative systems. A probable revolutionary scenario is the upheaval of entire
societies in the face of economic collapse brought on by environmental disasters resulting in
scarce resources. Some civil wars that are already in force (e.g. Syria) are said to have begun this
Would revolution be in order against severe forms of repression, or even genocidal tactics by ruthless military regimes? Reinhold Niebuhr was critical of M. K. Gandhi’s nonviolence philosophy as impractical against Nazism; however, even if we were to concede Niebuhr’s point, it does not invalidate the practical application of nonviolence and the process of legal and political reforms in societies in which there is already a nominal commitment to human rights. Gandhian tactics may not have worked against Nazis, but they were effective in British ruled India, in part because Gandhi cleverly won over the British public on a visit to London, and in part because anti-colonialism was sympathized with. Nor does Niebuhr’s argument against what he termed ‘pacificism’ invalidate Kant’s argument that even a benign revolution falls short of the ideal of the good society, because without an established democracy in place, societies are dependent on the beneficence of individual rulers, which in the long run is no guarantee of safety from despotism.

Although materialistic utopianism eschews any notions of an afterlife, it is still akin to Christian dispensationalism in that it represents an historical telos. During the Enlightenment, a shift in popular thinking occurred, from belief in an afterlife to belief in the possibility of a utopian society through technological progressivism, expressed through both Marxist and capitalist political ideologies. These ideologies, for many, supplanted traditional religious belief, leading David Loy to refer to capitalist consumerism as the most successful “religion” ever. In theological terms, an imminent ideal replaced the transcendent ideal. In this way traditional theology was supplanted, at least in part, by belief systems that served the same function, even if belief in the supernatural was eliminated. The ideal of the utopian society, in which every citizen is prosperous due to economic growth and technological mastery of nature, may be thought of as a supersensible object, like the Kingdom of Heaven. If understood regulatively, the idea of the
utopian society is the same as Kant’s ideal of the ethical society, but if understood constitutively, it invites the violent application of a *de facto* utilitarian calculus to bring about its fruition.

Political utopianism could very well experience a renaissance in this century, in service to violent conflicts over scarce resources, especially as human populations grow. This could begin, in some places, as a refusal to allow eco-refugees across national borders, or the result of water supplies being cut off.\(^{403}\)

An important element of secular materialist eschatologies is technological utopianism, present in both Communist and capitalist political economies. Many climate policy makers and commentators, including Bill Gates, envisage a technological solution to the climate crisis, enabling us to avoid behavioural changes motivated by ethical concern.\(^{404}\) The most common criticism of the progressivist ideal of technological utopianism is that it contributes to the avoidance of the moral imperative to bring about structural and behavioural changes.\(^{405}\)

Technological utopianism subscribes to the conceit that the entire world can be bent to our collective will, without regard for the limits of nature, and that a prosperous outcome is inevitable.\(^{406}\)

The existing economic and political order in the West is a combination of a capitalist economy and governments on Enlightenment ideals.\(^{407}\) Militant subversive political ideologies that pose a challenge to the prevailing order are ethically questionable when human dignity and individual freedoms are considered expendable for the sake of political objectives. Capitalism, socialism, and fascism are all teleological historical-material ideologies\(^{408}\) predicated on an ideal vision for society. Socialists within capitalist societies decry climate change as the failure of capitalism and see an opportunity for a new world order, when capitalism falters.\(^{409}\) There is at the same time, a growth in totalizing religious ideologies (e.g., Islamism, Christian Dominion

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theology). In liberal democracies, where civil liberties are protected, dissident views are permitted freedom of expression; the more ruthless ideologies, such as Islamism, do not permit any free speech: apostacy is punishable by death under sharia law. Chinese nationalism represents a form of state-controlled capitalism, devoid of democratic values and civil liberties. These are just some of the competing ideologies and worldviews seeking global political power. The possibility of impending economic collapse merely provides the opportunity for much fiercer form of competition in the future.
Chapter III: Applied ethics: animals, consumerism, the open society, activism

Chapter II examined the various ways in which Kant’s philosophy of religion could be used to gain insight into historical religious traditions, and provided examples of an ethical assessment of these traditions. Chapter III addresses four specific issues, to show how Kantian ethics and Kant’s philosophy of religion may be applied to any number of diverse topics, to further illustrate how this ethical system can be used to provide insight into complex social and political phenomena. These four topics were chosen somewhat at random, and represent only a small fraction of the seemingly endless array of diverse and complex climate change issues. As will be shown, each topic plays an important role in the unfolding climate crisis. The objective of the chapter is to show how the examination of special topics provides further insight into the way this philosophy of religion can be applied to any number of diverse issues.

3.0 The question of animal rights and animal agriculture

Thomas Berry reconciles anthropocentric and biocentric worldviews by adopting Teilhard de Chardin’s philosophy that human beings represent the universe being conscious of itself. This is reified in the strong anthropic principle, which theorizes that the mechanics of the universe have deterministically led to our species, or are in some way compelled toward conscious life forms. If so, this would also seem to imply a hierarchical interpretation of evolution as a process that culminated in sentient life. The weak anthropic principle, which merely states that the constants of the universe are compatible with conscious lifeforms, due to natural selection (which is indeterministic), seems more probable. Given that many religious cosmologies have formed, in part, as a way to help establish a sense of human identity, as distinct from or superior to the nonhuman world – and that this type of cosmology is no longer of practical benefit to humanity now that we are faced with the climate crisis, it is not surprising that many thinkers have turned to some version of a holistic cosmology as the remedy (e.g., the land ethic, deep ecology, some New Age philosophies). Holistic worldviews, however, have the danger of abrogating individual rights, for which reason animal ethicist Tom Regan, who adopts and expands on a Kantian perspective on rights, is critical of Leopold’s land ethic. Regans is
critical of what he terms “environmental fascism,” which is the idea that the integrity of an ecosystem can be used to justify the abrogation of the rights of individuals for the sake of maintaining that integrity. Importantly, Regan’s argument can be extended to include not only animal rights (Regan’s original focus), but also human rights, to argue against rational arguments for mass murder of human beings for the sake of reducing Earth’s human population, which is having a negative environmental impact. Regan’s own philosophy of rights, extended to both human beings and nonhuman animals, allows for an understanding of a way in which anthropocentrism may be reconciled with biocentrism, thereby solving the problem that Regan identified with the land ethic: the extension of FH to include nonhuman animals who may be considered moral subjects.\textsuperscript{416} This is an issue in environmental ethics that has a bearing on climate ethics. If animals fall within the scope of moral consideration as ends, and not merely as means, this facilitates an unorthodox and potentially important approach to the climate crisis, one that has implications not just for animals, but for all beings whom Regan terms “subjects of a life” – which includes all human beings. This is because greater consideration for animals might lead to ending deforestation or animal agriculture, both of which harm animals, but also have enormous impacts on the climate, leading one researcher to argue for a tax on the most environmentally destructive diets, much like a carbon tax, in order to curb consumption\textsuperscript{417} (although at present animal agriculture, like fossil fuels, is heavily subsidized by governments in industrialized nations, such as Canada).\textsuperscript{418} This is essentially the same as taxing food-related GHG emissions – an idea growing in popularity as the evidence accumulates on the environmental impacts of industrial agriculture (and in particular animal agriculture).

Even an ethic of indirect rights for animals, as advocated by Kant, has important implications: if moral callousness to animals de-sensitizes us to one another, that de-sensitization
can potentially reduce our concern for eco-refugees or other victims of climate change. Given our understanding of the limits of nature, and our dependency on it, a functional cosmology will necessarily find a place for humanity within the cosmos that is environmentally sustainable. It would place limits on our instrumental use of nature and prescribe an attitude of respect for the natural world that is currently missing from the mechanistic view of nature (which said to have originated with, or at least first coherently been articulated by Descartes).\textsuperscript{419} Northcott argues for a connection between consumer-driven capitalism and the Cartesian view of nature: “The economic governance of the society as household through the construction of mechanistic market procedures – and especially the laws of supply and demand – find significant analogy with the new construction of nature as mechanism in early modern science . . . [which is a] cosmological model of the earth, and the universe, as a secular autonomous mechanism . . .”\textsuperscript{420} Profligate consumerism is permitted by the mechanistic cosmology, which applies instrumental reason to nonhuman nature. Northcott also applies a regulative interpretation of biblical scriptures to argue for a “moral economy of food” which includes ethical consumerism and rejection of industrial animal agriculture,\textsuperscript{421} and transition of society towards plant-based diets.\textsuperscript{422}

In contrast to this anthropocentric conception of nature, a biocentric worldview, if understood holistically, has the problem of abrogating the rights of individuals. Regan’s and Franklin’s rights-oriented ethics retains the emphasis on individual rights, which is lost in holistic cosmologies, and extends the scope of FH to include members of other sentient species. Kant’s worldview includes all rational beings as ends, and the rest of nature as means,\textsuperscript{423} which could mean rational beings not of our species, though in Kant’s understanding this meant only human beings. However, his own ethical system can be used to prescribe a conclusion that he (Kant) could not anticipate. Regan’s and Franklin’s rights-based ethics affirms the ethical individualism
inherited from a neo-Kantian perspective, but extends it to other species, which still retains a
two-tiered hierarchy of means and ends, but enlarges the scope of who counts as ends. Nature
can still be used instrumentally, in this view, but the environmental impact of plant-based diets is
much less harmful.

Biologist Marc Bekoff argues that some nonhuman animals have basic forms of morality,
including altruism and social cooperation, and like us they have complex emotional lives, but
it is fairly safe to say that human beings are unique in the Animal Kingdom on Earth, in terms of
their advanced capacity to use reason and technology. Our capacity for moral decision-making is
unique, but this does not necessarily imply human superiorism, on the basis of which our species
has the right to exploit others; on the contrary, it implies a moral obligation to behave in a
morally responsible way toward all moral subjects, even those who happen to be members of
other species. The same is true of our unique capacity to use technology: it gives us almost
unlimited power, but this should imply responsibility, not the right to dominate to the point of
causing a mass extinction. Consequently Franklin abandons Kant’s criterion for membership in
the moral community – the capacity to reason – and replaces it with sentience, which extends the
scope of moral concern and direct rights to a great many species other than human. At the
same time, he argues that FH is the strongest possible argument for the rights of all sentient
individuals. He supports this by pointing to a logical inconsistency of Kant’s criterion: it only
includes those who are moral agents, and excludes non-rational human beings who can be
classed as moral subjects, and not agents. In animal ethics, this is called “the Argument from the
Marginal Cases.” Regan has a similar argument: the idea of the sentient subject of a life, which
is a neo-Kantian argument for both human and animal rights. Both Franklin’s and Regan’s
arguments for animal rights, are supportable through reference to the moral implications of
evolutionary theory, as demonstrated by James Rachels, who is critical of the human superiorism found traditional religious cosmologies. The moral argument that Rachels, Regan, and other animal ethicists invoke is based on consistency across species: there are basic similarities between human beings and other species, on the basis of which egalitarian values ought to be applied.\(^{427}\) Paul Waldau argues the point through reference to an image of an ever-widening circle of moral concern that historically began with the argument against human slavery, extended to women's rights, and now logically can be extended to animal rights.\(^{428}\) The paramount importance of individual rights is retained by the ethic of animal rights, but in such a way that it can be reconciled with environmental concern, so that anthropocentrism is not corrupted to imply ‘zero-sum humanism.’ If the animal rights argument were incorporated into the maxims of actions of most humans, this would lead to an end to mass deforestation and climate change, both of which are leading causes of the Holocene extinction event. It would also mean an end to animal agriculture, which takes the lives of approximately sixty billion sentient beings annually.\(^{429}\) These developments would go a long way toward mitigating the climate crisis, and thereby benefit humanity.\(^{430}\) Will Kymlica, in the book *Zoopolois*, has worked out in detail how human beings might co-exist more respectfully with other animals. His argument, in a sense, represents a vision of a Kantian ethical community (or ethico-civil society), one that extends the scope of moral concern beyond the species limit, in consideration of the fact that human welfare is best served by this ideal of more harmonious co-habitation. The implication of the animal rights position as an extension of FH perfectly (based on Franklin’s amendment to FH \(^{431}\)), illustrates the importance of cosmologies for the establishment of values. A “functional cosmology” (such as that argued for by Thomas Berry) is one that, at the bare minimum, allows for a stable climate necessary for the functioning of life on Earth.\(^{432}\) Extended beyond that, it
suggests an ideal society in which social and environmental justice are paramount, and Kant’s ethical community can be understood as an Enlightenment expression of this kind of ideal. Kant’s expression is more than just an ideal, however: it provides the coherent ethical foundation for the ideal in a way that many types of environmental philosophies fail to do because they do not sufficiently incorporate the idea of rights (and in some examples they directly contest that idea). A functional cosmology need not be holistic to the point of that it entails the abrogation of individual rights, as Franklin’s adaptation of FH serves to illustrate. Kant himself was not for animal rights, and regarded nonhuman animals as means to an end (despite his well-known argument for their indirect rights). Nonetheless, he provides the basis for a good argument for animal rights, through FH, and this is important for articulating one way in which a paradigmatic change, challenging traditional cosmologies, can help bring about climate mitigation.

A Kantian argument for human rights may be used to provide a counter-argument to the idea that animal rights is incorrect because rights discourse is a wholly human construct, and therefore not applicable to nonhumans, in the following way. Kant’s philosophy can be understood as a rejection of the logical fallacy of the appeal to nature, in favour of ethical decision making predicated on practical reason. The concept of rights may indeed be a human construct, but so is every other postulate of pure practical reason, and so for that matter, is our concept of nature itself (as the epistemological claims made in the first and third Critiques seem to indicate). What matters is not whether a concept is a construct (issuing from the mind), since as Kant’s epistemology shows, everything that we perceive is apprehended in this way and filtered through the Categories of Understanding; what matters is whether that concept has moral worth or not. This is also how Kant views historical religion: it may be entirely constructed (i.e., issuing from the human mind, which his critique of revelation seems to indicate), but it is not
entirely without value as a result, provided our application of it conforms to ML. For this reason, the extension of rights to nonhuman animals is practically of value, since it could very well make the difference between being able to mitigate climate change successfully or not. Like religious concepts, or any example of postulates of supersensible objects, it could have enormous value, if understood regulatively and acted upon accordingly, but like any political or religious ideology, animal rights seems also to invite *enthusiasm*, dogmatic utopianism, and violent attitudes which serve to negate its ethical value. Like historical religions, which it resembles a great deal it is a worldview deserving of a rigorous assessment using universal ethical principles and should not be accepted uncritically.

In summary, nonhuman animals might be considered ends in themselves, according to one interpretation of FH, and there is increasingly empirical evidence to argue for the status of some of them as persons of a kind (e.g. dolphins, dogs, cats, apes), but even if we do not accept this argument, the moral argument for ending animal agriculture for environmental reasons is relevant. There are some theologians, such as Andrew Linzey and Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, making regulative arguments from within their traditions (Christianity, Judaism) along these lines.

### 3.1 Incentives, ethical consumerism and FH

Kant defines incentives as “the subjective ground of desire” (GR, 4:427, 78), tied to the principle of happiness and the empirical desire for an “object.” Wood comments that an incentive is a subjective ground for motivating a rational will, and this subjective ground is “an end based on empirical desires.” We may think, for example, of the objects that are sought after as a result of the predisposition to animality. Perhaps, incentives may be thought of, in Freudian terms, as the effect of instinctual desires of the Id upon our wills, shaping their determining ground. To carry the comparison further, the Superego is comparable to the law we
give ourselves to act in accordance with ML. Incentives are contrasted with motives, which are
the “objective ground of volition.” Much the same distinction is made in the second Critique,
when Kant distinguishes between “formal” and “material” principles, as determining grounds for
morality: formal principles alone can be practical laws, whereas material principles are
empirical, fall under the principle of happiness, and “are opposed to the determination of the will
by reason alone” (CPrR, 5:21-22).438 We may add that just as with Kant’s discussions regarding
self-love, happiness, and the predisposition to animality, incentives are not evil in themselves;
rather, it is the choice to give them priority over ML that is evil (R, 6:21). The fact that incentives
exist, in human nature, along with the good will, is what gives us that choice to begin with.

Incentives influence the determining ground of morality, among rational beings, but they
may also refer to any being, rational or not, who is subject to the forces of the physical world;
thus, an incentive is “the subjective determining ground of the will of a being whose reason does
not by its nature necessarily conform with the objective law” (CPrR, 5:72). The fact that rational
beings are embodied, part of the empirical world, and subject to its forces – in other words, that
we are animals, as well as rational beings (the biological fact of our animality established
scientifically by Darwin and others) – gives us inclinations, but the fact that we are also rational
beings and therefore ‘lawgivers’ gives us the ability to choose between giving priority to
incentives or formal laws, given to us by reason.439 These more abstract examples of incentives
have given rise to long-standing traditions and complex legal and political regimes to protect and
advance them. It is no exaggeration to say that entire civilizations devote much of their time and
energy to the pursuit of incentives, above moral considerations. In this context, where human
beings exist within social orders dedicated to incentives, and yet at the same time feel the pull of
conscience, towards ML, they soon find themselves in need of a way to justify the former
without feeling guilty regarding the latter. Historical religions play a significant role, by creating codifications meant to assuage guilt over non-universalizable practices that serve the gratification of incentives, through divine justification. It concerns Kant, who is critical of external observances to statutory laws if said observance does not issue from the good will. A given action may even, on occasion, conform to the moral law, on the surface (so to speak), but lack pure intention. The worth of an action hinges on its intent. Thus mere “feeling” is an insufficient reason to act in conformity with ML; for Kant, it must be “for the sake of the [moral] law” itself – that is, a sense of duty to ML itself, not to gratify the emotional incentive at having done a good thing. We may think of Jesus’ parable of the widow’s mite, in order to illustrate the distinction between similar actions on the surface, but arising from different intentions: one arising from the incentive to acquire acclaim, and the other arising solely from duty, and not corrupted by incentives. An action that does not have this duty as its “determining ground” may contain legality, Kant says, but not morality (CPrR, 5:71-2).

One way in which every individual in modern societies may exercise some degree of free will is in his or her consumer choice. Consumption is driven by incentives, but ML can also be incorporated in the maxim of action of the consumer, through ethical consumerism. There is the standard sort of consumerism that has no regard for environmental concerns or human rights, and there is also so-called ethical consumerism, which takes morality into consideration to some degree, either in terms of labour standards, or environmental considerations, or in terms of harm to animals. There can be any number of ethical concerns that can be incorporated into maxims of actions to influence purchasing choices, e.g. “I will not buy products from x country, because of human rights abuses there” or “I will not buy products that may be made with slave labour”, etc. Ethical consumerism, it should be noted, can extend moral concern to one area, but completely
ignore another, rendering it a good example of the asymptotic character of the principle of universalizability – meaning that the application of ethics to consumerism is an endless project of discovering what is the best choice, ethically (i.e., the least harmful). This will inevitably result in some types of products not being purchased at all (e.g. so-called “blood diamonds”). There are numerous campaigns to promote ethical consumerism, such as “fair trade” (based on the fact that workers in sweat-shops are often exploited to produce consumer goods, and this has even taken the form of modern-day slavery in some parts of the world), the “not tested on animals” emblem on personal care products, recycled paper emblems, and so-called “conflict minerals” in electronic goods, etc. DiCenso notes that “we choose evil because we prioritize some nonmoral end. These can include seemingly desirable goals such as pleasure, wealth, and prominence, which become immoral only if they are obtained by harming others directly or indirectly.” Ethical consumerism, if sincere, is driven by a desire to not participate in nonmoral ends indirectly. It can take the status of workers and animals into consideration, as well as environmental impacts, and it can mitigate violations of FH to some degree, but it is rare – perhaps even impossible – that the products purchased with ethical consumerism in mind are entirely free from such violations. Moreover, because there is no systematic regulation (at least in the U.S. and Canada), with regard to such claims, there can be false claims that goods and services are ‘sustainable’ or ‘green’ or in some other way ethically sound (a phenomenon called ‘greenwashing’). In the ideal society, based on universal ethical principles regulations would be unnecessary, as every citizen would voluntarily abide by universalizable practices (which in the context of environmental concern, means always aspiring towards sustainable practices), and products not abiding by those standards would not be sold. In fact, products that have the least stringent standards often end up being the least expensive and it is convenient for consumers to
ignore where they came from or how they were produced. We may conclude from this that laws and regulations, if they help the society incrementally progress towards the ethical ideal, are practically necessary. If purchasing them lessens the degree of violence that occurs in the world, that will not save the whole world, but if it helps individual workers, or local small businesses, or individual animals, or individuals born in the future, by regarding them as ends, it has greater moral worth than purchasing choices that do not take others into account. While the ideal society is one in which no laws and regulations are necessary, a lack of them can be detrimental, as can regulations and laws that sanction and protect unjust and unsustainable practices.\textsuperscript{443} The term ‘structural violence,’ is said to refer to violence that is “embedded in ubiquitous social structures, normalized by stable institutions, and regular experience [so that] longstanding, structural inequities usually seem ordinary, the way things are and always have been done” (ibid). The invisibility of structural violence in a capitalist society which in most cases is not even intended as a harm (harm is an ‘externality’ or by-product of it), allows it to become enshrined in tradition and protected by laws. Kant’s discussion of the dynamics of the ethical community is valuable for envisaging a remedy for deeply embedded social ills: he advocates incremental progress towards the ideal society, and the utilization of elements of historical religions to achieve it. Ethical consumerism has within it some the same elements that inform Kant’s concept of moral progress: namely, the choice to incorporate ML (or not) into the subjective determining grounds of the maxims of actions. Moreover, ethically minded consumers can form a collective identity similar to members of religious communities, which in Kantian terms could potentially be examples of the visible church. A good example of ethical consumerism contributing to a collective identity based is ‘ethical veganism’ (based on the ideal of observance of animal rights), which, it has been argued, is a type of functional religion.\textsuperscript{444} The classification of ethical
veganism as an important and emerging worldview, as well as a type of ethical consumerism, raises an interesting point which has bearing on all forms of ethical consumption: the debate over the moral worth of incrementalism. This debate arose between animal philosophers Gary Francione and David Sztybel: Francione argues against incrementalism (which he terms welfarism), whereas Sztybel argues for its efficacy, saying that it may be viewed as a spectrum, not more simplistically as a binary. Sztybel’s argument is asymptotic in nature, envisaging a gradual progression of society towards animal liberation (and attendant environmental benefits), through incremental reforms. The incremental history of the civil rights movement can be used to support his argument. Francione’s argument, while to its credit arguing for nonviolent means, fails to grasp the political pragmatism of incremental reforms. Kant gives us an essentially pragmatic argument for the practical use of historical religions to advance an ethical vision. A similarity can be shown to exist between the pragmatic incrementalism of ethical consumerism and the incrementalism of social, political and legal reforms necessary for effective climate mitigation, as well as the moral progress of society towards enlightenment and use of religions (and all other cultural formations) for this purpose. There is a tendency to “cut corners” (ethically speaking) if motivated by revolutionary zeal. At the same time, societies can be intransigent in their willingness to abandon unethical practices, so there is a practical value for idealism, to help envisage necessary reforms, at every level of the society. Sztybel’s argument demonstrates that one can be both an ethically motivated idealist and incrementalist at the same time.

Consumerist societies can also violate FH in the sense that consumers themselves are viewed by those who profit from consumerism as means to an end. Consumers can, if they choose, exercise some autonomy of the will to extricate themselves from excessive consumerism, but no one in a consumer society is ever entirely free from the pressure to
purchase goods, or the necessity of doing so. They are viewed by marketers and corporations as purchasing units, and consumer rights are routinely violated for the sake of profit. A particularly egregious example is the deliberate exploitation of lethal addiction (e.g. cigarettes), and marketing to create new addicts. The ideal of autonomy of the will, in this context, can take on the meaning of attempting to be less susceptible to the heteronomy of advertising and to consume less, or more ethically, with greater consideration for a range of concerns (environment, animals, labour, etc.).

A final point on ethical consumerism, relating to the tendency toward hypocrisy in human nature is that Kant is critical of our tendency towards self-deception: “when we bring any flattering thought of merit into our action, then the incentive is already somewhat mixed with self-love and thus has some assistance from the side of sensibility” (CPrV, 5:159). Applied here, it is clear that the volition that informs such consumption can, in some cases, be motivated by self-love above moral considerations, which has contributed to the problem of ‘greenwashing’ (a form of deception) by producers of consumer goods, which works if consumers’ commitment to ethical consumerism is less than optimal and they are therefore not vigilant. Kant says that action does not have duty as its “determining ground” may contain legality, but not morality (CPrR, 5:71-2). At the same time, this should not be regarded as an argument against the merit of ethical consumption, because as Kant notes “to become aware that one can do it [i.e., observe holiness of duty alone (see A.20)] because our own reason recognizes this as its command and say that one ought to do it: this is, as it were, to raise oneself altogether above the sensible world” (CPrR, 5:159). Kant goes on to advocate “making appraisal of actions by moral laws” a “habit” (ibid), which seems to anticipate ethical consumerism, but also any number of other habitual practices that could be said to be motivated by a sense of moral duty.
Although “Kant places strict boundaries on what we can actually know (there must be sensible intuitions),” he acknowledges “that we can “think” or “cognize” beyond these boundaries; this will either take the form of practical cognition (practical postulates) or fantasy and delusion.” Accordingly, incentives can take on very abstract forms. The history of religious violence and political fanaticism provides examples of this. Ernst Becker believes that human beings create these abstractions and dedicate their lives in service to them as “immortality projects,” motivated by an unconscious fear of death. While individuals can pursue their own immortality projects, they can be collective as well. There are numerous historical examples of this, including the Crusades, and the dream of a ‘thousand year Reich,’ Communism, capitalism, Islamism. Many of these examples illustrate Kant’s concept of idolatry, which is when “we are making a God for ourselves . . . to win him over to our advantage . . .” (R, 6: 169) Kant also notes that this relieves us from the obligations of moral duty (ibid). DiCenso says that this tendency (to anthropomorphism) is “intimately connected with self-love and radical evil.” The pursuit of incentives can mimic or take on the image of ultimate goodness in the ideologically conditioned mind. The ideology can become idolatrous if it ignores or violates ML. The result is that the unconditional moral imperative that ought to be reserved for ML is given instead to the incentives. The incentive in this case is the desire to belong to a community and to engage in an immorality project, which confers meaning and purpose, but can also lack any moral worth, and serve to impede morality. Our desires to gratify incentives, whether of the base animalistic variety, or this more abstract form, could be said to be responsible for the climate crisis. “The American Dream” is an ideal that combines both kinds incentives, but the problem is that if everyone were to achieve it, it would require four Earths to sustain that level of consumption. Wood notes that social inequality, characterized by patterns of domination and subjection, is frequently predicated on “the
delusory hope that they may become dominant themselves,” and he gives the example of the American Dream, calling it a “vicious delusion” used to justify “monstrous inequalities of wealth.”^{451}

The pursuit of unlimited economic growth undermines the humanitarian premise frequently used to justify it, by placing future generations at risk to achieve it. Consumerism arises from desires (incentives) created in part by marketing campaigns (i.e., the phenomenon of artificial demand, created by advertisers).^{452} The desire to acquire unnecessary consumer goods is a modern example of a tendency of human nature Kant identifies in his description of the corruption of the predisposition to humanity, which is “the inclination to gain worth in the opinion of others, originally, of course, merely equal worth: not allowing superiority over oneself . . . but from this arises gradually an unjust desire to acquire superiority for oneself over others. Upon this, namely, upon jealousy and rivalry, can be grafted . . .” (R, 6:27). This is the dynamic through which human beings seek superiority over others, to advance social standing through material and financial acquisition. This is legally sanctioned and culturally reinforced, and may even be supported through religious justifications (e.g. the prosperity gospel, a form of Christianity). Julian Simon argues that the economic prosperity of all of humanity is best advanced through economic growth; he takes issue with the Club of Rome’s *Limits to Growth* publication from 1972, which refers to finite resources and growing population. Simon claims that their prediction, like Thomas Malthus,’ is wrong and claims that the Club of Rome report lacks scientific veracity, that the environmental problem is overstated, and that “innovation” (technology) will help solve any environmental problems, and ensure economic prosperity for future generations.^{453} Is the pursuit of this economic and political vision merely a case of pursuing incentives, in violation of ML, or is there a legitimate moral claim being made by pro-growth economists and pundits? The pro-growth
argument is predicated upon several assumptions: (i) human superiorism; (ii) that human welfare is best served economically; (iii) that the social and environmental costs of economic growth are morally justified, using a utilitarian calculus; (iv) that environmental problems arising from industrialization can be remedied through technology. The idea that human welfare is best served economically is, at first glance, difficult to dispute, given the horrors of poverty and famine that have always plagued humanity. According to Schmidt and Marratto, “with the Enlightenment came the explicit denial of an other-worldly transcendence, whether in eternity or at an end time. There emerged what George Grant has called the history-making spirit, dedicated to fulfillment in this world only, through the elimination of evil.”\textsuperscript{454} From this arose the belief in progress and a “humanism which put science and technology at its center, as the means of redemption.”\textsuperscript{455} The problem with this ideal, if used as a justification for unlimited growth, is that it fails to take into account the unsustainable environmental problems created by such growth. No-growth or steady-state economists argue that economic growth alone is insufficient to guarantee happiness, because individual wealth over a certain threshold does not bring happiness.\textsuperscript{456} Economist Tim Jackson notes that “the continued pursuit of economic growth (beyond a certain point at least) does not appear to advance and may even impede human happiness.”\textsuperscript{457} Based on this finding, it does not seem prudent to pursue growth beyond a certain point if it does not add to aggregate happiness. The greatest aggregate happiness comes from a no-growth model, where minimum and maximum wages are enforced, to prevent poverty on the low end of the scale, and to prevent unlimited accumulation of wealth at the expense of the public good, at the other end. While Kant would not agree with the no-growth economists’ designation of happiness as paramount, it can be argued that the ethico-political society that he envisages is better approximated by a society that utilizes environmental regulations than one in which unfettered capitalism is the norm. Ataner argues,
environmental regulations are necessary for the advancement of human freedom. The incentive of endless economic growth, as an end in itself, is irrational if it subverts the interests of the citizens whose welfare it purports to advance. Revealed religion, which should help advance ML, can become a form of delusory faith; similarly, the paradigm of economic growth, justified in the name of advancing human freedom and happiness, can subvert them. Good governance requires a vigilant citizenry exercising a high degree of moral responsibility. Inculcating these values in the public arena is an area where religions can potentially play a positive role in the world.

3.2 Popper’s open society

Kant’s ideas can be utilized to comment on the danger of despotism in secular societies, as well as religious despotism, since the use of supersensible cognition – in the form of widely accepted and culturally transmitted ideals – can be used in support of violent political machinations within secular societies. Karl Popper addresses the problem of despotism in secular societies in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In it he defends rationalism. By rationalism, he does not mean intellectualism and empiricism, which denote one use of the word; rationalism in the sense he is using it refers to a belief in the value of human reason for making moral judgements, and the practice of respectful communication, instead of relying on appeals to emotion (such as demonstrated by political or religious demagogues). Rationalism, thus understood, is “an attitude that seeks to solve as many problems as possible by an appeal to reason, i.e., to clear thought and experience, rather than by an appeal to emotion and passion.” More precisely, it is “an attitude of readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience. It is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that ‘I may be wrong and you may be right, and by effort, we may get nearer to the truth.’” Freedom of speech is necessary for such dialogues to occur, which is why such freedom does not exist in the context of a political or
religious tyranny. Interestingly, the suppression of free speech and designation of disagreed views as allegedly “hate speech” and “racist” has become a hallmark of the political Left within liberal democracies, in recent years.\textsuperscript{460} It is often enough to designate a speaker as guilty of “hate speech” rather debate him or her in a public arena. DiCenso comments that principles of CI “guide an active reflective process by which we assess our maxims in relation to their potential impact on other people. This capacity to engage the standpoints of others involves a continual broadening of our perspective or horizons; this also requires freedom and open communication.”\textsuperscript{461} The opposite tendency, away from self-reflection, and towards suppression of the views of others with which one disagrees, and ideological entrenchment with rigidly adhered to worldviews, even occurs on university campuses where one might suppose that the Enlightenment ideal of reasoned debate might prevail. This suppression of free speech cannot rightly be thought of as the necessity to stop open incitements to violence, which the U.S. Supreme Court, for instance, believes is the only legitimate reason for it.\textsuperscript{462} An important point of comparison with Kant’s system of ethics is that the open society, based on rationalism, requires freedom of speech and open-ended thought, which totalizing and closed systems of thought and political hegemony militate against through the use of censorship. The closed society restricts speech and thought in order to de-humanize people and control them. It uses various techniques of social control in order to do this, including shaming. It is a heartless worldview in which the sanctity of ideology is given precedence over human beings. It is a form of heteronomy of the will insofar as the ideology itself becomes the external “object” on the basis of which a moral decision is made (GR, 4:444). Kant was utterly opposed to the de-humanization of persons by rigid systems of thought, which in his historical time period took the form of religious orthodoxy; today, this continues, though on a much larger scale in the case of Islamist
theocracies, and through totalizing political ideologies, which try to gain a foothold in every society (but are not always successful in doing so, especially when resisted by more dominant ideologies that already possess power). As a consequence, Popper’s analysis is unfortunately still needed.

Constitutive interpretation, as noted previously, contributes to closed systems of thought (e.g. scriptural literalism, but there are also numerous secular examples), and regulative interpretation of scriptures contributes to religious pluralism, an embrace of science (which for biblical literalists represents a competing ontology), and open discourse. In practical terms, rationalism requires a democratic political and judicial system that respects civil liberties, including freedom of speech. Liberal democracies embrace these values, for the most part, but these values are constantly under threat from both the extreme Left and Right. The reactionary polarization and shutting down of debate, from both quarters, contributes to the conditions in which violence can flourish, contributing to the demoralization and undermining of civil society and its moral regress. This erosion of liberal democracies from within, the result of polarized political extremism willing to resort to violence, may be expected to increase, in conjunction with diminishing natural resources and related economic and political erosion. It is for this reason that Popper’s rationalism and Kant’s social and political vision are needed to be able to recognize and assess evolving social, political and religious movements of every variety.

How the rationalist engages in debates and determines truth is of key importance for Popper: “the fact that the rationalist attitude considers the argument rather than the person arguing is of far-reaching importance” because it indicates that everyone is to be considered “a source of reasonable information,” thus establishing a “rational unity of mankind.” This is important in a society in which dialogue is routinely shut down by extreme Leftist groups.
described as “PC authoritarians,”¹⁴⁶⁵ who have superimposed an agonistic model of oppressor and oppressed, from Marxism onto race and gender issues. Gad Saad notes that some of “these groups just end up competing to see who is more oppressed because it is the mechanism through which they attempt to solve problems.”¹⁴⁶⁶ While there can be no doubt that many sorts of oppression are a real and serious matter (to which the egalitarianism of the Enlightenment stands in opposition), the identity politics of the intersectional movement is in danger of trivializing legitimate forms of oppression. Competition among who is most aggrieved could be thought of as an example of Kant’s “vices of savagery of nature” (see 4.11). This dynamic has had a profound effect on the women’s movement and civil rights movement, both of which began as political movements for equality – which may be regarded as an application of Enlightenment ideals – but have since take on such forms that (it can be argued) reject those ideals in favour of authoritarian collectivism. For example, some theorists now argue that gender has no biological foundation, that it is entirely socially constructed. This argument is utopian in its implications: if everything is socially determined then “there’s no limit to how our society can be transformed.”¹⁴⁶⁷ A complete rejection of the past is a license to engage in a social engineering. Any ideology that completely rejects the past in this way, and proposes to create a new world order is laying the foundation for sweeping social control, ostensibly in the name of a greater good. The destabilization of the climate crisis represents an opportunity for many political movements that use these progressive ideologies to erode societies based on Enlightenment values. This has affected animal rights activism, climate activism, and other types of political activism seeking comprehensive social reforms. Collectivist thought, even if inspired by great ideals is, on its face, heteronomous, because it dissent and autonomous ethical thought as heterodox.
Kant says of some religious laity that they do not comply as a result of force, but “through influence over minds” (R, 6:180). He is referring to the way in which religious hegemony and the state can merge, whereby the state believes that through the influence of religion over the faithful masses it can benefit from the “unconditional obedience to which a spiritual discipline has habituated the very thinking of the people” (ibid). Similarly, militant revolutionary eco-socialism relies on the willing compliance of the masses, through “influence over minds,” and exacts it through the imposition of an equally rigid ideology, one that tends to exact conformity through fear of social exclusion (a disincentive to autonomy), and through the enthusiastic appeal of group identity and purpose (a positive incentive). Theodore Dalrymple says of propaganda that its objective is to “humiliate” the listener into submission, by getting him or her to repeat obvious lies, and in so doing “one’s standing to resist anything is thus eroded, and even destroyed. A society of emasculated liars is easy to control.”468 Orwell explored this in the novel Nineteen Eighty-Four, through the character who internalizes the lie that 2 plus 2 equals 5, through which his spirit was broken.469 Kant’s description of the way in which the laity so easily comply, uncritically, could also be used to describe the easy acceptance of religious climate change denial by the Christian Right: their willingness to reject science in favour of a narrow interpretation of faith, which many of them know to be false, but assent to anyway. Kant says of the power of religious ideologies, which can also be applied to political ideologies that require uncritical compliance from adherents: “For what is easier to grab and partake with others of a narrative made so accessible to the senses and so simple . . . and how easily does this sort of thing find access everywhere, especially in conjunction with the promise of great advantage . . .” (R, 6:181). The easiest thing to do is fall back on reflexive beliefs that fit a standard narrative, and we find this evident everywhere, including social and political movements dedicated to
substantive societal transformation. Kant is referring to religious narratives, but his critique is also applicable to any secular political narrative, Left or Right, that employs supersensible objects. The “great advantage” that the uncritical “social justice warrior” hopes for is an ideal society run by a benign enlightened state, which disregards the historical tendency of such states to be run by murderous despots, not enlightened leaders (who, even if they attain power, are often brushed aside by the despots). The more immediate advantage hoped for is employment by the social democratic state or the countless committees and groups that it would support. Popper notes that Marx was originally a rationalist, but “his doctrine that our opinions are determined by class interest hastened the decline of this belief.” The idea that opinions are to be determined by class, race, gender, or some other arbitrary factor, and are not to be judged based on merit, or assessed through the use of reason, is supported by the uncritical adoption by the Left of cultural relativism, which has been articulated through postmodern theory, which drew the theoretical links between race, class, and gender issues, and gave them intellectual legitimacy, eventually resulting in intersectional theory. In postmodern thought, truth is regarded as subjective and relative to one’s position in society. This contributes to the emergence of a brand of cultural authoritarianism and cultural relativism that has greatly affected the emerging climate justice movements, essentially turning them into vehicles for the imposition of a neo-Marxist anti-capitalist vision of the ideal society. Liberal democracies are also internally undermined by the extreme political Right, which promotes climate change denial or skepticism, and ad hominem mischaracterizations of scientists. This has been used to squelch free and open discourse, either by inflaming an irrational skepticism regarding the veracity of science, or by silencing public officials. There are at least two widely publicized instances: the silencing of climate scientists in
Canada, and the ordinance against the use of the term “climate change” by the state of Florida.

Another important issue related to the political Right is the growing xenophobia against immigrants. The political backlash against Muslim Syrian refugees in Western Europe, and against illegal aliens of Mexican descent in the United States are two prominent examples of this phenomenon. The principle of universalizability can be applied, in this case, to argue for more open borders. Should this include the proviso that migrants cannot, by law, continue to practice traditions that violate human rights (e.g. honour killings, female genital mutilation, child brides), and must adhere to the laws of a civil society? Popper rejects the attitude “which considers every tradition as sacrosanct” and adds that a tradition may be judged “valuable or pernicious, as the case may be, according to their influence on individuals.” The ability of the juridico-civil state to successfully ensure that human rights are adhered to by migrants from cultures where human rights are routinely violated as part of cultural traditions, is questionable, especially when there is an influx of tens of thousands of such migrants and law enforcement is hindered by the politics of cultural relativism. There is a fear that migrant areas can turn into extrajudicial ghettos where honour killings occur regularly – which some critics claim has happened in the UK, Germany, and other parts of Western Europe. In these places large numbers of migrants have arrived in recent years, leading to criticism of Islam, which has had the effect of polarizing these societies around that issue, and which led, in part to the UK leaving the EU. Honour killing in Britain highlights the problem, which according to one commentator, “cannot be justified in the name of cultural relativism.” The massive influx of migrants and eco-refugees from the global south, and regions adversely affected by climate change – which is already occurring – will become an even greater test for liberal democracies in coming decades, as they try to balance national
interests with humanitarianism, and within the country as they try to grapple with the question of freedom of speech by xenophobic persons who are alleged to have committed hate speech. Since these social and political tensions are frequently interpreted through the lens of cultural and religious identity, traditional religion can play an important role in their outcome, either adversely, as happens with radical Islam (and reactionary responses from the Christian identity movement), or in a more politically moderate direction, facilitating assimilation and serving to quell Wahhabian radicalism and race tensions. Although some speakers are skeptical and regard Islam as monolithic and liberals in the West willing to accommodate it as dupes,\textsuperscript{476} the case can also be made that religious pluralism, coupled with regulative interpretation of scriptures, as advocated by Kant, can be of great importance in helping to reduce tensions over eco-refugees, as already demonstrated by the role that moderate Islam has performed by condemning religious terrorism.\textsuperscript{477}

Popper, referring indirectly to the rise of Communism and fascism, laments that a “rationalist attitude to social and economic questions [especially in the twentieth century] could not resist when historicist prophecy and oracular irrationalism made a frontal attack on it. This is why the conflict between rationalism and irrationalism has become the most important intellectual and perhaps moral issue, of our time.”\textsuperscript{478} His words are also quite applicable to the twenty-first century as well, since “historist prophecy and oracular irrationalism”\textsuperscript{479} have not disappeared: they have just taken on new forms. The contest between radical Islam and the West – which has only served to solidify the position of the Christian Right against Islam – is one of the ways in which they have resurfaced, and the stealth insurgency movements of militant socialists and militant fascists within liberal democracies is another. What Popper terms “irrationalism” – the abandonment of rationalism in favour of a constitutive belief in historicism
– is something we can also recognize in Kant's critique of statutory religion and delusory faith. Both Popper and Kant are critical of demagogues who manipulate the masses through appeal to emotion (enthusiasm), inciting passions that ostensibly are in service to what is perceived to be the highest good, but which can easily become the means by which great evils are committed.

3.3 Heteronomous forms of secular activism

Another way in which the violation of FH and the concept of rights and moral duties apply to the climate crisis is in regard to the way in which social justice oriented activism can become a heteronomous force. Initially, this idea seems counter-intuitive, because activism of this kind seems, on its face, to be akin to Kant’s concept of the church universal (the visible church), insofar as it purportedly advances moral concern for humanity and egalitarian values. However, climate activism – like any historical religious tradition or human institution – can be corrupted by incentives, and it is important for those committed to the ideal of climate justice to be self-reflective on this point.

There are two things that must be stated at the outset. First, this thesis treats such activism as though it were a religion, according to the functional definition of religion, and there is scholarly support for this position: Jamison et al say that animal rights activism is a religion of a kind because it has the same characteristics and serves the same social function as do traditional religions, even if the beliefs differ. Andre Maintenay argues that environmentalism could be described as form of spirituality, one that he regards as a “‘healthy’ form of ethical and spiritual expression in modern technological society.” Bron Taylor, in Deep Green Religion, makes a similar argument. This raises the second preliminary point: that the environmental and climate justice movements can, at their best, be thought of as examples of the visible church because
they are social formations ostensibly dedicated to a universal moral good. As with historical religions, the truth is nuanced: climate justice movements can aspire to the highest good, but can also be corrupted by incentives.

Kant’s criteria for the true church (as noted in 2.0) may be of help in assessing the internal dynamics of social justice oriented movements. They are: universality, purity, relation under principles of freedom, and modality (R, 6:101-102). The first criterion, universality, requires that the group not degenerate into schisms. This is important because in social justice movements the unity that brings people together into an uplifting pursuit of the highest ideals can be corrupted by numerous incentives, including identity politics, resulting in schisms. According to Kant, the “never fully attainable ideal of the ethical community” can have a sublime quality (R, 6:100). Kant says that the sublime can be experienced in relation to nature (CJ, 5:245), war (CJ, 5:262), scriptures (CJ, 5:274). It is in “our imagination a striving to advance the infinite” (CJ, 5:250), and “a faculty of mind that surpasses every measure of the senses” (ibid). Logically, if the sublime can be felt in relation to the ethical community, it can be felt in relation to the religious or political group to which one belongs, if through that group there is a sense of a connection with something limitless (e.g., justice, truth, goodness). For social justice activists, this is expressed as being part of a community dedicated to a common cause, which extends outward endlessly to a universal community, including all the victims of climate injustice. Environmentalist David Suzuki expresses his sense of the sublime as follows: “The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human.”

As for Kant’s observation that the ethical community is never fully attainable, it is worth noting that this asymptotic trait has real-world implications environmentally, insofar as it inspires
efforts to create the best possible world, which although necessarily falling short of that goal, nonetheless manages to change the world in some way. An example is the advance made in the field of renewable energy, motivated, according to Adrian Smith, by an idealistic utopian vision of a sustainable society by activists who created a “niche” for the expansion of this technology, through a “long-term sustainable development vision.” After several decades, it was not fully realized, and “the Utopia remained persistently at the end of the rainbow,” but this “vision” helped to promote renewable technologies that are now finally gaining huge market-place momentum, despite decades of setbacks. This result can be traced back to the idealistic vision of a political movement that can be understood through Kant’s concept of the visible church striving for the creation of an ethical community. The entire history of environmental regulations and environmental conservation efforts can be described in the same way. This illustrates the importance of the practical use of supersensible objects, even if the type of ideal society that motivates activists is never fully realized.

The second criterion, Purity, is “union under no other incentives than moral ones” (R, 6:101-102). We must presume that a strong sense of moral imperative inspires a great many people who join these movements, but as the movements grow in influence and prestige, some people may be motivated to participate in them to satisfy incentives other than moral ones (e.g., fame, power, prestige, careerism), which may skew the judgement of those individuals away from moral ends. This is not to say that a group cannot have funding, or its member gain fame or recognition, but this ought not to be the reason for its existence.

The third criterion, relation under the principle of freedom, as an ideal, is juxtaposed to illuminatism, “which is a kind of democracy through individual inspirations, which can vary greatly from one another, according to each mind” (ibid). Perhaps what Kant is alluding to is the
tendency for people in a church to stray off into flights of imagination that have no moral worth. This unavoidably happens in all religious and political movements, for which there is a need for unifying principles, provided they do not become instruments for social control. This is why Kant refers explicitly to the “principle of freedom.” This principle has a bearing on a tension within the climate justice movement (and all movements united by ethical ideals), between unifying principles and individual inspirations. The latter are due, as Kant notes, to their democratic nature, for which reason some groups like Greenpeace have adopted an internal hierarchical corporate model,\textsuperscript{485} which focuses the group on the task or goal, but often at the expense of autonomous ethical thought and diverse forms of creativity. One of the biggest tensions within these movements is the disparity between the motivation to accomplish reforms, typically through pragmatic compromises with governments and corporations by environmental NGOs, and the uncompromising idealism of those at the ‘grassroots’ level.\textsuperscript{486} The NGOs, from the perspective of the more uncompromising activists, have lost their ethical vision, while the NGOs see the necessity of accomplishing reforms, which they believe idealism cannot accomplish. At the other end of the spectrum from NGOs is the Occupy movement, which is so democratic and where so many different inspirations are present at once (some that could even be called illuminatism), that it has led many media commentators to conclude that it had no unifying message.\textsuperscript{487} Thus, a unifying principle is needed for such movements, and specifically a principle of freedom, recalling that freedom implies limitations in consideration of the freedom of all. This is put in a new light by Ataner’s argument that the freedoms that accompany a healthy environment take precedence over the economic freedom of polluting business, thereby justifying environmental regulations. This same idea can be extended to argue for a unifying principle of freedom within social justice movements.
Kant’s last criterion for the true church is “modality, the unchangeableness of its constitution.” This is contrasted with “arbitrary creeds which, since they lack authority, are fortuitous, exposed to contradiction, and changeable” (R, 6:102). This is important for establishing that the faith community in question must be focused on entirely moral aims based on rational principles. The climate movement, although motivated by very high ideals (e.g., saving humanity and life on Earth through the transformation of society to a more just, sustainable model), will inevitably fall short of its own ideals, so that those in it who have joined it for entirely moral reasons face the challenge of working to bring the movement into alignment with its true purpose, against a myriad of influences that might derail it. The following explores some of the internal impediments that this movement faces, in greater detail. It should not be understood as a criticism of the movement; rather, it is a critical analysis of the movement’s internal dynamics that make use of Kantian concepts.

Beliefs themselves, even in the case of secular political movements, can take on the form of supersensible objects when they adopt utopian, perfectionist conceptions of society that are unrealizable (see 4.12 ii). A regulative interpretation of the supersensible object would recognize that, but strive toward the social ideal in way that does not violate FH, and in an undogmatic way that allows new information to shape the ideal. The constitutive interpretation leads activists to attempt to socially engineer societies, to conform to their utopian ideal, but in ways that can violate FH. This can happen especially in the case of “false universals” which are “when ecclesial authorities claim that their own tradition or group has exclusive validity, thereby dismissing all others. Then they exploit this claim to legitimize imposing their statutory belief system upon others, creating oppression, hatred, and violence . . . [including] subtle ideological violence that seeks influence over minds and ways of thinking.” 488 This is the greatest danger
arising from a delimited conception of universality, contributing to defensive violence to protect
the community identified with (e.g., defending the umma from apostates by killing them). The
supersensible object, as such, takes on the status of what Kant terms “the unconditioned” which
is then wrongly given the status of “highest good.” The true highest good is ML, but if a
conception of the ideal society is given this status, it subordinates moral concerns to the prime
directive of the actualization of the object. Ideologies identify with the object and thus are in fact
advancing a form of self-love ahead of ML, at the risk of violating FH, but are doing so in the
name of what appears to be an ultimate good. These beliefs take on a sanctified status, and even
if proven incorrect, they are clung to religiously and become impervious to refutation by logic or
reason or empirical fact. They take on the form of circular logic, a self-reinforcing ideology,
dogmatically adhered to by practitioners, who are even willing to martyr themselves in service to
what those beliefs represent for them. Even if they have been refuted many times through factual
evidence, they can nonetheless persist in the public domain if they have wide emotional appeal,
with the effect that they can be enshrined in the culture in various ways. What is envisaged as a
corrective against systemic injustice can itself become a means through which the social re-
enengineering of an entire society occurs, in flagrant violation of human rights in some cases. The
utopian vision of secular political activists -- even if motivated by the best of intentions – can (if
given legal and political force) take on forms that violate FH in new ways. Practitioners in such
movements need to be able to question established beliefs and subject them (or their projected
outcomes), objectively, to ethical scrutiny. Yet very often the beliefs become articles of faith, to
be defended at all costs, and they are pursued through ritual performances (protests) which, like
rituals of traditional religions, take on a supersensible meaning for practitioners and become
enthusiastic.
The performance of protest can take on unique and subjective meanings; for example, Catherine Bell, drawing on Dukheim's distinction between sacred and profane in ritual, says that practitioners "generate the sacred" through ritual performances. Such performances can include protests. This is highly subjective and particular to each person, although shared through a similar interpretative framework.\(^{490}\) The overt purpose of the protest is social and political transformation. Political protests perform the function of religious ritual because they reinforce group identity, creating a sense of community, which can be euphoric, creating a sense in which the activist is connected to universal struggle for justice. According to James Beckford, protests represent a kind of “nondoctrinal and unconventional spirituality”\(^{491}\) Whether it contributes to its political objective or not, what the protest accomplishes is to reinforce the sanctity of the belief system in the practitioners, who often are swept up by enthusiasm as a result of the embodied collective action. In fact, the success of the ritual is often measured in the degree to which it creates a collective emotional response. Kant describes some kinds of religious rituals as leading to a “feeling of the presence of the immediate presence of the highest being” and concludes that “enthusiastic religious delusion is . . . the moral death of reason without which there can be no religion” (R, 6:175). What this means is that “the true pure religion” (ML) can be undermined by emotion. Kant is referring to traditional prayers and invocations and spells meant to bring about a certain end through “imagined means,” but many political protests also have some element of enthusiastic religious delusion in them, insofar as they are motivated by a supersensible object, which in the case of activists is the vision of an ideal society or ideal outcome of some kind. Even if their political objectives are met, in many cases, the outcome can even be disastrous, if pursued by coercive means (i.e., if protests contribute to violence in some way).\(^{492}\) If secular political activism is a type of religion in which practitioners experience enthusiasm, it could fall
sway to heteronomy of the will as much as traditional religious traditions are prone to do.

DiCenso, in discussing forms of heteronomy in religion, says “heteronomy can perhaps manifest itself more blatantly in hierarchical authoritarian structures . . . Yet, it can also become manifest more subtly and insidiously in the monopolization of interpretative authority, even by those who overtly reject ostentatious displays of power.”

This is true also of heteronomy in social justice fora, where adherents clearly reject social injustice on some level, but sometimes learn how to wield their own political power through “the monopolization of interpretative authority,” sometimes to the detriment of others, and sometimes in violation of their own stated principles. The great temptation, always, is to achieve the ideal, sometimes at any cost.

The grassroots protest-oriented climate justice movement is not always “a straightforward environmental movement against climate change; rather, the participants [are] ‘united in a feeling of belonging to a broader, and global, anti-capitalist social movement’ [which has its] foundations in anarchist and anticapitalist protest” combined with a “commitment to social justice.” Social justice itself is, on its face, a universalizable ideal, but its implementation can end up violating FH if it is used to justify instrumental reason, in which individuals are expendable for the sake of the collective. This development has happened to a degree in the climate justice movement, due to the fact that some of the activists in it subscribe to an “anticapitalist project.” Many also want to “dismantle patriarchy.” It should noted that some of the most militant forms of feminism have strong ideological connections to pro-violence Marxist revolutionary ideology. They are motivated by a quite understandable distaste for the violent excesses of unfettered capitalism as fundamentally unjust (and certainly unsustainable), but engage in a utopian project that seeks to displace that economic system entirely, including its
many benefits. A Kantian approach, as will be argued, pragmatically favours reform over revolution.

There are several sometimes competing models for climate activism: (i) moral consideration of human rights and concern for future generations, utilizing law reform and nonviolent methods; (ii) environmentalism and species conservation, based on ethical holism, also typically reformist and nonviolent (e.g. Greenpeace, Sierra Club); (iii) “indigenous sovereignty” and aboriginal identity (e.g. Indigenous Environmental Network); (iv) revolutionary eco-socialism (e.g., Climate Action Now!), and (v) anti-oppression ideology, backed up by pro-violence anarchist “shock troops” (e.g. anarcho-feminist collectives, ANTIFA, Black Bloc). The third, fourth and fifth models sometimes converge, as has been the case in protests at climate talks and climate marches. Naomi Klein and Bill McKibben are well-known proponents of the protest style of climate activism. They both advocate militant resistance movements and embrace a neo-Marxist anti-oppression worldview. The first model conforms most to the political ideal of Kantian ethical principles, both in scope and methods used. The fourth and fifth types of activism noted above are most prone to utopianism and collectivist thought. At their best, they can inspire young people to get involved in productive ways to help solve the climate crisis, but at their worst, they can be described as essentially agonistic ideologies that do not recognize the rights of individuals, bend individuals to collectivist thinking, and engage in ritual scapegoating and divisive behaviour that can have the effect of demoralizing many activists.

Steven Lukes, in *Marxism and Morality* (1986), argues that although Marxism has a moral element to it – the moral imperative embedded in the idea of emancipation from oppression – its disregard for human rights and duties stands in conflict to that ideal. Marxism
promised “political emancipation, whereby the individual would achieve 'universal freedom' from capitalism and slavery through cooperation and struggle. Yet, ultimately . . . Marxist morality failed because it didn’t deliver on its promises.”

The utopian society, in this case based on historical materialism, is in fact a supersensible ideal. A constitutive interpretation tries to arrive at the telos of an ideal society by any means necessary – which includes using people as means to that end, in violation of FH. It seeks to destroy the Enlightenment social imaginary by designating it as oppressive and to replace it with another social imaginary: a collectivist ideal of social justice in which individual rights do not exist. It is a political ideology that in its own way depletes what Loy refers to as “moral capital,” which is a reference to “shared community values need to restrain” the excesses of the market.

Loy refers to the depletion of moral capital in the context of his critique of “the market” (consumer capitalism), but this concept is also applicable to pseudo-totalitarian activism, insofar as it demoralizes idealistic young people who join these movements.

A recent mutation of this ideology is “intersectional” ideology, which superimposes Marx’s concept of class conflict onto race and gender identities, and is now, because of its popularity among young people, uncritically adopted by many influential environmental non-profit organizations. Intersectionality is a worldview that on its face seems wholly consistent with FH: it argues that different types of oppression have a common foundation in objectification and that the movements that oppose them have a common foundation in their commitment to equality. It contributes to the creation of social and political identification with oppressed groups; these identities are viewed through the lens of an anti-oppression framework, which reduces complex social formations to a simplistic binary of oppressor and oppressed, excluding moral consideration for the former. In this way, anyone who by misfortune of birth, is deemed one of the oppressors, must admit guilt and seek contrition, to
be socially accepted, at least within activist circles.\(^{507}\) In fact, it is a political vision that conflicts with true egalitarianism. Although this ideology, on its face, purports to advance equity and inclusivity, it in fact “illicitly imports the very model it purports to overcome: that is, the unitary model of identity.”\(^{508}\) This ‘balkanization’ or segregating of social identities can facilitate the exclusion of those who do not fit within approved identities (the “marginalized” or “oppressed”), thereby creating new social hierarchies, in order to actively redress historical wrongs, and advancing the parochial interests of those at the top of the hierarchy. Individual human beings and their interests and rights are lost in the midst of this drive to implement social engineering in the name of an ideology. Some secular activist groups – including climate justice activists – that adopt anti-oppression ideology of this kind risk turning into “political cults” and “miniature totalitarian societies” when their “objective is to seize state power” and when “the leader(s) create an environment characterized by ideological totalism.”\(^{509}\) The followers of such movements often naively believe the state will be more enlightened under the rule imposed by their leaders, but this ignores the propensity to evil in human nature: our tendency to succumb to self-interested incentives, for which reason universal ethical principles need to be enshrined in law (in the juridico-civil society), as it progresses lawfully via reforms towards the ideal of the ethico-civil society. For these reasons, a neo-Marxist approach to climate activism may have an adverse effect on needed social and political reforms.

Some people in the climate justice movement in North American eschew the rule of law, and identify as anarchists (e.g., anarcho-feminism, anarcho-syndicalism). Jeremy Bentham “was unwilling to model a government as a body of omnipotent and omniscient officials who are somehow immune to corrupting personal incentives of the citizens whose activities they direct [for which reason] the law needs to protect us at least as much from the officers of the state who
govern us as from our fellow citizens.\textsuperscript{510} Many activists, like the Inquisitor, feel themselves to be morally righteous and beyond reproach, and that their campaigns, which often utilize the tactic of public shaming as a deliberate tactic,\textsuperscript{511} are justified as necessary violence for the sake of achieving a revolution.\textsuperscript{512} Kant comments that “the motto of the right of necessity says: ‘Necessity has no law! . . . Yet there could be no necessity that would make what is wrong conform with law” (MS, 6236). He specifically means that it is wrong to murder, even out of a feeling of necessity. Violent activists, like religious fanatics, are exercising “probablistism”\textsuperscript{513} (R, 6:186), to justify themselves, and abdicating the use of conscience. Social and environmental justice (and climate justice), all of which are in principle egalitarian ideals, can ironically become forces for inegalitarianism and parochial interests if they contribute to the heteronomous encroachment on the freedom and autonomy of individuals, and if they impose a rigid political ideology that impedes autonomous ethical thought and action. The collective thinking of the extreme political Left, which falls under the rubric ‘groupthink’ by social psychologists,\textsuperscript{514} represents an interesting paradox, in Kantian terms, because on one hand Leftists desire some form of social justice (often framed as an equal social and economic outcome for all), which appears \textit{prima facie} universalizable, but on the other hand, groupthink, by definition, contributes to heteronomy of the will, and consequently impedes autonomous ethical thought. The political Right has seized on this discrepancy, and decried the Left’s abandonment of free speech and individual liberties (disingenuously in some cases). Coalitional psychology refers to the unconscious tendency to band with in-group members and dissociate with out-group members,\textsuperscript{515} contributing to sectarianism and factionalism within political movements. This frequently occurs in movements dedicated to universal human suffrage. Harold R. Isaacs, in his study of group identity in politics, argues that the forces that drive identity politics go deeper than economic,
class, gender, or race discrimination issues. The origins of these disputes are “primordial,” originating in tribalism, based on attempts by one group to wrest political power and status from another; as a result, there is no political panacea that will remedy these grievances. If there is a solution to the paradox (that the pursuit of social justice may contribute to heteronomy), it is this: the Left, like historical religious traditions, may be regarded as a cultural vehicle for the transmission of ethical ideals, but at the same time, it also can also represent a barrier to the actualization of those ideals, insofar as it fosters the creation of despotic personalities and patterns of heteronomous thought. It can be a vehicle for a much-needed social and political transformation of human societies towards a collective form of moral progress, but it can also feed moral laziness if adherents adopt an ideology in which they feel themselves to be above reproach. We may recall Kant’s mention of “the delusion of allegedly supersensible (heavenly) feelings” that contributes to “false devotion” (R, 6:185). Those who are part of such movements become caught up in the euphoria of the important history-making projects they engaged in; like the religious terrorists described by Juergensmeyer, they come to feel that they are warriors in a “cosmic war” between good and evil. Enthusiasm experienced by those practicing secular politics has been deemed “the ecstasy of self-righteousness.” Kant says that “one is never more easily deceived than in what promotes a good opinion of oneself” (R, 6:68). Kant’s sustained emphasis on being self-reflexive, on investigating one’s own inner ethical disposition, is extremely important for social justice oriented activism, because any political or religious ideology, if it becomes too certain of itself, and its members too convinced of their own moral superiority, endangers the moral imperative that originally inspired it.

DiCenso says that in Kant’s ideal of the political community that universal “principles cannot be limited to members of particular groups.” Very often with the radical militant
activist branches of the political Left the principles used are limited to particular groups, based on ethnicity, gender, political commitment, or other criteria that should not properly apply in terms of universal moral consideration. In their zeal to be redress historical wrongs (allegedly perpetrated by what Bell Hooks refers to as a “imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy”519 they end up replicating the sort of thinking that allowed those wrongs to originally occur, similar to the Red Guard during the Cultural Revolution, who dehumanized an older generation as alleged “counterrevolutionaries.” Such activism, although purportedly to establish an egalitarian utopia, can be motivated as much by incentives as by moral duty, such as a privileged person wishing to identify as victims of discrimination so as to gain acceptance into a group of like-minded activists who also identity as victims, or as the allies of victims.520 Those who view their community as under siege are more likely to engage in acts of what they view as defense and necessary violence.521 This sense of absolute righteousness in defending one’s community is one of the cognitive underpinnings of terrorism, according to Juergensmeyer. Kant underscores this point: “Now such is the situation with every historical or phenomenal faith, namely that the possibility is always there of coming across an error; consequently, it is unconscientious to act upon it, granted this possibility that what it requires or permits is perhaps wrong, i.e., at the risk of violating a human duty in itself certain” (R, 6:187). Social justice oriented activism is (or ought to be) about taking political actions for moral purposes, but if there is any uncertainty regarding the morality of the means whereby it is achieved (e.g. the ethical quandary of public shaming and scapegoating individuals or committing defamation or physical disruption and outright violence), the activist is well-advised to autonomously assess the tactics, to guard against the error of probablism. George Orwell’s Homage to Catalonia,522 which documents the crimes of Stalinists during the Spanish Civil War against those on the Left they
deemed class enemies (thereby contributing to Franco’s victory), stands as a great testament to the necessity for critical self-reflection on the Left, in order to avoid totalitarian tendencies. Interestingly, he had difficulty getting it published by a socialist press in England in the 1930s, because at the time many socialists still believed that the U.S.S.R. represented a great victory, or they were afraid to be critical of Stalinists.\textsuperscript{523} Today, the doctrine of “intersectionality” receives the same sacrosanct status among Leftists, and one may not question it for fear of censure.

The segregation of people into social identities within these movements contributes to inegalitarianism. Morality is reduced to the function of “systems of power” (an idea borrowed from neo-Marxist intersectionality)\textsuperscript{524}, and evil is located in these systems, and in other person or groups, rather than recognized as being located in the determining ground of morality at the level of the individual. Kant’s identification of this propensity is important, because it suggests that any one, of any political or religious identity or orientation, is capable of exercising free will, including decisions that can be characterized as evil. There is no one who is exempt from moral responsibility, even if they are members of historically oppressed groups (or are advocating on their behalf). This would apply to the oil executive who justifies his actions by referring to the mandate of the corporation, as well as to the neo-Marxist revolutionary who justifies her actions by referring to oppressive “systems of power” or through Herbert Marcuse’s idea of “necessary violence.”\textsuperscript{525} What the more radical and militant groups\textsuperscript{526} have in common with religious exclusivism – which is a key element in religious violence\textsuperscript{527} – is a strong emphasis on orthodox, dogmatic belief in the form of political ideology. The world is still caught up in ideological contests between competing doctrines and absolutist worldviews, religious and secular, and the doctrine of necessary violence to silence opponents is widely utilized. As climate instability worsens, it is possible that atrocities may be perpetrated by radical ideologues, which is why an
understanding of how this phenomenon works is necessary. Kant is critical of heteronomous forms of faith spread by religious authorities, but it also happens in secular groups that adhere to dogmatic political beliefs. Those in political cults could actually be described as fundamentalists, where fundamentalism is defined as “the unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs,” and refusal to participate in events with any group that does not share its essential doctrines and beliefs that carry a pretense of being the sole source of objective truth. These groups utilize the language of expulsion, exclusivity, extremism, and polarization. They employ dogmatic assertions and the claim that anyone who holds contrary views is not a real believer (an apostate, an evil person), leading to the creation of a distinct group of insiders. Jana Lalich explains that all cults – including political cults – have a “self-sealing system . . . a social system that is closed to disconfirming evidence and structured in such a way that everything reinforces the system,” and she adds that “in our political organizations we must be on alert for the cultic symptoms of authoritarianism, conformity, ideological rigidity.” The “self-sealing” process of exclusion, in order to protect the ideology from the perceived threat of freedom of thought and speech, necessarily involves the process of scapegoating those who are deemed enemies of the group. The fact that many of these groups claim to be inclusive, but in reality are not, creates an irresolvable paradox that is never addressed. The threat to autonomy is not only true of the extreme political Left or Right in liberal democracies; it is true of any political ideology, religious or secular. The dramatic growth of militant jihadism (Islamism) is clear evidence of this. This critique above certainly does not describe all activists who pursue social justice oriented goals, but it does describe a very loud and vocal group (the pro-violence or ambiguously violence militants) who tend to “de-platform” and silence their opponents, and have become dominant forces within social and political movements as a result. This has had a detrimental
influence on larger groups that wish to avoid being pejoratively labeled, including some very influential environmental NGOs.\textsuperscript{530} These NGOs acquiesce to demands and allow their reformist missions to be infused with revolutionary zeal; it’s a calculated gamble on their part, based on the belief that they can strategically utilize fear of the radicals to exact reforms from governments and corporations.\textsuperscript{531} For this reason it has an important bearing on the climate crisis, because radical tactics tend to result in an entrenchment of their ideological opponents, polarizing positions, and stifling debates.

In contrast to the phenomenon of the political cult, CI extends the scope of moral concern equally, to everyone, and would not classify humanity along race, gender or other lines that can be used to designate what sociologists call the \textit{in group} and \textit{out group}. In this sense, CI may be said to be a corrective remedy for the kind of tribalism that human beings seem inclined to. The worsening of the climate crisis and resulting political instability will provide an opportunity for the growth of radical politics, with the effect that those who call for legal reforms and gradual social and political changes, in the way advocated by Kant in his discussion of enlightenment, will be demonized as complicit in what radical militants view as an irredeemably corrupt system. Political utopianism tends towards inegalitarianism, and can even result in despotism and mass violence. In the twentieth century, these movements began with a few followers, but flourished under conditions of political instability.\textsuperscript{532} Kant’s philosophy of religion provides some of the ideas through we may be able to understand this type of phenomenon: the utopian vision is a supersensible ideal that can and has led to political and religious violence in support of that vision, if constitutively understood and aspired to. A regulative understanding of the ideal cannot lead to violence because that understanding is predicated upon respect for all others as ends themselves (FH); the very point of the ideal is to serve the principles of RE and FH, not to
Violent revolutionaries are increasingly filling the ranks of climate justice and other social justice oriented movements, and try to enforce their worldviews there. They regard others as means to the end, or as expendable for the cause of attaining their political objectives. Kant was critical of revolutions, saying that “the public can achieve enlightenment only slowly” because “a revolution may well bring about a falling off personal despotism and of avaricious or tyrannical oppression, but never a true reform in one’s way of thinking; instead, new prejudices will serve just as well as old ones to harness the great unthinking masses” (E 8:36). In other words, Kant is in favour of enlightened political reforms, rather than revolution, provided that the reforms are in accordance with ML, because revolutions run the risk of replacing one form of prejudice with another. Why then should climate activism, if based on an inegalitarian anti-oppression worldview be any different? The means by which a political end is sought is paramount, as Gandhi’s nonviolence philosophy attests. Any climate justice movement that adopts revolutionary tactics and rhetoric runs counter to Ghandian ideals.

Juergensmeyer distinguishes between nonviolent reformers and revolutionary militants who are willing to use symbolic violence, and identifies the thought process informing both. In the “Stages of Symbolic Empowerment” the first stage is viewing the world as fundamentally problematic, as having gone “awry” – a stage shared by both violent and nonviolent practitioners who are deeply dissatisfied with the status quo.\footnote{Juergensmeyer} The second stage is a “foreclosure on ordinary
options” – meaning that one cannot fix the problems through ordinary political or legal measures. While some nonviolent militants might take extraordinary measures, such as nonviolent civil disobedience of positive laws, and risking arrest, their actions still fit within a reformist framework insofar as a protest, informed by nonviolent philosophy, seeks social transformation, rather than revolution. For example, the protests that Gandhi was a part of are explicitly nonviolent transformation of South African and Indian societies, rather than violent revolution against colonial powers. The same is true of Martin Luther King Jr.’s activism, which sought the transformation of American society, not its overthrow, and in both examples, these extraordinary measures were meant to work in concert with the “ordinary options” of legislative reforms. However, the phrase “foreclosure of ordinary options,” as used by Juergensmeyer, describes a kind of symbolic ritual that seeks the total annihilation of the old order, leading up to the third stage: “satanization” occurs when those deemed to be the enemy are demonized in a “cosmic war” of good and evil, and their annihilation is deemed necessary. This has resulted in acts of terrorism. Satanization is also evident in the case of Kant’s Inquisitor, who deems it necessary to murder those who for him represent the antithesis of everything that he stands for, and who justifies his actions with reference to his own heteronomous conception of divine will (R, 6:186-7). In the case of pro-violence (or ambiguously violent) militant secular activists, those who practice and support revolutionary violence for the overthrow of a system they deem incorrigibly evil, put the supersensible object of the ideal society in place of God, and claim that they are justified for the sake of the good of the people. It should be clarified that many people are not explicitly pro-violence themselves, but are either supportive of those who are, through tacit silence or apologetics or through community support.
The fourth and final stage identified by Juergensmeyer is the execution of “symbolic acts of power,” in which violence is necessary to cleanse or purge the evil elements from the world. Juergensmeyer is describing acts of religious terrorism, but his analysis is applicable to secular forms of revolutionary violence – especially if we understand that both are motivated by supersensible ideals which they use to justify disruption, censorship, public shaming, aggressive mob tactics, and other tactics that fall just short of committing prosecutable offences under the law. In both cases, those who are killed or otherwise harmed are deemed necessary casualties for the sake of the objective, and in both cases the objective (the motivating ideal) is understood constitutively and given the status of an end, to which people are subordinated as means, in violation of the principle of FH. If understood regulatively, the objective would dictate a nonviolent response because it would be understood as a mere representation of universal ethical principles, which place human lives (and rights) ahead of supersensible objects, because the latter exist only in order to help us grasp these principles. Instrumental reason and violence are excused as necessary, in service to that ideal, which can potentially have the effect of violating individual rights. The way that this happens, in practice, among activists, is through the process of scapegoating and social exclusion, but as the climate crisis worsens and economic and political instability erode the force of law and civil order, both neo-Marxist and fascist revolutionaries plan to take advantage of the instability to assert their power. While revolutionary activity in liberal democracies is relatively small and politically ineffectual right now – though it has increasingly found a strong foothold on university campuses -- it could grow in strength exponentially as the climate crisis worsens. This is why the ethical assessment of religious traditions should also, properly, apply to secular militant activism.
According to Juergensmeyer, “cultures of violence” (which he uses to describe cultures that endorse religious violence) typically create martyr figures, as well as engage in sacrificial violence against outsiders, who are viewed as demonic.\(^{536}\) In the same way, secular political cults, which could have an effect on the future of humanity disproportionate to their size, already engage in scapegoating campaigns by inflaming the passions of their followers against those who deviate from the sanctioned ideology (be it anti-capitalist, anti-oppression, “intersectional” etc.). Rene Girard argues that sacrificial violence serves the social function of uniting the community of believers around opposition to a common enemy: “The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric. Everything else derives from that. If once we take this fundamental approach to the sacrifice . . . we can see that there is no aspect of human existence foreign to the subject, not even material prosperity”\(^{537}\) From a Kantian perspective, scapegoating violates the categorical imperative and FH, because it is non-universalizable, inasmuch as it excludes those scapegoated: they are ends, but are treated as means in the course of the scapegoating ritual, which Girard identifies as an unconscious dynamic in human history. A maxim of action that excludes members of humanity from its scope of moral consideration and sanctions violence against them can never become a universal law. Scapegoating is common among militant Leftists, in the form of social exclusion (“purges”), and through shaming opponents. It seeks to dehumanize and silence opponents, not engage in debate with them. Secular climate activism is a necessary part of the growing global response to climate change issues. It has traits by virtue of which it can be assessed using Kant’s ethical system for the assessment of historical religions, and this assessment favours nonviolent, transformative activism which seeks reforms and civil debates in the public arena, instead of destructive and censorious forms of activism.
Activism is a powerful force, far more than what is ordinarily supposed. It invokes supersensible objects and is thus able to have the same effect on people as traditional religions, and it can be expected to grow exponentially as the climate crisis worsens. This is why it is important to provide an ethical analysis for it. It should also be added that the type of activism described above represents an entirely different worldview and system than that of the European Enlightenment. The latter still largely informs the norms and values of countries in the global North. In times of crisis, there will be a temptation to dispense with the old and embrace the new. Countries in the global North are well insulated against the ravages of climate change, as compared to the Global South, but there is a threat to societies that are based on Enlightenment values in the form of anti-Western sentiment, both domestic and abroad. While the so-called “West” is far from perfect, as compared to many other systems of government, certain legacies of the Enlightenment are worth preserving, as for example, civil liberties, a relatively impartial judiciary, respect for human rights, and democratic elections – in short, the “open society.” There is a risk of losing these civilizational assets to either fascist or totalitarian forces in the impending crises. Popper’s thoughts can be used to weigh in on the question of what line should be drawn in a free society, by the state, to protect society without at the same time endangering the values it stands for by violating the freedoms of the open society. Or to rephrase: what role should the juridico-civil state play to protect a free society without violating civil liberties?

3.4 The European Enlightenment and enlightenment as an ideal

There are three meanings of the world enlightenment (Aufklärung). Only two concern us here. The one that does not concern us is the soteriological concept from eastern religious traditions (e.g. moksha, Nibbana). The first of the meanings that concerns us is its use to describe an historical period of which Kant was a prominent figure. The European Enlightenment is what
Charles Taylor calls a “modern social imaginary” -- a social, political and scientific movement that envisaged an ideal for humanity and for society, articulated by rationalist thinkers -- philosophers, statesmen, scientists in roughly the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thinkers of the European Enlightenment advocated the use of reason and scientific principles in all human endeavours (scientific, political, philosophical), human rights and democracy and the principle of egalitarianism, and the rejection of heteronomous religious authority and the ancien régime of despotic political rule that used religion to reinforce itself. They also were critical of religious enthusiasm and superstition. The historical context of the rise of “the task of enlightenment” is growing rationalism and secularization, concurrent with the overthrow of “theology’s age-old hegemony in the world of study” and eradication of magic and belief in the supernatural. The ideals of human freedom and egalitarianism had a huge political influence, contributing to the French and American revolutions, the separation of church and state, and the creation of modern liberal democracies. The social and political ideals of the Enlightenment have never been fully achieved, but in many ways the modern era continues this legacy through the idea of human rights and secularization and the diminishing influence of world religions. In the modern era, however, on numerous occasions humanity has lapsed into barbarism, despotism, and complete disregard for human rights. These lapses have been attributed to the Enlightenment, by some, but through the second meaning of the word enlightenment (as Kant understood it) we may understand the barbarism of modern totalitarian movements as examples of the very thing that Kant advocated against: heteronomy of the will, blind obedience to authority, enthusiasm, fanatical observance of practices devoid of morality, and radical evil. The climate crisis, like no other single phenomenon, forces humanity to take this challenge to heart, because of the massive human rights violations that it can result in (e.g. the creation of countless eco-refugees and
resource conflicts\textsuperscript{539}), and because the use of practical reason is nowhere more important than in the task of preventing the collapse of the conditions that make human civilization and life on Earth possible.

There has been a sustained critical interpretation of the legacy of the European Enlightenment from postcolonial theorists, including eco-feminist Carolyn Merchant, who suggests that the environmental crisis is the result of a mechanistic and anthropocentric Cartesian mind-body dualism that relegated the natural world to instrumental use, to be harnessed by science.\textsuperscript{540} Another critic is eco-feminist Carol J. Adams, who argues that Enlightenment rationalism reflects a patriarchal intellectual bias, one that unjustly relegates nonhuman animals to slavery,\textsuperscript{541} which also has an adverse environmental effect (inasmuch as animal agriculture is a primary driver of global warming). Adorno and Horkheimer in \textit{The Dialectic of Enlightenment} suggest that the industrialism spawned by the Enlightenment helped to plunge the world into mass violence in the twentieth century. They attribute the mass violence of the twentieth century indirectly to Kant in the following way:

\ldots according to Kant, from the standpoint of scientific reason moral forces are neutral drives and forms of behavior, no less than immoral ones \ldots Enlightenment \ldots considers 'human actions and desires exactly as if I were dealing with lines, planes, and bodies.' The totalitarian order has put this into effect in utter seriousness. Freed from supervision by one's own class, which had obliged the nineteenth-century businessman to maintain Kantian respect and reciprocal love, fascism, which by its iron discipline relieves its peoples of the burden of moral feelings, no longer needs to observe any discipline.\textsuperscript{542}

Adorno and Horkheimer’s assertion that Kant views morality as though it were ‘lines, planes, and bodies’ is highly questionable since in Kant’s view pure practical reason exists \textit{a priori}; this means it cannot be thought of as contingent, as though part of the sensible world, or possessing its properties. They seem to portray ML as behaviourism, and then argue that bourgeois class etiquette determines moral behaviour. The concept of freedom, which is central
to ML, eludes their analysis. They seem to be arguing that the only thing that kept mass violence in check was a rule-bound ‘Kantian respect’ enjoyed by businessman of the previous century, and that freedom from supervision by one’s class, under fascism, led to mass violence. This assertion equates class supervision with the enforcement of a moral code. The very point of ML, however, is that one is free to choose, based on principles that issue from practical reason, not heteronomously from social expectations of one’s peers. Adorno and Horkheimer do concede that CI is violated by fascism, which is correct, but then add that “the totalitarian order has granted unlimited rights to calculating thought and puts its trust in science as such. Its canon is its own brutal efficiency” 543 They make the error of collapsing practical reason into instrumental reason, even though former is violated by the latter. Fascism, like despotic religious heteronomy before it, is just another form of the abrogation of freedom.

These characterizations of the European Enlightenment are all something of a straw man argument; the truth is more complex. The Enlightenment has two legacies: its positive legacy continues today through climate scientists, human rights advocates, political leaders and thinkers concerned with future generations, and environmental ethicists. They are all valuable representatives of the application of Enlightenment ideals to the climate crisis. The Nuremberg trial of Nazi leaders affirmed humanitarian values against totalitarianism, the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and established an international tribunal to try crimes against humanity. This effort reflects a neo-Kantian understanding of enlightenment, as reflected through the principle of natural justice. The proliferation of civil rights movements and nonviolent pro-democracy movements in despotic societies both owe their existence to the Enlightenment ideal of egalitarianism. 544 The Enlightenment also has given us the environmental and humanitarian crises of modernity (though unintentionally, for which reason it cannot in its
origins be classed as radical evil): it has given us science and technology, leading to mass industrialization, which is a contributing factor in the climate crisis – as well as the industrialization of mass murder by totalitarian regimes. Inasmuch as it has given us the idea that human rights are paramount, it provides the foundation of a moral argument against unsustainable development and genocide. If we properly understand Enlightenment ideals through a Kantian perspective, the negative environmental legacy of the Enlightenment (that is, the entirely mechanistic and instrumental view of nature and harnessing of science and technology to exploit it for human ends, with no regard for social or environmental consequences) represents a deviation from practical reason and a corruption of its ideals. This is the second meaning of *enlightenment*. It is not an historical movement per se; it is an idea for progressive betterment of humanity through the use of reason. Kant provides a way of understanding how the Enlightenment, which had such lofty aspirations, could gain such infamy among modern (and more specifically postmodern, poststructuralist, and postcolonial) critics. He writes that “precepts and formulas, those mechanical instruments of rational use, or rather misuse, of his [a minor’s] natural endowments, are the ball and chain of everlasting minority.”

DiCenzo comments “It is significant that Kant characterizes this deficient use of reason as *mechanical* . . . indicating his resistance to strictly instrumental applications of reason and to the dehumanizing worldviews sustained thereby . . . reason itself can be made subservient to fixed authority structures as a way to inhibit the liberating imperative of enlightenment.”

DiCenzo comments that Kant’s recognition that instrumental reason runs contrary to the critical philosophy (which understanding Kant owes to Rousseau) “is crucial, since Kant’s work is sometimes reduced to an advocacy for this form of instrumental reason, especially when collapsed into a generic understanding of ‘the Enlightenment project’ with its putative vision of
technical progress. This interpretation loses sight of a wider human and practical (i.e., ethical-political) program.\textsuperscript{547} It should not be the emphasis on reason – rationalism – that is to blame for the crises of modernity, as much as the failures of reason and the corruption of reason. Modern examples of despotism and the environmental crisis are the result of \textit{the failure of reason} and readiness by many to be seduced and coerced by irrational ideologies.\textsuperscript{548}

Kant believes that nonhuman nature should serve as a \textit{means} and human beings, as rational beings, are \textit{ends}.\textsuperscript{549} This hierarchical anthropocentric ontology (somewhat similar to Aristotle’s Great Chain of Being, \textit{sans} supernatural beings) would appear to be part of the environmentally destructive legacy of the Enlightenment, but this overlooks the true meaning of human beings as \textit{ends}.” To say that we are ends is not to say that we are entitled to exploit the natural world with impunity. It refers to the idea that rational beings are \textit{lawgivers.” The law referred to is ML: rational beings give moral laws to themselves, to govern the maxims of their actions. Having the status as \textit{ends} does not entitle us to the limitless freedom to exploit or consume, which is the primary conceit of the modern age; rather, it refers to our status as beings endowed with reason, by virtue of which we have a moral responsibility to act in accordance with universalizable principles, and in the modern historical context, the application of these principles, through judgement, dictates environmental conservation, in consideration of the rights of all others.

How may we understand the destruction of the natural world and biodiverse species in Kantian terms? It is caused by the pursuit of short-term economic gain, through technological means, placing self-love over and above universal ethical principles. This goes contrary to the original goals of the Enlightenment, and is caused by the inability or unwillingness to think for ourselves, contrary to the principle of enlightenment. At the same time, the climate crisis
presents us with an opportunity to become more enlightened, as a society, through a greater awareness of the limitations of nature and our relation to it, and the need for the exercise of principles of justice and respect for others in the course of the emergence of new forms of society.

The fact that in the twenty-first century we have ample knowledge of the environmental costs of fossil fuel use, and have access to a more sustainable alternative (renewable energy) and effective energy efficiency measures, but have failed (thus far) as a society to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy, could be interpreted as an example of radical evil, originating in the corruption of the freedom of power of choice. Kant describes evil as “the propensity of the power of choice to maxims that subordinate the incentives of the moral law to others (not moral ones) . . . it reverses the ethical order as regards the incentives of a free power of choice; and although with this reversal there can still be legally good (legale) actions, yet the mind’s attitude is thereby corrupted at its root . . .” (R, 6:30). There is so much in this sentence that applies to the conscious choice of those who support the fossil fuel industry. Let us take to the example of those who provide political, financial, legal, and media support for the Keystone pipeline, which has become a symbol in the United States and Canada for the political contest over global warming, environmental protection, and climate justice concerns. Supporters of the pipeline are well aware that it will contribute to global warming, and that global warming can have disastrous consequences, but they subordinate this consideration to immediate economic concerns, which reflect a form of collective self-love. Their awareness of its consequences means that their actions constitute radical evil. This acquiescence to heteronomous incentives is justified through positive laws that fail to advance a universalizable conception of justice. “The mind’s attitude” is “corrupted at its root” at the point at which the decision is made, of free will, to ignore universal
concerns in favour of self-interested incentives, which are justified through a political and economic ideology, supported by legal positivism.

The European Enlightenment, then, according to this interpretation, should not be held responsible for the environmental crisis and other crises of modernity (e.g. the Holocaust), because enlightenment (as Kant understands it) does not refer to the triumph of instrumental reason. On the contrary, it refers to the process of calling into question instrumental reason, or any ideology or worldview, and even external laws that undermine human rights and human freedoms. It could be argued that climate activists who deliberately break the law through acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, by being arrested for blocking the entrance of coal deliveries to coal-fired power plants, are exercising a form of autonomy of the will, one that gives greater priority to ML than to laws that protect an egregious example of structural violence. At the same time, it can also be argued that breaking the law, even nonviolently, and for a good cause, breaches an important social contract upon which civil society is based: respect for and obedience to the law itself, in line with Kant’s idea of the predisposition to personality, which is respect for the moral law itself, and which could also be reflected in respect for juridical laws (even though it often is not). The argument for the observance of juridical laws is based on knowledge of the danger posed by widespread disregard for them: violent anarchy.

The ongoing process of enlightenment is the utilization of reason to question fixed authority structures that are unjust (lawfully and civilly, through rational discourse), not the instrumental use of reason to maintain those unjust structures. The idea of human rights does not mean the right to unlimited freedom and consumption; it implies self-imposed limitations and a moral responsibility, in consideration of the rights of all others. Of course, not everyone voluntarily observes human rights, for which reason a juridico-civil state is practically necessary
(provided its laws are shaped by ML). A willful and knowing disregard for universal ethical principles, contrary to the dictates of ML, and acquiescence to a form of heteronomy, which puts endless economic growth ahead of all other considerations, describes the mindset of those responsible for the climate crisis. Enlightenment ideals, as articulated by Kant, take on a new importance and urgency if we consider the fact that denying the veracity of climate science defies reason, both epistemologically and ethically.

DiCenso comments that “the task of learning to think more clearly about ethical and political questions is not simply a matter of logical refinement, but of taking empirical occurrences and new insights into account.” The ideal of rational enlightenment, then, is not a philosophical justification for brutal human superiorism, which destroys nature and other animals to fulfill endless frivolous desires (what Paul Shephard calls “zero-sum humanism”); rather, it is the use of practical reason in judgements that have important ethical consequences. While some parts of the European Enlightenment have contributed to the crises of modernity, the idea of enlightenment itself — the idea of thinking for oneself, in accordance with moral considerations generated by reason — provides a much-needed remedy for these crises.

Enlightenment, for Kant, means the “free and open use of our rational faculties to try to better understand ourselves and to improve the social-political worlds in which we live.” This can involve “open public inquiry”, questioning established norms that may be irrational and unjust. In the essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” Kant, according to DiCenso, “interrogates parochial ideas and institutions undergirding unjust societies, seeking to dislodge these with more universalizable and hence fairer principles.” Kant starts with a critique of “self-imposed” minority — meaning the way in which human beings fall into the pattern of heteronomously allowing religious and political authorities to think for them. This
makes them somewhat complicit with the moral failings of the society (e.g. engaging in unjust wars, human rights violations, economic injustice, etc.), although the far greater share of culpability lies with those authorities who are motivated by the advancement of their own power or interests in these situations. These authorities exercise “psychological, doctrinal, as well as physical means to keep others in a condition of minority.”

In the context of the climate crisis, we may think of those fossil fuel corporations, in league with political lobbyists and political leaders, who advanced climate change denial and skepticism, which has had the effect of protecting oil profits, but also endangering the global environment. There can be no more blatant example of the manipulation of incentives in the public domain, in defiance of practical reason, by those in a position of great authority. The ethical implications of climate science – the necessity to shift to a society based on renewable energy and energy conservation – were flagrantly disregarded in favour of self-love, in the form of the promotion of the paradigm of limitless economic growth. Climate change denial is thus an act that stands as an example of radical evil, as it is defined by Kant. The phrase *Sapere aude!* means literally “dare to be wise” – meaning use your own reason, think for yourself, which in the context of a theocratic or despotic society would mean having the courage to exercise the free and open use of critical faculties and questioning established norms and traditions that seem unjust. For example, one may think of those who dare to question human rights violations in theocratic or despotic regimes, even if doing so puts them at grave risk. In liberal democracies, unpopular free speech is still largely permitted, but in totalitarian regimes the punishments are severe. Political dissidents in these regimes advocate for free elections and against political corruption. In the context of the climate crisis, political advocacy might take the form of openly questioning the cultural norms and traditions and laws that contribute to social injustice via greenhouse gas emissions. It may take
the form of calling into question the silence or denialism of religious or political leaders. It might take the form of the evangelical Christian who questions religious climate change denial in his own church and risks social exclusion for taking that position. There are numerous possible examples of persons exercising autonomous ethical initiatives against dominant norms. These initiatives, if originating in practical reason, do not always fall nicely onto one side or another in terms of political partisanship; for example, environmental groups can be subject to open critical inquiry for falling silent on the issue of the environmental cost of animal agriculture because they fear of a backlash from donors. In another example, labour unions may be in favour of extraction industries and the production of unsustainable vehicles, putting job security ahead of environmental concerns. The allegation by climate skeptics that left-wing politicians, environmental NGOs, activist movements, and even climate scientists themselves may be unduly influenced by self-interest (in terms of votes, or funding, or identity politics) cannot be dismissed, because there are no human beings or institutions that should be considered above moral scrutiny, or given a pass when it comes to applying an ethical assessment of social and political phenomena.

Any individual or group can fall sway to parochial interests, because the propensity to evil exists in all persons, regardless of political orientation or religious affiliation. The political Left is as vulnerable to these tendencies as the political Right; take, for instance, the rise of identity politics, which had its origins in egalitarianism, but has deviated into irrational enthusiasm and tribalism based on shared emotional demands, through what Tanveer Ahmed terms “the elevation of the subjective” which has resulted in largely irrational protest movements predicated on outward projection of psychological harm. This is why enlightenment as an ideal is important for the ethical assessment of all religious and political movements, especially
as the climate crisis worsens, posing even greater life and death moral dilemmas. A concern will be that as the crisis worsens the gulf between elite groups and disenfranchised masses will widen even more, leading to widespread resentments and political unrest. This will leave them open to influence by the worst aspects of historical religions and the worst examples of political ideology.

The Enlightenment critique of religion takes on new importance if we consider the way in which the Christian Right supports climate change denial, in support of endless economic growth at all costs, even if it runs the risk of violating human rights en masse. The way most other religious leaders fall silent in the face of the crisis (and thus take a position, by default, in favour of an unsustainable status quo) could be understood as an example of radical evil, especially because their positions entail a greater degree of moral responsibility than that of the average person. Religious climate change denial is also an example of biblical literalism and the view that empirical science is at odds with the biblical account of history. Biblical literalism and the religious denigration of science in the United States began with the denial of the theory of evolution; it has now been extended to justify climate change denial. These are examples of constitutive interpretations of the Bible, in contrast to Northcott’s (and other eco-theologians’) interpretations, which acknowledge climate science and employ regulative moral arguments in response to it. One definition of the Enlightenment sees it as a movement with “hopes of social progress through humanitarianism and the scientific outlook.”\textsuperscript{559} The ethical implications and applications of climate science, in this sense, exemplify the Enlightenment outlook, and many climate scientists, such as James Hansen, express strong moral concerns for future generations (he uses his grandchildren as an example).\textsuperscript{560} It would be fair to say that they are motivated in their work by humanitarian concern. Hansen’s book \textit{Storms of My Grandchildren} (2009) is a
testament to this. There are many other examples of individuals who act from conscience, and
demonstrate rational hope, “as if everything depended on [them]” (R, 6:101).

3.5 The Doctrine of Right, the paradox of intolerance, and the state

The Doctrine of Right articulates Kant’s ideas on rights and duties, the question of
external laws, and in general explores concepts of justice and freedom. It is a foundational text
for the formation of an impartial judicial system in enlightened societies. This section will not be
able to examine the entire text, due to its length; rather, it is to be used here to stimulate
discussion regarding questions of rights and the state. Kant’s ethical system underpins the idea of
rights, as discussed previously, and his philosophy of religion can be understood as an
articulation of the need for non-coercive moral education, to cultivate inner ethical dispositions.
Enlightenment values, at their best, reflect universal laws that are necessary for the operation of a
just society. It should be added that this type of society is under threat from forces that would
displace it. The economic and political instability expected as a result of climate change may
provide the opportunity for that to happen. It is common, in discussions of possible future
scenarios, to focus on the adverse effects of the weather (e.g., drought, flooding), but another
indirect threat to humanity is posed by social and political regress to despotism and barbarism
that may accompany economic degeneration.

The Metaphysics of Morals is divided into the Doctrine of Virtue and the Doctrine of
Right. These roughly correspond to the ethico-civil and juridico-civil states, respectively. Ideally,
they are drawn from the same source: ML. Kant begins by noting that he is concerned with the
question of how to determine “what is right?” He answers that a right has an obligation
corresponding to it, then describes “the universal principle of right”: “Any action is right if it can
coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law . . .” (MS, 6:230-1). Further in the text Kant provides a variation on the same idea:

*There is only one innate right. Freedom* (independence from being constrained by another’s choice), insofar as it can coexist with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law, is the only original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity (MS, 6:237).

These are expressions of the idea, discussed previously, that rights are really freedoms, and that some limitations on freedoms are necessary, to protect the freedom of all. Kant calls the concept of rights and freedoms a postulate, which suggests that it is subject to interpretation. For example, a right is not unlimited, but nor does the limitation on rights imply the unlimited power of the state to trample them. An impartial system is needed to balance individual rights with the public good. Our judicial system in the West is based on these principles. However imperfectly it may be applied, it is in theory balanced and fair, unlike many other judicial models throughout history, because it adheres to the principle of natural justice. Where citizens do not voluntarily limit the satisfaction of incentives, to the point of harming others, then the juridical state is necessary. Kant calls this “an authorization to use coercion” (MS, 6:231), in accordance with freedom (i.e., universal ethical principles). Although coercive, the external laws of a society serve to protect freedom by “hindering” the “hindrance to freedom.” In other words, the state is correct to step in, even if doing so limits the freedom of the wrongdoer. This provides Ataner with the argument for environmental regulations, as noted above.

Given that not only the freedom of all, but the very existence of all, is endangered by the unsustainable status quo (e.g., continued fossil fuel production and use, clear-cut deforestation, animal agriculture, lack of energy efficiency, etc.), how far should the state be permitted to limit economic and consumer freedoms? And to what extent should the juridical state permit attempts to foment militant revolution against a free society, without at the same violating the civil
liberties of protestors? This is a question that has in recent years arisen in the context of trying to prevent terrorism, leading in some cases to unconstitutional actions by the state that were nonetheless deemed necessary at the time, by guardians of national security.\textsuperscript{561} This situation is described by Popper in his defense of coercive measures, called the “paradox of tolerance”:

\begin{quote}
\ldots unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.\textsuperscript{562}
\end{quote}

The question that legislators, judges, and the police have before them is how far should dissent be allowed to go before it endangers society? An open society will give very wide latitude to dissent, but outright violence (which can include property damage by rioters, or terrorism) clearly endangers society. How far should the state be permitted to go, to prevent terrorism? Should it be allowed to engage in torture (which violates FH), for example, or use extrajudicial coercive measures such as unlawful detention? The idea that the rights and freedom of \textit{all} are to be protected could be interpreted to include the civil liberties and basic human rights of the accused as well, who must be presumed innocent until proven guilty, thus necessitating restrictions on necessary force and coercive power by the state, to prevent it from overstepping its rightful boundaries. As societies experience degeneration, these issues will increasingly be put to the test. We can already see that some societies (totalitarian and despotic states) have never reached a basic threshold of enlightenment. Societies where such values are still prized have the dual challenge of both safeguarding and living up to them, and setting the example for other societies. And what of practices that are legally permitted but endanger society as much if not more than the worst riots? Specifically, what about environmental destruction permitted by lawgivers? Many of them are corrupted by the incentive of political bribery from fossil fuel companies to continue supporting those industries.\textsuperscript{563} Kant’s idea that the rights and freedoms of
all should be protected by limitations imposed by the state is also relevant here, to end the widespread pattern of government corruption that allows unsustainable industries to have undue influence and to act with impunity, and even to shape public laws to their own ends. What perpetuates this problem is the fact that to be elected to office, especially in the U.S., one must have a considerable amount of campaign money. Accordingly, campaign finance reform in electoral politics is sorely needed in that country. One of the great problems, currently, is that the political, financial, and legal powers of many multi-national corporations exceeds that of governments, and can thus bend them to their will, especially when it comes to bypassing or weakening environmental regulations. It is necessary to reign in any force in society that endangers the freedoms of all (MS, 6:232). This principle is applicable not only to end violent riots and terrorism, but also to end corporate and government practices that endanger human societies, due to climate change. This is not merely a case of ending a “system of power” or changing an economic system. Capitalism is often blamed, but it is far from clear that ending capitalism is in everyone’s best interests, since it has brought a great deal of good to the world, as well as evil, and because its rival economic model, socialism, simply centralizes control and power in order to benefit a new elite, while retaining an unsustainable technocracy. Rather, what seems to be needed are reforms, to end corruption, and to move toward the ideal of the ethical community, based on sustainable sufficiency, and requiring limitations on unsustainable economic growth and consumption. This could take the form of a limited type of capitalism, or ‘green capitalism’, one that helps local economies and businesses, and is more sustainable. This idea of more sustainable decentralized governance is increasing in popularity, as an alternative model to reliance on macro-economies, resulting in pseudo-religious virtual communities dedicated to the idea, such as the Zeitgeist movement. Currently, national and
international economic self-interest has created an “ethical state of nature” in which there is positive law (the juridical state), but the absence of the cultivation of inner ethical states that are necessary for honest governance in the interests of all the people – including future generations. Kant explores these states at length, in *Religion*, through the regulative use of religious concepts, but in *The Doctrine of Right*, they are presented in a more secular fashion as the “duties of right.” The first of three is “1) Be an honorable human being,” (MS, 6:236). Kant continues this maxim of action with a variation on FH: “Do not make yourself a mere means for others but be at the same time an end for them” – which he calls “the right of humanity in our own person” (ibid). There could not be any more important maxim for a public official to obey, to avoid corruption (i.e., not making oneself a means for other), and at the same time providing needed moral and political leadership – i.e., being an “end”, a lawgiver governed by reason. The second duty of right is “2) Do no wrong to anyone … even if, to avoid doing so, you should have to stop associating with others” and the third: “3) (If you cannot help associating with others) [then] . . . Enter a condition in which what belongs to each can be secured to him against everyone else” (MS, 6:237). These three duties clearly assert the importance of individual autonomy, and yet also provide the basis for a society of benefit to all. The interests of all are best served by individual rights (including property and human rights), but with the important proviso that the state may be permitted to impose some limitations. State power can be greatly abused, which is why those in positions of political, judicial and institutional authority need to engage in autonomous ethical reflection as befits their station, and not succumb to enthusiastic delusions of the many types that can adversely affect moral judgement. The law has many grey areas where positive law may fail and good judgement is needed. Kant say that in cases where the courts have insufficient information to render a fair judgement (as in the case of correcting an inequity that is
not recognized by law), the imposition of positive law and assertions of “what is right” alone cannot remedy it; only “the court of conscience” can do so (MS, 6:235). This is why religions are potentially very useful: for awakening the conscience, to facilitate moral decision-making in accordance with universal laws, and to augment and support good governance and the judiciary in this task. In the absence of the cultivation of such principles, human beings revert to other systems – those based more on emotions or incentives, reflecting an “ethical state of nature,” such as collectivist identity politics, or forms of self-interest masquerading as universal ideals, or despotic religious laws.
Chapter IV: Principles and concepts applied to climate change issues

Chapter III provided an examination of specialized topics, to further illustrate how universal ethical principles are applicable to diverse issues that all in some way touch on climate change. In Chapter IV, additional principles and ideas from Religion and the critical philosophy are defined and applied to climate change issues. Climate change is said to be the most complex and serious challenge facing humanity at this time,\textsuperscript{567} so it warrants a special focus. It should also be noted that each section below represents only an initial examination of the principle or concept and how it may be applied. To that end, it begins with a definition of the principle, then an application. This structure is represented as follows: (i) Principle. (ii) Application.

4.0 Freedom and free will

(i) Principle. Free will originates from pure practical reason, and can even be said to be the same as reason: “Since reason is required for the derivation of actions from laws, the will is nothing other than practical reason . . . the will is a capacity to choose \textit{only that} which reason independently of inclination cognizes as practically necessary, that is, as good” (G, 4:412). There are two parts to the will: the first is \textit{Willkür}, which is that part of the will that operates within the social and political realm and is influenced by it. It is the “sensible” part of the will (the “sensible power of choice”). There is also \textit{die Wille}, the inner part of the will (so to speak), “indicating the transcendental free will that subtends practical decision-making.”\textsuperscript{568} \textit{Die Wille} is the incorruptible seat of the determining power of choice. \textit{Willkür} is the corruptible part of the will. Despite this, the \textit{Willkür} is still free: “yet not \textit{brutum} (animal) but \textit{liberum} (free), because sensibility does not render its action necessary. . .”\textsuperscript{569} DiCenso notes that “\textit{Willkür} interconnects with interpersonal, social, and political realities. Choice occurs within phenomenal and social worlds shared with others. At the same time, the power of choice is not compelled by sensibly intuited phenomena or sensible impulses.”\textsuperscript{570} The fact that the power of choice is not compelled and that it is still free, despite the presence of potentially heteronomous influences, is important. This distinction could have an implication for jurisprudence, where retributive justice is decided for alleged crimes, because the judgement must consider the degree of culpability. If everyone can make moral
choices freely, despite the presence of compelling forces, then a person must be held responsible for his or her actions. Heteronomous influences are not a valid excuse. For example, the defense of genetic predisposition is sometimes raised in the context of legal defense, but “ethical issues are irreducible to genetic determinism.” The result is that if the propensity toward moral evil is “not a natural predisposition” (R, 6:32), and if we commit an evil deed, then we must be held accountable for it. The principle could also be used to argue against any naturalistic justification for selfishness, such as social Darwinism or the logical fallacy of the ‘appeal to nature.’ It also represents a position that is contrary to mechanistic and behaviourist personality models. Kant believes that our sensuous nature and the “lure of inclinations” contains “too little to provide a ground of moral evil in the human being.” This is an affirmation of the power of choice, and a denial that incentives can be thought of as strong enough to overpower ML, except through the free choice of the individual. DiCenso argues that Kant’s idea of the propensity to evil is “constitutive of being human while yet anti-deterministic. In other words, we are all capable of choosing according to the moral law, but, as human beings with limited awareness and fallible wills, we will all sometimes choose wrongly . . .” The propensity to evil comes into play through “a free power of choice” and works by corrupting “the ground of all maxims” (R, 6:37).

(ii) Application. An implication of the two parts of the will, and the freedom of the will, so understood, is that it places responsibility on all of us, to some degree, for the conditions that have led to the climate crisis. The degree of responsibility is debatable, because there are vast institutional, legal and corporate structures in place to facilitate fossil fuel use and other unsustainable practices, but even though this is the case, it would then be our responsibility to reduce our participation in them and to reform them somehow. The problem is that because there
are so many of us and the responsibility is so widely dispersed, it is easy to abdicate. Hannah Arrendt explores this issue in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, through what she terms “the rule of Nobody”:

We heard the protestations of the defense that Eichmann was after all only a ‘tiny cog’ in the machinery of the Final Solution . . . Of course, it is important to the political and social sciences that the essence of totalitarian government, and perhaps the nature of every bureaucracy, is to make functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machinery out of men, and thus to dehumanize them. And one can debate long and profitably on *the rule of Nobody*, [italicized] which is what the political form known as bureaucracy truly is . . . we have become very much accustomed by modern psychology and sociology, not to speak of modern bureaucracy, to explaining away the responsibility of the doer for his deed in terms of this or that kind of determinism.576

The heteronomy that exists within the corporation or the state or the large institution certainly exists, and it has a standardizing effect on individuals. Should it be a mitigating factor, in terms of assigning culpability, if everyone at the level of the individual has the capacity to know right from wrong? Even if judgement is corrupted by outside influences, it can be argued that based on Kant’s idea of the incorruptibility of *die Wille*, a person must be held accountable for his or her actions, because of this essential freedom to choose, which no political system, compelling ideology, or positive law can take from us. This is also reflected in the principle of practical reason that “each must . . . so conduct himself as if everything depended on him” (R, 6:101). This emphasis on freedom of choice, despite the undeniable influence of heteronomous factors, could be applied to the question of retributive justice in international courts for determining responsibility for crimes against humanity in connection to climate change. Executives at Exxon Mobil Oil Corporation knew of the possible consequences of continued fossil fuel burning since the 1960s, but paid public relations lobbyists to spread climate change denial propaganda in the mainstream media instead, despite the long-term consequences of doing so.577 They did this to safeguard oil profits, and their actions provide a good example of radical
evil (see 4.1). As a result, there have been some legal efforts to start class-action suits against them. By way of counterargument one may say that the public demanded oil or that the existing laws allowed ongoing oil production, but neither point negates the moral responsibility of the individuals in charge of the oil corporations. The responsibility of others does not negate one’s own responsibility, and legality does not equal moral rightness.

There is a second and even more important application of free will to the climate crisis: the potential of every human being to redeem himself or herself, and in a larger sense for humanity to do the same. It relates to die Wille. This part of the will is completely autonomous. It gives Willkür, which otherwise can be corrupted, its capacity for freedom. As such it constitutes a redemptive element for humanity, because no matter how far astray we may become, there is still some part of us through which there is the potential for change. This is a hopeful note for the climate crisis, in the face of the common tendency to be pessimistic about its outcome. The potential contained in die Wille means that everyone, despite the many influences and incentives visited upon them, still has the potential to act in accordance with CI at any time. Whatever the eventual outcome, there is still some value in this choice; the value of the good will is intrinsic. Perhaps it is this knowledge that gave many people sufficient faith in goodness to survive some of the worst suffering imaginable throughout history. Kant even goes so far as to say that the good will has infinite value even if changes nothing in the world (GR, 4:394). Kant identifies the capacity that gives our lives meaning, even if we cannot achieve the ideal society or fail to live up to the highest standard of good life conduct of which we are capable: “the usefulness or fruitfulness” of the good will “can neither add anything to this worth nor take anything away from it” (ibid). This, of course, does not mean that we should do nothing about climate change; rather, it could be taken to mean that ML should be the guiding principle in terms of what we
choose to do, rather than succumbing to incentives that have no moral worth. If we value the ideal of good life conduct and the creation of the ethical community above all, it will give us the motivation and guiding principles we need to face this challenge, to act “as if everything depended on” this effort (R, 6:101). Shared representations of these ideals allow us to convey this moral imperative to one another.

There are several ways in which we can talk about freedom in the context of climate change. For example, there is the freedom to choose “ethical consumption,” which represents a moral choice, and to choose wisely requires moral judgement (since not all choices are wise, even if well-intentioned). There is also freedom of speech, which is important in the context of contesting widely accepted cultural beliefs and practices generally considered sacrosanct (e.g. the discussion around population control and reproduction, or culturally protected practices that violate human or animal rights). Properly speaking, even the freedom of expression of climate change deniers should be upheld, insofar as the principle of free speech has no value if it is only for views one agrees with. 580 Based on his own experience, Kant advocated freedom to dissent from dogmatic religious beliefs. The political and economic implications of climate science (i.e., challenging the dominant economic system) have led to some scientists being silenced by the state. 581 Freedom of speech for those within religious traditions who wish to argue for a pluralistic version of the ethical community, in concert with secular political efforts, is also important, because in some traditions (e.g., Islam) orthodoxy is enforced through violence. One could also speak of freedom from egregious bodily harm (i.e., negative rights), in the context of conflicts that may arise in the event of economic collapse and competition for resources – which must certainly be a problem for many eco-refugees; this is a freedom enshrined in the concept of negative human rights.
Kant’s primary concern with freedom, however, relates to free will and freedom of thought, from which all other freedoms may be said to issue. The alternative to the open society in which these values are upheld is the closed society (or society in the process of closing) in which rational debate in the public arena is not allowed (or is severely constricted), suppressing views and contributing to political polarization. The absence of civil liberties contributes to violence, because freedom of speech, while allowing much speech that may seem wrong, also provides the opportunity for debate, without which tensions can escalate.

Rational beings as moral agents have free will and can choose between good or evil at any time. Kant dismisses the idea of historical determinism to describe the progress of humanity: progressivist determinism is the idea “that the world steadfastly . . . forges ahead . . . from bad to better,” which Kant says is an “optimistic presupposition on the part of the moralists . . . intended to encourage . . . that seed of goodness that perhaps lies in us . . .” (R, 6:20). In the second Critique, Kant says that the idea of “endless progress” is of “the greatest usefulness” (CPrV, 5:122), insofar as it can inspire the aspiration to “moral perfection.” The idea of moral progress, so understood, may inspire us to collectively strive for the attainment of RE, but the vicissitudes of human history argue against moral progressivism. Kant tries to find a “middle ground” (ibid) between unwarranted optimism and the pessimism derived from observation – namely seeing human beings as possessing freedom, the capacity for both good and evil, the capacity for moral decision making. There are various forms of progressivism advanced today in two opposing directions: (i) by those who wish to suggest that growing economic prosperity (the right to which is enshrined in the ideal of “economic freedom”) and technological advancement are reasons for optimism for humanity, and (ii) by those who engage with the question of climate change, but retain an optimism regarding the eventual outcome, based on technological optimism. While the
idea of moral progress for humanity is a valuable heuristic tool to inspire us to collectively strive for the attainment of the ethical community, the vicissitudes of human history argue against any deterministic progressivism. The European Enlightenment has given us the idea of human rights and democracy and its technological advances have done much to emancipate humanity from suffering, poverty, and disease. Enlightenment values continue to inspire hopeful scenarios for the future of humanity, based on a combination of egalitarian ideals and technological progress, such as demonstrated through the power of the science-fiction narrative Star Trek, the success of which is due to the fact that it tells a “story” (in Berry’s sense of the word), and has become a modern-day form of mythology, serving the same function as ancient mythologies.\(^{582}\) However, these progressive visions for humanity are relatively recent in terms of the scale of human history, and can easily be reversed at any time. Such gains as have been made have been hard won and the outcome of the contest is by no means certain. Ancient prejudices and violent instincts are ever present in any human civilization, and can erupt at any time. In a world of dwindling resources and contests over resources, human rights may be violated \textit{en masse}, and religious despotism could experience an even greater renaissance than it already has, due to the human tendency to fall back on simplistic or comforting worldviews in the face of suffering and uncertainty.

Although the European Enlightenment, based on this idea of endless progress, in many ways represents a high-point in human civilization (e.g. giving us the idea of human rights and democracy, liberating humanity from the shackles of religious despotism, and influencing the modern civil rights era and modern notions egalitarianism), progress is not inevitable. More optimistically, the inertia that seems to hold our species back from remedying climate change can also, because of free will, be overcome. The power of supersensible cognition to sway
masses of people cannot be underestimated. The potential of religions, addressed previously, speaks to this possibility. Sociologist Ara Norenzayan says that as climate change wreaks havoc on the world in coming years and natural resources potentially grow scarce, then suffering and hardship could fuel religiosity. “People want to escape suffering, but if they can’t get out of it, they want to find meaning,” Norenzayan says.\(^{583}\) If Norenzayan is correct in this assertion, it would confirm Kant’s dismissal of inevitable progressivism, as well as his view of religion as “servile faith.” It would also help explain the rise of totalitarian utopian movements that want to eradicate the *ancien régime*, and institute a new world order, to redress historical wrongs (based on every sort of inequity) and to eliminate all suffering through correct thought. Those in these movements often find an ultimate meaning or purpose in their vocations, which confirms the theory that religion, as such, will never disappear and can take on new and potentially much more violent forms.

Historical religious traditions can play an active role in the reinforcement of resource conflicts, legitimizing them and providing ideological justification for them;\(^{584}\) at the same time, historical religious traditions have the potential to be peace-makers.\(^{585}\) They have the potential to serve both good and evil – where good is the actualization of ML, and evil is its violation. The postulate of freedom can be used to argue against deterministic worldviews, and to emphasize moral responsibility in the face of what may seem to be overwhelmingly powerful systemic forces predicated on an underlying (structural) violence. This is important in the context of climate change, for arguing in favour of behavioural and structural change, and against technological optimism (if it is presented as the only option). Human freedom to choose between maxims of action that are universalizable or non-universalizable (or more precisely, choices that exist somewhere on a scale or spectrum of universalizability, since it is more of a spectrum than
a binary, as indicated by Kant’s figurative use of the image of the circle also means that moral agents can, at any time, choose to go in one direction or the other. The possibility of freedom is always present, in any circumstance. This philosophy relies on rational hope. It suggests that we ought to have faith in the human potential to change for the better, even against all the evidence that such faith might be misplaced. The philosophy of freedom helps us to believe that a solution to the climate crisis is possible, insofar as all human beings have the potential to change for the better, and as Kant says in an important passage, that potential always exists, at every moment: “however evil a human been has been right up to the moment of an impending free action (evil even habitually, as second nature), his duty to better himself was not just in the past: it still is his duty now . . .” (R, 6:41). This describes the potential for redemption through free will.

4.1 The propensity to evil

(i) Principle. Evil, in Kant’s philosophy, is the improper inversion of priorities, a deviation from the incorporation of ML into one’s maxim of action: “He is conscious of the moral law and yet has incorporated into his maxim the (occasional) deviation from it” (R, 6:32). The awareness of violating ML means that it is a choice, an act of free will. Another expression of this is the description of depravity as “the corruption of the human heart.” It is:

... the propensity of the power of choice to maxims that subordinate the incentives of the moral law to others (not moral ones). It can also be called the perversity (perversitas) of the human heart, for it reverses the ethical order as regards the incentives of a free power of choice; and although with this reversal there can still be legally good (legale) actions, yet the mind’s attitude is thereby corrupted at its root . . .” (R, 6:30).

This corruption of reason (depravity) exists as a counterpoint to the proper (ethical) use of reason, as represented by ML. Willkür, that part of the will that can be affected by heteronomous influences, can knowingly choose to put self-love ahead of ML. The fact of
knowing that the consequences of doing so will harm others, and of thus being “conscious of the moral law,” is important here. Radical evil describes a choice that occurs daily for nearly every human being to the degree that they choose to participate in instrumental reason. Somewhat like the idea of original sin, to which it has been compared, the propensity to evil is ubiquitous. Self-love and the pursuit of personal happiness of itself is not a bad thing; for example, Kant refers to the ‘predisposition to animality’ as a morally neutral predisposition, necessary for human life; but it can be corrupted when we put self-love ahead of ML. In a truly civil society, everyone would pursue his or her self-interest just to the degree that was necessary and not beyond, in consideration of the needs of others.

A person is not evil because he carries out an evil action, but because his actions allow “the interference of evil maxims in him” (R, 6:20). Kant refers to an “underlying evil maxim” that determines all others; it is giving priority to self-love over ML. He says that “… the ground of evil cannot lie in any object determining the power of choice through inclination, not in any natural impulses, but only in a rule that the power of choice itself produces for the exercise of its freedom, i.e., in a maxim” (R, 6:21). For example, if a man experiences a desire for wealth or sex, these things themselves are not evil, but choosing the satisfaction of these desires over the interests of others, in a way that violates FH (i.e., theft, rape), requires that the man allow his actions to be influenced by these incentives to act in a way that is contrary to good moral conduct. This propensity lies in “the first ground of the adoption of maxims” and the “free power of choice . . . antecedent to every use of freedom given in experience” (R, 6:22). All persons have the capacity for both good and evil, and because of this they are at any time free to choose between them, using reason and judgement. Kant identifies evil as a propensity common to all persons: “… we must presuppose evil as subjectively necessary in every human being, even the
best” (R, 6:32). He adds that it is not a “natural predisposition, but something that a human being can be held accountable for …” (ibid). What distinguishes “radical evil” is awareness of the evil thus chosen. Evil, therefore, cannot be blamed on nature, nor can it be blamed on society or other external factors.

(ii) Application. First, it should be stated that by carrying the concept of evil over from traditional theology and giving it a secular explanation, Kant provides a valuable service, because there are some things that happen (such as deliberate murder or torture) to which only the word evil properly applies; secular descriptions cannot do justice to some events or actions. Kant’s definition deserves wider usage.

The democratization of evil, implicit in the idea that everyone occasionally deviates from ML, is important for a discussion of the ethics of climate change because one of the defenses of the fossil fuel industry against charges of being so-called ‘climate criminals’ is that everyone uses fossil fuels and thus shares in the burden of responsibility for creating the climate crisis.\(^588\) This means there are a great many things that could be described as evil, ranging from the relatively trivial, in everyday use, to the horrendous. Using fossil fuels, for example, is unavoidable for most people. Choosing to “opt out” of their use would require not being part of industrial civilization. The only way forward, morally, is to reduce the use of them, at the personal level, and to help advance the transition to renewable energy, which is an incremental process that has met with great resistance. A great deal of that resistance lies at the foot of the fossil fuel industries that funded climate change denial public relations efforts, despite clear knowledge of the negative environmental consequences.\(^589\) Meanwhile they promote their own record as striving to balance “sustainability”\(^590\) with their commitment to stakeholders – even though fossil fuel production and use is inherently unsustainable. Governments also bear some
responsibility, due to complicity with that industry’s objectives, but it is a systemic problem, which makes it easy for individuals (even those in positions of great responsibility) to evade personal moral responsibility. Avoiding responsibility in this way has become a prevalent and largely hidden form of heteronomy of the will. Consumption of fossil fuels is so ubiquitous that it has shaped the nomos of modern societies, providing people with a reason not to think about it too closely. This has created a situation in which reasonable people feel internally conflicted regarding their role in the impending crisis, and feel powerless to address it.

Are all moral choices that incorporate non-universalizable maxims of action equally morally culpable? Clearly, this cannot be so, because mass murder is not the moral equivalent of failing to recycle. That means there must be degrees of culpability. If we look at Kant’s ‘ecclesiastical authorities,’ we may suppose that he focuses on them in Religion because of the power they have, which in many instances is abused. Perhaps we can say that degrees of culpability correspond to degree of political power, the harm done by them, pre-existing knowledge of the harm, and the option not to harm (the existence of alternatives).

Kant’s focus on free will negates the eco-socialist blaming of the rich if such blame becomes a way of avoiding moral responsibility to engage in behavioural change. Kant’s theory of evil places responsibility squarely on individuals, against the tendency to abdicate personal responsibility in deference to institutions, systems, ideologies, and higher authorities. Autonomy of the will requires standing apart from society and ‘thinking for oneself.’

Another issue is the question of violence or nonviolence in climate activism. Pro-violence activism, even for good causes such as environmental protection, such as that defended by Ward Churchill or Derek Jensen, should be considered automatically non-universalizable. Activists (especially anarchists) who are ambiguous about the use of violence leave the door open to its
use in their movements.\textsuperscript{593} There is also the subtler form of violence that occurs through scapegoating and the heteronomy of collective thinking, endemic to social justice activist movements. Totalitarian utopianism, perhaps the result of “repressed transcendence,”\textsuperscript{594} stems from the subordination of moral laws to immoral incentives, which would certainly include the aggrandizing of political power by those advancing such a society. It is interesting to note that without the capacity to envisage the ideal society, which in Kant’s explanation is ethically purposive, the capacity to envisage a utopian society would not be possible. Supersensible cognition, generated by reason, motivates human beings to commit atrocities for the sake of the higher good they envisage. Thus, paradoxically, genocides and religious terrorism may arise from the same propensities and capacities as the ideal social/political vision without which the greatest aspirations of human civilization would not be possible. They both seem to originate from pure practical reason, but the difference between them hinges on the priority given to “incentives of a free power of choice” (R, 6:30). A key example of the utopian (or in practice, dystopian) result of the corruption of reason into the idea of an objectively achievable ideal society is the Holocaust, orchestrated to create the ideal German state, to achieve the supersensible ideal of ‘blood purity,’ by exterminating those considered impure.\textsuperscript{595} Another example from history is the Spanish Inquisition, aimed at eradicating or converting alleged heretics, to achieve the ideal Christian society by enforcing orthodox belief through violence. The history of religious terrorism and totalitarianism is driven forward by similarly conceived religious, social and political ideals, beginning with the corruption of an idealized vision of society by the propensity to evil.

Recognition of one’s own free will and ability to choose good or evil maxims of actions is the prerequisite for autonomy of the will. The reform of industrial civilization towards a more
sustainable economic model, in consideration of future generations, is the task of those who embrace the challenge of enlightenment. The ethos of consumerism drives the production of greenhouse gas emissions, and relies upon the use of unsustainable technologies to facilitate consumer capitalism. Can one properly blame an entire economic system as eco-socialists contend? The error of eco-socialism, as such, is that it overlooks the propensity to evil in human nature and the necessity for behavioural change. Moreover, systemic change must come from nonviolent lawful reforms, not violent revolution. Revolutionaries tend to view themselves as above ethical reproach, as guardians of truth; Kant would regard this attitude as a profound error of reason, because “the distance between the goodness which we ought to effect in ourselves and the evil from which we start is . . . infinite” (R, 6:66). There are many other expressions of human frailty and corruptability in Religion. The revolutionary, however, like the religious fundamentalist, is certain of his position, which is to demonize those who profit from the status quo. A deterministic emphasis on systems of power and class inequality obviates the moral responsibility of individuals to engage in individual behavioural change and political reform. Some maxims of actions, such as those relating to diet or energy use above a certain threshold, are not pre-determined by dominant economic, legal, and political structures. They are personal choices. Kant locates evil in the determining ground of moral choices made by individuals, not externally in systems. Most values are culturally conditioned, but acceptance or rejection of them is always a choice for the individual. The concept of free will may serve as a reminder that we are not locked into the current political or economic system. Nor should free will be thought of as affecting only the choices of individual consumers; the political and religious leaders of a society can opt for autonomous ethical action at any time, significantly altering societies, and helping to create the conditions necessary for paradigmatic change. This argument recalls the
potential of religious traditions to alter worldviews, norms, traditions, and practices, by helping to awaken a powerful political force that typically lies dormant in every human being. Kant is aware of this power as indicated by the fact that he can envisage “the victory of the good principle over the evil principle, and the founding of a kingdom of God on earth” through the creation of the ethical community (R, 6:93).

In conclusion, Kant’s theory of evil is useful, in the context of climate change mitigation efforts in three ways: (i) because of its emphasis on freedom of choice in how we respond, in myriad ways; and (ii) for supporting the idea that evil must not be thought of as located externally in evil systems or as personified by persons or groups (who then must be deposed or annihilated). This is useful, for example, for climate activists, so they do not commit the error of demonizing their opponents, within or outside the movement. It is very easy to do this, and it is done frequently, rather than looking at the root causes of the crisis. (iii) Lastly, it is a useful concept for helping to explain why we have a climate crisis and mass extinction of species to begin with: the theory of the propensity to evil in human nature helps illuminate the countless choices that have led to the conditions we now find ourselves in.

4.2 The Realm of Ends

   (i) Principle. The ideal of the Realm of Ends (sometimes translated as Kingdom of Ends) is as follows: “act in accordance with the maxims of a universally legislative member of a merely possible realm of ends” (GR, 4:439). This is the variant of CI that is prima facie most relevant to the social and political applications of Kantian ethics, because it refers to an ideal realm (Reich), “a systematic union of different rational beings through common laws” (GR, 4:333), in which every member of the realm acts with perfect autonomy of the will, in consideration of every other member, and the purpose of this ideal is to serve as guide for us in the creation of an
ethico-political society (i.e., a just society). It is, in Kant’s words, a “union under moral laws . . .
a moral realm, the idea of which determines what ought to exist.” It is a normative ideal
issuing from pure practical reason. RE can serve as the ideal through which humanity may aspire
to its best possible state and traditional historical religions provide representations that may serve
as vehicles for this and other ideals.

(ii) Application. In a world of dwindling resources, and contests over them, Gwynne
Dyer predicts that human rights will be violated en masse. Simon Caney, in “Climate Change,
Human Rights, and Moral Thresholds” argue that climate change will have a detrimental effect
on human rights, caused by a number of climate-induced changes, including border conflicts. Fascist and despotic religious ideologies proliferate in the modern age, confirming Kant’s
realistic dismissal of social and moral progressivism. If the history of religion is any indication of
its future trajectory, historical religious traditions will play an active role in the reinforcement of
resource conflicts, legitimizing them and providing ideological justification for them. For
example, Bruce Lincoln describes the role that religion plays in violent conflict, as follows:
communities and institutions have symbolic capital they do not wish to lose. They wish to
maintain “nonmaterial resources” such as dignity and prestige, so they employ religions to
“reconcile the gritty nature of their struggles with . . . elevated precepts.” Those given this task
can accomplish it only through “selective readings” of scriptures. These “selective readings”
are constitutive interpretations. At the same time, as Appleby notes, and as Kant’s doubling of
religion underscores, historical religious traditions have the potential to be peace-makers, in
service to ML. They have the potential to serve both good and evil (where good is the
actualization of ML, and evil is its violation). The idea of human freedom can be used to argue
against any number of deterministic theories of human nature, and to emphasize moral
responsibility. This idea is important in the context of climate change, for arguing for behavioural change, and against technological optimism or the equally deterministic (though far less probable) Christian dispensationalist theology that maintains that an apocalypse is a \textit{fait accompli}. Freedom, for Kant, means “independence from determining causes of the world of sense” (GR, 4:455). The idea of human freedom means that those whose maxims of actions are frequently evil can still reverse themselves at any time. This philosophy of evil and human freedom, so conceived, is one of rational hope: we ought to have faith in human potential, even against all the evidence that such faith might be misplaced. This helps us to believe that a solution to the climate crisis is possible.

A regulative understanding of the ideal society results in an unwillingness to resort to short-cuts to achieve the ideal if they would violate FH, because it is irrational to strive for a good society by committing evil. This is a theme in nonviolence philosophy as well: Gandhi says, “as the means, so the ends.”\textsuperscript{600} The ideal stands as a kind of guidepost for gradual progress, to inspire those striving towards it, but with the caveat that the ideal cannot be achieved through compromise of the values that inform it. If we say that environmental sustainability is an ideal for society to aspire to, achieving it cannot be allowed to violate FH, because to do so would be to undermine RE, from which the vision of the just society issues. As the climate crisis worsens, and the safeguards that maintain industrial civilization start to unravel, there will be a great temptation to violate FH in pursuit of new social and political ideals, including the use of violent force to achieve those ends. Violence can occur if the ideal society, thus envisioned, is restricted in its membership to those with a similar nationality, ethnic or cultural or religious identity, or any other arbitrary designator of identity, and excludes consideration of those outside this scope of the narrowly defined in-group. The clearest example of the proliferation of such conflicts is
so-called resource conflicts and impending “climate wars.” RE, and its articulation in the ideal of the ethical society, can play an important role in the unfolding conflicts, because it could serve as a corrective to violent tendencies, if those who grasp it are able to see that conflicts that violate human rights are morally wrong, and are able to look beyond restrictive identities that serve to de-humanize those outside particular in-groups that wield power. In order for RE to be able to do this it will likely have to be understood through the framework of widely used religious and political worldviews, because the formal principle on its own is largely inaccessible and in need of shared representations to convey it.

4.3 The concept of asymptoticality

(i) Principle. The mathematical term asymptoticality refers to two lines that increasingly come together – in this case, representing the ideal of moral perfection and our actual practices, which are necessarily imperfect. The two lines may seem to be very close but will never meet. While Kant does not use this mathematical term, it may be used to describe a leitmotif in his writings on ethics and religion: the idea that we can aspire to the ideals of ML and RE, but can never fully reach those ideals in the sensible / phenomenal world, due to the inescapable limitations of human nature. Our limitation is that we inevitably succumb to inclinations and the temptation to give priority to self-love, i.e., the propensity to evil in human nature. We could express this by saying that the potential for autonomy of the will always exists, and this potential or possibility can inspire moral striving, but the probability of actualizing it is so minimal as to be impossible. DiCenso notes that Kant “specifies that these are regulative guides that can be approximated, but never fully realized. He emphasizes that ‘no creature can ever reach this stage of moral disposition [i.e., complete autonomy of the will]. For being a [sensible] creature . . . he can never altogether be free from desires and inclinations . . .” (CPrR, 5:84).”
approximation of regulative guides thus referred to occurs at the level of both individual and society. Our physical nature, which makes us succumb to desires, places limitations on our potential to achieve autonomy of the will. More precisely, we have the freedom to choose to obey inclinations or observe the commands of reason, which gives us the potential to achieve autonomy, but no human being or society fully accomplishes this, because inevitably – due to the propensity to evil in human nature – our choice will fall short of the highest good, which is limitless and thus can never be fully actualized. It should be understood regulatively, as an ideal, one that serves to inspire efforts to achieve it, but which can only be approximated, not attained.

If environmental sustainability combined with observance of human rights represents the ethical ideal for modern industrialized societies in the context of the climate crisis, as previously argued, then some societies (e.g. Finland) come closer to approximating that ideal than others (e.g. Saudi Arabia). There is no single society that can be said to perfectly reflect those ideals.

The social and political ideals are articulated, at the most formal level, as the principle of RE and the invisible church. They are represented by ideal phenomenal correlates in the form of the ethical community, ethico-political society, and the visible church. These ideals help us envisage the possibility of moral perfection in the sensible world. That ideal can inspire moral progress.

We can make a distinction between societies that have greater freedoms than most, and seem more enlightened (e.g. Canada, Scandinavian countries), and those that are clearly despotic and unenlightened and where human rights violations are commonplace (e.g. North Korea, Nazi Germany, Saudi Arabia). The fact that such a distinction can be made at all helps prove that human societies can be placed on a moral spectrum from better to worse, based on the degree to which they conform to ML in their practices.
(ii) Application. Societies where religious pluralism and freedom of religion is practiced can be favourably compared to those where religious orthodoxy and exclusivism are enforced. While relatively more enlightened countries, such as Canada, are far from perfect, there is greater observance of civil and human rights in them than in North Korea or Saudi Arabia, for example. In both of those nations, a totalizing system of thought prevails, heteronomously circumscribing all thought, speech, and action. This does not make Canada a morally good society, to the extent that it is beyond reproach, but it does mean that it is relatively better than others, at least in terms of human rights and civil liberties. Where Canada falls far short of practicing universalizable principles that take future generations into account is continuing commitment to the Alberta oil sands, despite knowing the consequences of global warming. The moral decision to continue with oil extraction at such a high cost could be interpreted as an example of the decision to succumb to the propensity to evil – because the self-interest of profits and growth and jobs is being put ahead of global interests. Its critics argue that it represents a moral issue of the first magnitude. The tar sands project also has a human cost in the present, according to Luc Bouchard: it has negative health impacts on local aboriginal peoples, and also on the long-term job security of workers, because extraction industries tend to offer short-term employment, after which those living in the area inherit the consequences of the environmental damage (e.g. acid mine waste). The Alberta tar sands are representative of the wider problem that faces humanity: it provides jobs, and appears to its proponents to be vitally necessary, but it is also ethically problematic and environmentally destructive, and certainly unsustainable over the long run.

An important counter-argument regarding the tar sands, from pundit Ezra Levant, in *Ethical Oil*, is that it provides needed jobs (in Alberta, Canada), and is less ethically problematic
than oil extraction from Nigeria, where human rights violations by the local militias, in conjunction with oil companies, are commonplace, or dependence on the Middle East, which contributes to wars in that region.\textsuperscript{608} He also argues that the tar sands production provides needed employment for working class people, which is true. These are important points and the Canadian federal government uses them as talking points in defense of the controversial XL Keystone pipeline.\textsuperscript{609} Levant is applying a relativistic argument to justify the continuation of the tar sands. While his human rights and jobs creation concerns may have validity, they minimize the environmental harms of that project. One respondent to the ‘ethical oil’ argument says that Levant’s argument is “false choice,” urging us to choose between “conflict oil” and “ethical oil,” when in fact “the wise choice is to end our addiction to fossil fuels and move rapidly towards a clean energy economy” and green jobs.\textsuperscript{610}

Energy policy analysis Amory Lovins coined the binary terms “soft energy path” and “hard energy path” in 1976 to describe two possible futures for the United States.\textsuperscript{611} The soft energy path, of decentralized renewable energy, is preferable, in his view, while the centralized hard energy path (fossil fuels and nuclear energy) – which is still, for the time being the status quo – should be phased out, steadily replaced by the first. His vision is shared by many environmentalists, whose version of the ideal society includes renewable energy, and who have consequently formed a movement to advance it. This movement, in its nonviolent and inclusive form, has many of the traits through which it could be compared to Kant’s visible church, although as noted earlier there is no group whose members are ever entirely incorruptible or free from parochial interests. The incremental progress of such movements, as well as the many moments of regress and failure, all are evidence of the asymptotic character of moral progress. Interestingly, the real value of the environmental movement for society, in the long run, may be
the degree to which it facilitates a cultural shift in values – that is, its slow progress in educating the public regarding the necessity of sustainability – which is precisely the role that Kant envisages for historical religions. The difference, however, is that traditional religions have a long history of myths, parables, and ethical teachings to draw on, while secular environmentalists lack this. Eco-theology bridges the gap, but to date it has not resonated with the masses, despite the milestone represented by *Laudato Si’*. However, that may change in the future, because renewable energy production is increasing exponentially as its cost of production decreases, due to improved technology and economies of scale, and the phasing out of fossil fuels in the marketplace, over time, coupled with the shock of highly visible climate disasters, may help to attract many more people to eco-theology in the future. Very often cultural norms and values adjust with economic and political contingences, rather than influencing them, so we may yet see a great up-swell in attention to eco-theologies of various kinds, following momentous catastrophes. Such disasters, of course, could also have the effect of attracting more people to dispensationalist theology and militant Apocalypticism to help explain these events and create meaning out of them, to provide a panacea in what appears to be an otherwise hopeless situation. The line between these two interpretations is a fine one, and Kantian ethical hermeneutics provides a kind of Rosetta stone for understanding the distinction.

Moral progress may be thought of as a spectrum of deviation from or progress towards the ideals of good life conduct and the ethical community. We may also express this idea by saying that the attainment of moral progress is asymptotic; at the level of the individual, the same applies: individuals can never fully attain moral perfection (complete autonomy of the will), especially in a society in which the dominant economic structures lock us into ethically questionable consumer choices (e.g. use of fossil fuels). However, we can strive towards the
ideal of ethical consumerism, as well as advocacy for necessary social and political changes, and must exercise good moral judgement daily, to accomplish this. Kant recognized that human progress is not inevitable or predetermined; it is a slow progress that occurs in fits and starts, and because the ideal society is never fully achievable, our progress towards it takes on this character of endless progression. Utopians who try to achieve the objective of the ideal society prematurely, by violating FH, have turned the ideal vision into a schematism of object-determination.

4.4 The Urbild

(i) Principle. The term Urbild, frequently used by Kant, may be translated as archetype or literally as ‘original image.’ It is an idea that appears in the first Critique, but is consistent with Kant’s treatment of religion. It is, according to DiCenso, a personified representation of the maximization of “freedom for all under mutual law” and a “generating foundational representational form … with an explicitly practical function.” The Urbild originates in human imagination: “the image [Bild] is a product of the empirical faculty of productive imagination, the schema of sensible concepts …” (A141-42/B181). According to DiCenso, the ideals are conveyed through representations, through the “figurative representation of ideals.” In this way “reason and imagination work in tandem to provide symbolically configured guidelines for human ethical behavior.” The Urbild is a form that has no ontological reality even though we see that it can be projected onto actual persons or supernatural objects. There are many examples of second-tier Urbilder in history, including Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Haile Selassie, and countless others. There are also the Urbilder who become deified to some extent, or take on the persona of prophet (through whom revelation issues) or who are thought by some to be perfectly enlightened beings: Jesus Christ, Ramana
Maharshi, Mohammed, and the Buddha. The concept of enlightenment for Eastern religions (e.g., moksha, Nibanna), seems to rely on the creation of Urbilder. They are persons thought to have perfect knowledge or wisdom. Urbilder for Abrahamic religions are presented as prophets to whom God reveals himself, and in the case of Jesus, as the divine incarnate. Kant focuses on Jesus as the representation of perfect goodness, “the personified idea of the good principle . . . the prototype of moral disposition in its entire purity” (R, 6:60-1). He uses this idea to launch into an extended exploration of the value of moral self-examination.

Human beings are constantly engaged in constructing new Urbilder, indicative of the tendency to personify ideals. The actual persons onto whom it is projected will necessarily fall short of the ideal they come to represent for others since “no person can fully embody the idea of perfectibility generated by reason.” Thus, Martin Luther King, Jr. noted of himself that there were two Kings: one the public persona, a symbol of strength and social justice, an inspiration to millions, and one the actual person, vulnerable to typical human weaknesses. Paul Tillich distinguishes between Jesus, the historical person, and Christ, which from a Kantian point of view, we can identify as a representation of the ideal, pictured as divinity. In discussing the Sage of the Stoics, Kant notes that the Urbild gives us a “standard for our actions . . . [the] divine human being, with which we can compare ourselves, judging ourselves and thereby improving ourselves, even though we can never reach the standard” (A569/B597). The Urbild is much like autonomy of the will, RE or the visible church: an ideal representation that serves to inspire but is never fully realizable, and should not be allowed to become a schematism of object-determination. Like other elements of historical religion traditions, this representation serves the function of education and inspiration for ‘moral minors’ in need of enlightenment (in the
rationalist sense of the word, as employed by Kant). If we exercised full autonomy of the will, such representations would be unnecessary.

A related term, the *Vorbild*, is translated as “model” (R, 6:62); it is presented by Kant as “the ideal of the Son of God which is being placed before us as a model” (R, 6:66). DiCenzo comments that “there is an anticipatory meaning attached to *Vorbild* that adds an active element to an image-concept” and that it imagines “something in advance” (LM, 28:235-36), directing us “toward a possible future condition in accordance with moral principles, to which we should aspire.”

By giving us the concepts of *Urbilder* and *Vorbilder* Kant demythologizes religious persona, revealing that the idea of divinity is in a sense projected onto them, and that the ideal is generated by practical reason for its own purposes. This is applicable to eastern religions, as well, insofar as “enlightened” or “realized” persons take on the status of near divinity (e.g. Sai Baba). Jesus the person, according to this view, is not divine, but Jesus Christ personifies moral perfection, which we can emulate. The value of the *Urbild* does not rest on divine authority, but on the degree to which their example is valuable for inspiring good life conduct. The abstract and intangible elements of morality (such as universalizability and the idea of “good”) are made intelligible and accessible through reference to the figure of the *Urbild*, but as with other elements of historical religions, this representation carries with it the risk of misunderstanding.

The human tendency to idolize archetypal figures is caused by moral laziness: it is easier to idolize and locate ultimate meaning in a person or symbol than to practice moral striving oneself. The schematism of analogy can become a schematism of object-determination, which can have “injurious consequences” (R, 6:65). The latter can further be split into archetypal heroes and villains. The human tendency to demonize (what Juergensmeyer terms
“satanization”), may stem from the same tendency that creates *Urbilder*. This is also referred to the former as “the invention of enemies.” Kant does not explore this, but it is an idea that flows from his thought and is deserving of exploration. Both divinizing and demonizing others de-humanizes them in a way, because it fails to recognize the idolized person’s capacity for succumbing to the propensity for evil, which is common to all. Any ideology that relies on “the invention of enemies” is non-universalizable just because of that.

Some religious and political authorities, in response to being idolized, or being in command of widely accepted tropes that employ supersensible ideals, become despotic. This pattern occurs in both religious and secular arenas. Kant’s critique of ecclesial authorities may be understood as an indictment of that common tendency in historical religions. One modern expression of this tendency is the so-called “cult of personality,” perhaps best exemplified by the figure of Stalin. David Brandenberger explains the cult of personality in functionalist terms: the cult performs a function for societies “that are either poorly integrated or lack regularized administrative institutions. In such situations, loyalty to an inspiring leader can induce even the most fragmented polities to acknowledge the authority of the central state despite the absence of a greater sense of patriotism, community, or rule of law . . . [it is] a unifying mechanism . . .”

If we turn to religion as defined in essentialist terms, we can find the same thing: Franklin Albert Jones, for example, skillfully employed supersensible cognition in order to persuade many people that he was God in human form (re-casting himself as Adi Da Samraj). He then used this power to serve his sexual and financial appetites, at the expense of his followers, who allowed themselves to become minors, in deference to him. What’s remarkable about this example is that his followers were educated people within secular societies, illustrating the incredible power of supersensible cognition, if constitutively interpreted and manipulated by persons in positions
of political or religious authority, and if received by persons who are emotionally vulnerable and happy to set aside reason and moral judgement, to become minors. They were spiritual seekers who craved an authority figure, and were willing to forgo autonomous ethical thought for whatever this authority afforded them. As Kant says, “it is so comfortable to be a minor!” (E, 8:35). Re-humanization – in this case, seeing a given person not as an Urbild, but as a human being – is in fact de-sacralizing or de-mythologizing him or her, and autonomously relocating the centre of moral judgement in the use of one’s own reason. This is related to what Jung describes as an “inward turn.” It may be regarded as the key to creating a more nonviolent world, insofar as religious violence arises from the demonization or ‘satanization’ of others. The regulative understanding of the Urbild has the same function as a schematism of analogy. This understanding is necessary for avoiding religious exclusivism, because it recognizes that Urbilder are universal, not unique to any historical faith. Kant says that “from a practical point of view any such presupposition [to regard other human beings as divine] is of no benefit to us, since the prototype [das Urbild] we see embedded in this apparition must be sought in us as well (through natural human beings) . . .” (R, 6:63-4). Kant then warns against the “hypostatization” of particular human beings as supernatural, because it “stands in the way of the practical adoption of the idea of such a being for our imitation” (R, 6:64). The lesson is that if we are to view others as examples of virtue, we should do so only as regulative guides, and not to render servile faith to them. A further proviso is that the moral ideal they represent should be in conformity with practical reason. Nor should we regard them as in any way divine, since that idea ventures into speculative territory that Kant would consider beyond the boundaries of reason.
(ii) **Application.** The importance of *Urbilder* for understanding the climate crisis is the way in which certain individuals have come to represent ethical ideals for some (e.g. James Hansen, Julia Butterfly Hill, Naomi Klein, George Monbiot, Helen Caldicott, Rachel Carson, Bill McKibben, David Suzuki), even if they themselves may be subject to ethical shortcomings such as prejudice or hypocrisy. Followers may be tempted to ignore ethical inconsistencies in their heroes because the need or desire for the existence of a moral leader, whom we should emulate, is powerful. To be disillusioned invites what Berger refers to as *anomy*. Once persons are enshrined as heroic examples to emulate, some people see value in dethroning them, through revelations of unflattering personal details. This is often politically motivated by those wishing to discredit the worldview that the heroic figure represents (e.g., the FBI’s character assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. or attacks on Al Gore’s by political enemies). It could also be motivated by ideological purity, or what has been termed “perfectionism,” which is a tendency in many social and political movements to expect and demand that everyone who fails to measure up to that ideal become heterodox and cast out. This happens among true believers, perhaps motivated by the personal ambition of the attacker, wishing to usurp the position of the target. Alternately, a ‘de-throning’ may be the result of publicly articulated autonomous ethical thought, the result of a recognition that the heroic figure is, after all, human and imperfect. Kant says that “there is no need . . . of any example from experience to make the idea of a human being morally pleasing to God a model to us; the idea is present as a model already in our reason . . . each and every human being should furnish in his own self an example of this idea . . . the required prototype [*das Urbild*] resides only in reason, since outer experience yields no example adequate to the idea” (R, 6:62-63).
Pope Francis presents us with St. Francis of Assisi, as an *Urbild* whose love of God’s Creation and the natural world is presented as worthy of emulation. Theologian Matthew Fox refers to Creation as the mystical body of Christ, and ties this imagery into Jungian archetypes.628 Another, perhaps more common and down-to-earth example of Jesus as *Urbild* is to argue for the application of Christian ethics, as taught by Jesus, to climate change related issues – namely opening borders and homes to eco-refugees, and in general being concerned with the plight of the poor and disenfranchised masses (in places such as sub-Saharan Africa) who are and will continue to be the main victims of global warming.629 It should added that there is a substantial debate over the wisdom of opening European borders to African and Middle Eastern refugees and migrants, which erupted during and after German Chancellor’s decision to allow record numbers of migrants in 2015, and this has given rise to competing Christian responses, including the burgeoning of what could be called a western European conservative Christian identity movement, opposed to more immigration (in order to preserve European cultural heritage), and on the other side, an advocacy for Christian charity towards migrants.630

The popular phrase among evangelical Christians, “what would Jesus do?” (WWJD)631 could serve as a model of how the *Urbild* operates in popular culture: it implies the ideal of *imitatio dei*. This idea illustrates the importance of not attributing constitutive reality to the concept of divinity (hypostatizing it), and recalling, instead, that it is has only ethical value. If we recognize the personified deity as an *Urbild*, this recognition can help to relocate moral authority in the use of one’s own reason. In that sense alone, *Urbilder* may have practical value; otherwise, if misunderstood, they risk impeding moral progress by locating moral authority externally. For example, there has been a tendency to demonize those held to be responsible for climate change or who advance climate change denial. There was also an attempt by deniers themselves to
demonize environmentalists (e.g. the Cornwall Alliance’s video series against environmentalists, identifying them as idolaters who worship the Earth at the expense of God). The proliferation of the creation of heroes and villains speaks to the human tendency to personify ultimate meaning, uncritically. Tillich notes that symbols, which point to that which is infinite, are valuable to the degree that they resonate with people; thus human cultures are always in need of new symbols to replace the old. Symbols have a shelf life, so to speak. This is true of the Urbilder, who may be thought of as symbols in human form. The value of Kant’s analysis is that pointing to the fact that this tendency is generated by practical reason, and is in fact unnecessary and possibly counter-productive insofar as could absolve a person of the responsibility for autonomous ethical inquiry. At the same time, it may be of value for those who need a figure to emulate.

4.5 The Inquisitor and the miser

This section has two parts, each divided into principle and application.

Part I. The Inquisitor. (i) Principle. The Inquisitor is a hypothetical figure, used by Kant to illustrate the dynamic of self-deception, through historical faith, and the dynamic of conscience. The Inquisitor is given as an example of the failure of reason to judge itself, as a failure to undertake a diligent examination of one’s own actions, which “calls upon the human being himself to witness for or against himself whether his actions are right or wrong” (R, 6:185). This is a thought-experiment regarding the corruption of reason, which may be valuable for advancing discussions on a broader range of Kantian principles (namely radical evil and his critique of revelation and religious heteronomy). It shows how they apply to the problem of religious violence and the abuse of ecclesiastical authorities when trying to enforce conformity to religious orthodoxy, such as happens in theocratic states. Rational faith can be assisted by
historical (revealed) faith, but historical faith must be held in check by reason, so that it does not transgress the bounds of credulity and result in fanatical allegiance to superstition. The latter development can have disastrous results, such as religious violence. The latter places the symbols of historical faith above what they properly should symbolize: ML. So also does what Kant terms “priestcraft,” whereby the clergy has “usurped over minds by pretending to have exclusive possession of the means of grace” (R, 6:200). A literal interpretation of ecclesiastical faith (also termed dogmatic faith), transgressing the limits of reason, “contains nothing for morality” and “even works counter to its incentives” (R, 6:110).

The Inquisitor is a fanatic who “clings fast to the exclusiveness of statutory faith” in his persecution of the good man charged with heresy (R, 6:186-87). The moral law, in this case, would dictate honoring freedom of religion, not torture and murder in the name of religion. The Inquisitor is a telling example, one that has relevance for the climate crisis, insofar as violence and human rights violations are often framed in terms of a greater good.

Beyond the scope of historical faiths, this analysis may be applied to understand the way in which any kind of political ideology can be violently forced on others and given priority over human life and human rights. These ideologies, whether religious or secular, are often presented as vitally necessary by their practitioners, based on a constitutive interpretation of the highest good (articulated through supersensible objects), onto which is “grafted” the propensity to evil in human nature (R, 6:26-7). For example, the twentieth century witnessed the supersensible object of blood purity in combination with nationalism by National Socialism, resulting in a collective racial and nationalistic version of collective self-love given priority over human rights. This example of the failure of judgement is not only non-universalizable; it is also irrational in the sense that it corrupts biological science.634 Whenever a political or religious ideology explicitly
denies established scientific fact, or skews it into a non-falsifiable pseudo-science (e.g. Lysenkoism, Creationism, biological race superiorism, climate change denial), it often serves to play a role in a totalizing worldview that makes unverifiable ontological truth-claims to advance a political agenda, sometimes through use of force.

The Inquisitor is “presumably firm in the belief that a supernaturally revealed divine will [God’s will] permitted him, if not even made a duty for him, to extirpate supposed unbelief [i.e., alleged religious heresy] together with the unbelievers [i.e., murdering the alleged heretics]” (R, 6:186-187). Kant adds “that to take a human being’s life because of his religious faith is wrong is certain . . .” because it is never certain that God has “manifested this awful will” (ibid). It is never certain, we can add, because God, according to Kant’s understanding, is a postulate of pure practical reason, the purpose of which is to help advance the highest good (ML) by serving as a representation of it, and certainly to not violate it by murdering human beings. The Inquisitor’s understanding of God rests on the fundamental errors within historical religions, related to counterfeit service and slavish service. The error concerns “a proposition unwarranted by practical reason ‘that would be elevated, together with observances connected to it, to the rank of saving faith, though it has no morally determining grounds of actions’” (R, 6:165). In this case the slavish service is adherence to an orthodox belief, elevated to the rank of faith, and violating FH. God’s supposed will – to murder other human beings – is arrived at only through an interpretation of revelation, which occurs through “the intermediary of human beings and their interpretation” (R, 6:187). Heteronomous obedience to interpretations of revelation is subject to the error of mistaking one’s own prejudices or parochial interests for the command of a divine will. The Inquisitor, in committing an act of murder, is doing something which “in the highest degree” wrong, “and on this score, he acts unconscientiously. “Every historical or phenomenal
faith” has the possibility of error, so one should not risk actions which violate “human duty” (moral duty to human rights). Reliance on revelation for moral judgement always runs the risk that “error has crept into these [proofs] or in their classical interpretation.” Any ideology that is self-reinforcing and excludes elements that would contest it, rests on error; if it is not open to correction by new facts, the guardians of the ideology feel entitled to silence those would contest it.

Historical faith must be held in check by reason, so that it does not transgress the bounds of credulity and result in fanatical allegiance to superstition. Religious heteronomy places the symbols of historical faith above what they properly symbolize, which is the moral imperative to respect the life and liberty of others. The moral law dictates honoring freedom of religion, not torture and murder in the name of religion.

The harm to future generations is often dismissed as unimportant compared to national or economic forms of self-interest by governments and corporations; this justification could be compared to the Inquisitor’s use of his concept of divine will as a justification to harm others because in both cases a harm is caused for the sake of a supersensible ideal. Kant comments on the Inquisitor: “the delusion that through religious acts of cult we can achieve anything in the way of justification before God is religious superstition, just as the delusion of wanting to bring this about by striving for a supposed contact with God is religious enthusiasm” (R, 6:174). Through his insights into the mind of the violent religious fanatic, Kant anticipates modern studies of religious violence indicating that terrorists believe that through their actions they can unite with God – what Juergensmeyer calls “the sanctification of martyrs.” Also, the act of terrorism itself is a type of performance or ritual for them, motivated in part by an ecstatic emotion that two centuries ago would be called enthusiasm.
Other related examples of delusory faith include the idea that the service to God has as its aim “satisfying all our wishes.” This is fetish faith, which is delusory because if “we are making a God for ourselves, we create him in the way we believe we can most easily win him over to our advantage.” This “delusion which creeps upon us, is easily taken for the service of God, and also commonly given this name” (R, 6:192). Fetish faith is the phenomenon through which “the masses are ruled and robbed of their moral freedom,” and this occurs “wherever statutory commands, rules of faith, and observances, rather than principles of morality, make up the groundwork and essence of the church” (R, 6:179). A church hierarchy of this type is “despotic,” especially when it employs fear and coercion: “suppose now that a certain church were to claim that it knows precisely the way in which God makes up for that moral lack in the human race, and were at the same time to sentence to eternal damnation all human beings who do not know [what their own reason cannot tell them] who is the unbeliever in this case?” (R, 6:171). This absolute certainty about purely speculative matters betrays an arrogance that Kant finds offensive, especially when it is harmful to others. The use of an incentive or disincentive robs any ethically good choice of its moral worth, if the volition that informs that choice is heteronomous. Incentives, by definition, are heteronomous influences, unless they are based on reason; therefore, Kant refers to the incentives of morality (R, 6:110).

Yet another form of religious delusion is the statutory observance of faith (counterfeit faith), of which Kant says that if a religious “service presumed to be of itself well-pleasing to God” does not advance morality, it is pointless: all such acts “in worth (or rather worthlessness)” are the same, and it is “mere affectation to regard oneself as privileged because of a more refined deviation” from reason (R, 6:186-7). Pure practical reason makes use of this type of supersensible object to awaken our sense of duty to moral precepts. Only “the law” (ML) itself is
“apodictically certain,” and “objective,” not the supersensible objects it utilizes for practical purposes, so that to be obedient to moral precepts only because of incentives “would have no moral worth if their motive were derived from anything other than the law alone . . .” (O, 8:139). Counterfeit service focuses on a “mere means,” and as “slavish service, it would be elevated, together with observances connected to it, to the rank of saving faith, though it has no morally determining grounds of actions” (R, 6:165).

Kant argues that supersensible objects should not be granted the status of objective reality. When they are, through an error of reason, this can lead to terrible consequences, the most important of which is religious violence in defense of an interpretation of supersensible objects as apodictically real. In this error of reason, the symbol of the supersensible is given sacred status and priority over and above human rights, which are violated to defend this irrational interpretation. If we subscribe to the premise that Kantian ethics is entirely consistent with and provides the foundation for the idea of human rights, religious violence which violates human rights may be understood as an example of the fundamental error of reason that Kant is trying to address when he abstractly refers to the error of reason in which supersensible objects are thought of as apodictically real. Such objects help us imagine a kind of life and society that rational beings ought to strive to achieve, in Kant’s view. That is the true purpose of the supersensible object, in accordance with the original predisposition to good in human nature.

Those who engage in religious violence often have a utopian vision of society, which seems on its face consistent with the ethical society that Kant refers to as the objective of the true church. The key difference is that for the violent actor the ideal they subscribe to violates the principle of universalizability, because it excludes those who are deemed expendable for the sake of the defense of the symbols of the sacred. The symbols exist to point towards universal ethical
ideals. Utopianism of any kind – including environmental activism, if it envisages an ideal society and collectively strives to attain it in the political arena – can become a vehicle for either good or evil, depending on how it is understood and approached. Kant uses transcendent religious language to describe the possibility of an ethical community as the manifestation of the “Kingdom of God” on earth, but this is a symbol to be understood regulatively. Safeguarding the exclusivity of the symbol becomes, through an error of reason, the telos or end. This error of reason can become amplified on a mass scale through the process of socialization, and can result in religious violence endorsed by an entire community or society in defense of the supersensible object they have chosen or inherited as sacred. If the community is socially united through the object and identifies with it, they will consider an attack on it (e.g., through apostacy) an attack on them and thereby justify violence as defensive. Juergensmeyer notes that much religious violence, even if clearly offensive, is viewed as defensive by those perpetrating it.\textsuperscript{639} The supersensible object can become an extension, through this social dynamic, of a collective form of self-love, heteronomously adhered to. Kant does not say this explicitly, but his engagement with the heteronomous elements of historical religions lays the groundwork for this idea. Safeguarding the integrity of the sacred symbols and beliefs adopted by that community might be the fault line for conflicts with competing traditions. According to Juergensmeyer, religious violence is justified by those who practice it as the purging of evil from the world, as part of the “cosmic war” between good and evil, and the actors seem themselves as warriors in an unfolding historical drama in which their purpose in life is to eradicate this evil.\textsuperscript{640} They rely on the moral, financial and political support of a community who shares their views; they sometimes see themselves as martyrs for the particular cause,\textsuperscript{641} and believe they are defending that community from the hostility of the outside world, which is in thrall to evil forces and therefore must be
cleansed through ritual actions. They envisage a “world at war.” It’s interesting that Kant also employs the language of good and evil, which initially may seem like the fundamentalist language of those engaged in a “cosmic war.” In fact, he does this only to ethically evaluate historical religions according to a rationally defensible universal standard.

As an example of the way in which the “doubling” of religion can be applied, take the distinction between two meanings of the term *jihad*: (i) an internal spiritual struggle in conjunction with a community-building imperative, and (ii) militant defense of the faith (i.e., *jihadism*). The battle between good and evil, as Kant would understand it, occurs at the level of moral decision-making, reflecting the internal meaning of *jihad*, but divested of supernatural references. This internal meaning does not correspond to the militant defensive positions which, like the Inquisitor’s actions, violate the first, more ethically oriented meaning of jihad. Unfortunately, those whose thinking resembles the Inquisitor’s are very active in the world in both religious and secular political arenas, for which reason Kant’s analysis is still relevant.

**Part I. (ii) Application.** In the context of the climate crisis, we may encounter this form of religion manifest in several different political arenas. An example is the phenomenon of ultra-nationalism, which is often combined with religious ideology and ethno-centrism (which Juergensmeyer calls “religio-nationalism”) and can be used to support utopian visions for society, justified through reference to divine will, resulting in the violation of human rights. We also encounter social and political movements that appear to take on the role of Kant’s “true church” (i.e., acting as a moral vanguard for the transformation of society), but can easily lapse into violations of FH through use of morally questionable tactics. One of the most interesting and important ideas issuing from Kant’s philosophy of religion is the way the predisposition to good can be corrupted, how good can turn to evil, which is evident in the way in which social and
political movements striving to attain a utopian vision of society can morally degenerate into the worst aspects of human behavior. From the vantage point of tolerant, secular societies based on Enlightenment values, it is easy to look back on the Spanish Inquisition and see the Inquisitor as wholly evil in character, but it is more difficult to apply that same scrutiny to ourselves, and to recognize similar patterns of abdication of conscience and reason, in conformity to unthinking dominant narratives, occurring in our midst, often with the full sanction of society and public institutions. The absolute impartiality of universal ethical principles can act as a safeguard against the common tendency to overlook or defend the wrongdoings of one’s own religious or political ideology or community.

Part II. The miser. (i) Principle. In addition to the archetypal figure of the Inquisitor, Kant also describes the miser. This character does not appear in Religion, but his thinking is valuable for understanding the role of religion in climate change. He is used to articulate a form of superstition, one that places the pursuit of financial wealth ahead of any other consideration. According to Allen Wood, the miser is “prey to superstition, which is the propensity to see nature as governed by causes arising from our subjective wishes rather than from the objective laws of the understanding (VA, 7:275; KU, 5:294).” Moreover, “misers are used to substituting imaginary powers for real objects of desire: money in place of real objects of desire: money in place of goods we will never enjoy, divine favor or good luck in place of well-being in the here and now, which we forgo to no real purpose (VE 27:401-402).” In this form of superstition, we can see a parallel with religious superstition, except that in place of God, the miser substitutes another sort of supersensible object: an agonistic conception of natural law, which from the mid-nineteenth century onward was articulated as social Darwinism (erroneously borrowing on a broad understanding of the Darwinian notion of “survival of the fittest” and superimposing it
onto human societies). This is a non-universalizable principle that cannot take the form of a universal law of reason, because it facilitates the violation of FH: it is used as a justification for dehumanizing those parts of the human population who are poor or weak. The phrase “objective laws of understanding” is really a euphemism for ML. The miser incorporates into his maxims of action a variant of the “appeal to nature” argument (where what is considered natural is deemed to be good), based on an understanding of nature that stresses its competitive, savage character. Interestingly, it was not until the latter half of the twentieth century that biologists began to uncover evidence that nature also has the characteristic of cooperation, as well as competition, and that some animals exhibit altruism. Thus, the appeal to nature to justify social competition through acquisition of wealth can be challenged through an appeal to nature that stresses cooperation, but ultimately any appeal to nature is heteronomous. The miser is merely using the appeal to nature to justify to himself and others his desire to obey self-interested incentives over moral considerations, because historically appeals to nature or divinity succeeded in justifying hierarchical frameworks for society (as explored in 2.4).

Kant, in discussing evil maxims, asserts that if we use the term “the nature of a human being” we should understand it to mean “the subjective ground [of] the exercise of the human being’s freedom in general . . . antecedent to every deed that falls within the scope of the senses” (R, 6:21). The determining ground of reason exists prior to contingent factors; thus, the appeal to nature is a fallacy because the miser – like all rational beings – has the freedom to choose not to obey a maxim predicated on his interpretation of the sensible world.

Part II. (ii) Application. Kant’s analysis of misers is important for our understanding of climate change, because for the miser, the acquisition of money is his faith, even above the objects that money can obtain for him, and this analysis can be used to describe the
unconditional commitment to wealth acquisition of those profiting from businesses that create unsustainable amounts of GHGs, even though doing so endangers human civilization and life on Earth. This theme of the worship of money, formulated by Kant, anticipates a similar argument made by Tillich in his analysis of idolatry (one form of which is giving ultimate concern to the acquisition of wealth).\textsuperscript{649} It also recalls Walter Benjamin’s essay “Capitalism as Religion,” and David Loy’s essay “The Religion of the Market.”\textsuperscript{650} In all three thinkers’ works, capitalism is presented as a kind of religion, one they are critical of. In Loy’s account, for example, the environment is sacrificed on the altar of consumerism. Wood adds that “there is obviously much in Kant’s discussion of greed and avarice that anticipates Marx’s later theories of alienated labor, the objective social illusions of the market, and the fetishism of commodities.” However, Kant’s critique of greed, through the figure of the miser, if placed within the wider framework of the critical philosophy, goes far beyond the historical-materialist Marxist understanding. Kant’s miser, who seems to anticipate the nineteenth century social Darwinists and twentieth century fossil fuel executives, can be understood as an example of someone who adheres to a superstition that Wood identifies as “arising from our subjective wishes” rather than from the objective laws of the understanding.\textsuperscript{651} This is just another way of expressing the inversion of priorities that is at the core of the propensity to evil.

4.6 Self-love

(i) Principle. This describes an empirical fact about us, a trait “present in the system of nature” that “has the function of promoting life.”\textsuperscript{652} It is also described as a duty to oneself, both as an animal being and as a moral being.\textsuperscript{653} Self-love is closely tied to the predispositions of animality, humanity, and personality. In relation to animality, self-love describes basic physical needs and desires. In relation to the predisposition to humanity it takes the form of sociality,
which is a “comparative” form of self-love, “arising out of our social condition and the
comparison of ourselves and our degree of well-being with that of others” (R, 6:28). Since
Kant’s time, behavioural biology has provided evidence that for human beings, at least during
infancy, sociality may be considered a basic need.

In terms of basic animal needs and desires, we might call self-love the survival instinct
that is present in all animals, and through which our status as part of the Animal Kingdom is
evident. In this sense it is distinct from our capacity to formulate universal laws, by virtue of
which we are rational beings. The fact that we are also embodied, part of the physical world,
means that self-love is necessary for survival. The tension between the animal and rational parts
of our being provides the conditions for moral decision-making. Self-love is important for
understanding evil (the choice, of free will, to give priority to self-love over ML). In its role
within the maxim of action, it goes against our duty to respect others. As with happiness, it is
not evil in itself – in fact, it is necessary and not to be denied – but insofar as we choose it over
ML in the course of decision-making, it plays a role in actions that can be described as evil. Theft
and rape are obvious examples of actions of the inversion of maxims, giving self-love priority
over ML (subordinating moral considerations to self-interested considerations) as the
determining ground of moral choice.

(ii) Application. Self-love (self-interest) plays an enormous role in the climate crisis, in
several ways. Historically, self-love (we may call this ‘self-interest’) in combination with
technological innovations, fueled by an historically progressivist worldview in which
collectively agreed on forms of self-interest, always interpreted as virtuous or even divinely
ordained or sanctioned by natural law, resulted in industrialization and the widespread use of
fossil fuels. This led to the human population explosion, increased global and per capita
consumption and pollution, and eventually the resulting alteration of the Earth’s climate. Self-love was amplified beyond what is necessary into the desire for unnecessary luxuries, resulting in what James Garvey and Henry Shue term “luxury emissions,” as distinct from “subsistence emissions.” A word of explanation is needed here to clarify that by “subsistence” is not meant a life without comfort or amenities, as critics of environmentalism like to allege; rather, it means only reducing our environmental footprint to allow for sustainable sufficiency – which if done correctly can result in a comfortable life for all, and if done poorly can fail to do so. There is clearly a spectrum or range of amenities implied in this thought, from actual subsistence to comfortable lifestyles that greatly reduce environmental impact (e.g., through plant-based diets, limited air travel, reduced energy demand). The worldview through which self-love has been amplified beyond sustainable sufficiency and into the realm of luxury emissions en masse is profligate consumerism. Climate change and finite resource depletion contribute to a situation in which basic necessities that make life possible are seriously threatened. In this sense self-love plays a necessary and unavoidable role: self-love is crucial for basic survival. Eco-refugees, for example, already flee drought-stricken and flooded regions to survive. Their subsistence existence is threatened by the desire for unnecessary luxuries in societies in which consumerism prevails, insofar as consumerism leads indirectly to drought. Self-love, the pursuit of happiness, and the predisposition to animality all exist for the sake of survival and well-being, and are therefore not inherently wrong or evil in themselves; it is only the choice to place self-love above ML that constitutes evil. The choice to put financial profit or political gain above consideration of the effect of that choice on eco-refugees and future generations may be thought of as example of evil, in Kant’s sense of the term. This type of choice is reinforced and supported by the juridico-civil state in its non-ideal, historical forms. Self-love and incentives also play a role in
various forms of protest and civil unrest in support of parochial interests, which may be driven by what is termed “the Tocqueville effect.” This is when there is anger resulting from rising expectations: as social conditions improve, it results in more social unrest. Another factor may be that in a democratic egalitarian society there is sense that economic inequality is manifestly unfair, perhaps more so than in a traditionally hierarchical society where the prevailing cosmology serves to give inequality divine sanction. This relates to Kant’s theory of the vices of savagery, in the sense that the original predisposition to sociality is corrupted by wishing to elevate oneself above others (see 4.11). Even though anti-austerity protestors who live in an industrialized society have a much higher standard of living than their ancestors, the disparity between their degree of wealth and that of the higher classes is keenly felt to be an injustice. As climate change worsens, this disparity may increase exponentially, leading to great civil unrest, and even civil wars.

To further understand the role of self-love in radical evil, and how it is acted out through collectivist thinking (i.e., groupthink), Girard’s theory of acquisitive mimesis and scapegoating is valuable. The lynch mob is a group of individuals who seek to advance a collective form of self-interest through a group identity. They may be willing to set aside moral concerns to accomplish their aim, thereby inverting the proper order of the maxims of action. The desire to scapegoat and in so doing, reinforce the social identity of the collective –which for Girard is expressed as the social function of uniting a fragmented group or tribe through ritual violence—prevails over autonomous thought and conscience. Conscience would remind us that the victim of scapegoating is also a human being, an end in himself, to whom respect is owed. This universalizable maxim should extend also to the very people most responsible for climate change, the so-called “climate criminals.” To stand apart from a violent collective, and to
question it, is to risk social exclusion, against the basic need for sociality. The fear of exclusion from the group acts as a disincentive against autonomous ethical thought. Evident in the lynch mob is heteronomy of the will of the individual to the collective will, which lacks conscience (or more precisely works to suppress conscience). This dynamic is one that we may expect to be played out on a mass scale, in countless sagas, in a world of some 9.7 billion human beings (in 2050 CE), with far fewer resources than now exist, and as the conditions that make life possible become increasingly tenuous due to drought and flooding and extreme weather events.

4.7 Rational hope

(i) Principle. Kant’s account of hope, like his account of religion, recognizes the practical value of idealism, but sets empirical limits on what may be considered realistic or possible. It could be argued that Kant’s account of hope is indicative of William James’ theory of the “sick soul religion” because Kant acknowledges the reality of evil in human nature (the propensity to evil), but at the same time holds forth hope of the possibility of transcending it. DiCenzo paraphrases Kant to the effect that “the human being may have a ‘corrupted heart,’ but nevertheless still ‘possesses a good will’ . . . and so there ‘remains a hope of the return to the good from which he has strayed’ (R, 6:44).” He adds that “for ethical purposes Kant must counterbalance the radical nature of evil with practical hope [italics added] concerning our ability to improve our dispositions, and he sees biblical accounts as compatible with autonomous capacity.” Hope persists despite the propensity to evil, and it has practical value, even if its object cannot be attained, because it inspires moral striving, through which progress towards a good society is possible. Biblical lessons and stories are compatible with progress in conformity with ML because they contain supersensible objects that are of practical value, because they contain the element of unconditional commitment to goodness, conveyed figuratively through
sensible representations of the supersensible. DiCenso adds that Kant’s doctrine of rational hope “resists any form of passive fatalism that would further reinforce our rationalizations for choosing evil. He presents a vision or ideal of ethical possibility that supports our autonomous moral efforts, but there are no guarantees and no inevitable master narratives associated with this hope.” Rational hope, then, is a form of realistic idealism, predicated on free will and moral striving, not on irrational and superstitious belief in supersensible objects. Furthermore, rational hope represents a resistance to fatalism, nihilism, and pessimism, but does not succumb to false hope or irrational belief in divine intervention. It resists the lure of what William James calls “the healthy minded religion.”

Andrew Chignell, in referring to Kantian rational hope *vis-a-vis* the ethical community writes that “we can’t know that an ethical community is really possible, but once we see that we ought to will it, we have to believe on practical grounds that it is indeed possible. This . . . underwrites hope for a this-worldly but still inconceivable goal.” Kant’s position seems to be that we need to have hope for the possibility of the ethical community, as an ideal to which to aspire, but which at the same time needs to be understood regulatively, not as a constitutive reality that will ever be fully achieved. The necessity for this understanding is underscored by the long history of violence in the name of utopian ideals, in which the ideal society, in the end, reflected only the parochial interests of its architects and which were achieved by violating ML. A good end must be achieved only through good means, which entails not using others instrumentally as a means to an end (in accordance with FH). Hope for the ethical community is also to be understood “as a result of our efforts alone, without appeal to providence.” If hope is based on belief in divine providence, or if its object is an other-worldly salvation or anything that
could be called supernatural, then it has no moral value, in Kant’s view. Hope for and belief in actual miracles, for example, extends beyond the limits of reason (see A.11).

(ii) Application. Kant says that “the human being may have a ‘corrupted heart,’ but nevertheless still ‘possesses a good will’ . . . and so there ‘remains a hope of the return to the good from which he has strayed’” (R, 6:44). DiCenso comments that “for ethical purposes Kant must counterbalance the radical nature of evil with practical hope concerning our ability to improve our dispositions . . . ”666 This relates to the climate crisis in an important way: rational hope is present in those who advocate for reforms to mitigate climate change, despite overwhelming evidence that their efforts may be in vain. Rational hope has been instrumental in opposing all forms of heteronomy. This is evident in the courage of those who have opposed evil throughout human history. It is not the same as wishful thinking, because it requires effort on the part of the moral agent (and wishful thinking does not). It is what prevents many people who are deeply concerned with these issues from resorting to despair and nihilism, and inspires them to continue their efforts against all odds. Some climate commentators, such as James Loveock, have abandoned hope and even go so far as to discourage the hopes of others,667 but many others continue to inspire it themselves and others, through their efforts. Rational hope is crucial for nonviolent activism of any kind; violent activism no longer has faith in humanity’s ability to change and thus forecloses on what Juergensmeyer calls “ordinary options” (e.g. law reform), and resorts to symbolic violence instead.668 Rational hope can be contrasted with false or unrealistic hope – especially that which is based on superstitious belief in divine intervention and thus not requiring any effort by us (a dominant theme in Religion). Rational hope, then, must be based on rationally formulated and scientifically accurate assessments of the situation, unlike hope inspired by superstition. Rational hope is of practical value because it inspires moral
striving to achieve the ideal of the ethical community, and this effort on our part is necessary for any desirable result to be attained, however short it may fall from the ideal. We are locked into this by GHGs already emitted, but that is not sufficient justification for abandoning all hope. As Danny Harvey says: “it is too late in the sense that there are now severe impacts of past GHG emissions that are in the pipe and cannot be avoided. However, it is still not too late to avoid a series of much worse impacts, and there is much that is beautiful and wonderful that can still be saved. However, doing so will require rapid reductions in global CO₂ emissions combined with a few lucky breaks from nature. We cannot control what nature deals us, but we can control what we do, and we should certainly not give up.” Kant’s philosophy of the good will seems quite applicable to this problem. Its value lies in the volition of the decision itself, not in any end it might achieve (GR, 4:304), and this is important because if our decisions are based on doing what we know to be right, rather than doing only that which we think will be effective, we are more likely to take actions that in fact will be effective.

The multiple tipping points can be viewed as a spectrum of decreasing marginal utility: as time progress, our actions to mitigate the crisis have less effect, until eventually our only remedy is restricted to adaptation efforts. Nonetheless, given what’s at stake, no effort could be considered wasted. Even though our mitigation efforts now may have less effect than efforts would have had thirty years ago, they are still vitally necessary. They still have some effect. Consequentialist thinking can contribute to despair, as it does for many who are confronted by the stark facts of global warming. Harvey’s statement above illustrates rational hope, which is a pragmatic moral imperative to maintain cautious optimism. Furthermore, the necessity for adaptation efforts will never diminish, so there will never be a situation in which moral striving towards the creation of an ethical community is wasted. Adaptation scenarios will bring out the
best and the worst in people. Climate change, for many, represents the possibility of a radical restructuring of human societies, given that unsustainable industrial societies are destined to fail eventually. This re-structuring can occur through nonviolent or violent means; the latter seeks to impatiently bypass nonviolent methods, through force, which renders it non-universalizable.

Richard Heinberg describes four possible scenarios for human beings in the face of economic collapse. He believes is inevitable, due to peak oil – which it should be add is now an out-of-date concept⁶⁷² – but the possible human responses he lists are applicable to the climate crisis. There is (i) the “Last One Standing” pro-violence option – the path of competition for remaining resources – which has essentially given up on humanity and strives only for self-preservation. It is contrasted with (ii) the relatively nonviolent “Building Lifeboat” community option – the path of community solidarity and preservation. The lifeboat option (in the face of economic collapse) seems based on the same ideal that informs Kant’s understanding of the ethical community, but because of the propensity to evil in human nature there is always at risk of degenerating into tribalism, feudalism, or totalitarianism, through coercive laws and heteronomous use of force. The Lifeboat option is better, ethically, than the Last One Standing, but it is not necessarily universalizable, insofar as moral concern will extend just to one’s immediate group. There is also (iii) Powerdown: the path of cooperation, conservation, and sharing, which describes an option for entire societies, or all of humanity. It is perhaps the most idealistic, the most in accordance with Kantian ethics and universal human rights, and best describes rational hope. There is lastly (iv) Waiting for a Magic Elixir, which describes technological optimism or dispensationalist theology or climate change denial, because it is characterized by wishful thinking, false hopes, and denial.⁶⁷³ To be fair, it should added that technological solutions to the climate crisis should not be dismissed out of hand, and are without
a doubt crucial to any hope of mitigation success, but to rest wholly on that type of solution and in so doing to dismiss the potential and necessity of behavioural and systemic change -- this is what critics of technology seem principally to be critical of.

The gravity of the crisis, and what is at risk, will inevitably awaken a sense of unconditional commitment to oppose evil and to work for the possibility of a good society in many people. They will see in the crisis a unique opportunity to achieve a good society. There is a fine line between those who will resort to violence to achieve their vision, and those who will not. Juergensmeyer identifies the line as follows: “Most people who feel so strongly about such desperate conditions [join] political or social campaigns that sometimes are successful, sometimes not. But they persist with the expectations that eventually changes can be made through ordinary means: electing new leaders, advocating changes in public policy, and rallying public support. The few who are part of cultures of violence, however, see no possibility of improvement through normal channels. Their sense of frustration about the world around them is experienced as the potential for personal failure and a meaningless existence.”

Kant provides a formal rational understanding of the difference between those who opt for “ordinary” options and those who resort to terrorism or other violent means to achieve their political objectives, through the distinction between regulative and constitutive principles. The regulative principle corresponds to the “ordinary” options of nonviolent advocacy for social and political change. Adoption of this path is based on an understanding that social change is a cumulative or incremental process. It relies a great deal on rational hope (which, conversely, violence abandons). The constitutive interpretation sees supersensible objects (including utopian social ideals) as ideals that must be achieved by any means necessary, including the violation of human rights. This type of thinking “forgoes ordinary options,” as Juergensmeyer puts it.
It is generally understood that we must change our society, to make it more environmentally sustainable, and this brings with it the possibility of also transforming it into an ideal (or at least a better) society in conformity with the ideal of RE. Climate policy experts refer to the “co-benefits” of mitigation efforts. Not only can we still avert civilizational collapse, but in doing so we may also be able to create a better, more just society, provided that we do so in conformity with universal ethical principles (which can be expressed through Enlightenment values or ethically-oriented religious ideals). Sam Adelman argues that climate change “provides the opportunity for the construction of a more rational and egalitarian global order based on legality, normativity and cooperation rather than unilateralism and sovereign exceptionalism.”

Historical religious traditions may be of practical value in this effort, if they awaken – through recourse to supersensible objects – unconditional commitment to the ideal that must provide the foundation upon which any viable effort to achieve a good society is based. Kant’s philosophy resists any kind of deterministic view, tending either towards failure or success. Either is possible, depending on our choices. There is a tendency among some climate change commentators to resort to passive fatalism (e.g. James Lovelock’s pessimism). The doctrine of rational hope, by way of contrast, encourages moral striving, even in the face of what may seem like inevitable civilizational collapse. Doing so has moral worth, whether such efforts succeed or not. Ethical consumption can result in habitual maxims of action that in many cases have co-benefits independent of the original moral imperative, and which may eventually act as incentives (e.g., reducing energy use saves on electricity bills, a better diet reduces risk of disease). Those who advocate for climate justice or who in some way strive to mitigate climate change are especially in need of rational hope, to stave off defeatism while at the same time not succumbing to wishful thinking.
4.8 Theocratic despotism

(i) Principle. Kant describes the rule of dogmatic Christian metaphysics and theology as despotic.\(^677\) This is indicative of Kant’s criticism of theology which in his view contributes to theocratic despotism. We may think of latter-day theocracies, such as Saudi Arabia, as examples of this ongoing phenomenon. Kant is critical of dogmatic theology for helping to establish and maintain theocracies in which ecclesiastical authorities heteronomously maintain political power through use of positive (i.e., statutory) laws that violate ML. Coming at the end of the eighteenth century, after centuries of despotic rule over much of Europe by the Roman Catholic Church, Kant’s critique of despotic theocracy is representative of the Enlightenment’s rejection of religious despotism and the establishment of republican and democratic ideals, which in time have led to the establishment of liberal democracies and the separation of church and state. While these latter forms of government are far from perfect, they (arguably) represent, from an Enlightenment perspective, a vast improvement over theocratic governments. Most Enlightenment thinkers view humanity as engaged in a gradual process of transformation from despotism to enlightenment, though Kant’s emphasis on free will entails a rejection of historical determinism and progressivism: humanity can at any time regress away from enlightenment. The rise of politically driven religious fundamentalism and theocratic states, starting with the Iranian revolution of 1979 and more recently the political rise of the Christian Right in the U.S. to establish an American theocracy, proves Kant right on this point. The fact that climate change is still a problem decades after it was proven (and could have been remedied then) certainly indicates moral regress. The progress of humanity, in Kant’s view, can be advanced by “bringing institutions calling themselves churches into greater alignment with moral laws.”\(^678\) A church, for this purpose, can refer to the community of any religious tradition or political ideology that
commands unconditional commitment. The danger of religious institutions regressing into despotism turns on the degree to which they conform to or transgress RL. The danger of traditional theology based on revelation is that it sets the stage for the establishment of a hierarchical and heteronomous political rule. Heteronomous political rule by religious authorities, in the context of a theocracy, is maintained through statutory laws, reflecting dogmatic interpretations of revelation. This undermines the potential of human beings to autonomously govern themselves through the guidance and use of their own reason, which is the ideal of enlightenment. DiCenso notes that “Kant argues with reference to statutory laws based on the will of an anthropomorphized deity that ‘cognition of these laws is possible not through our own mere reason but only through revelation’ (R, 6:104).” Revelation claims to reflect a supra-human order; but according to DiCenso, “insofar as these traditions do not convey universalizable moral laws, they reveal merely an ethically dubious parochialism.” They can not only fail to serve their true purpose, which is to assist humanity in making moral progress; they can also impede that progress through the use of violence, based on the mistaken belief that they are commanded by God to do so – which as Kant says, must necessarily conflict with conscience.

Kant presents us with an ambivalent position on theocracy, which mirrors his binary theory of historical religions. He praises the establishment of the ancient “Jewish theocracy” as a “foothold for the good principle on earth.” The good principle on earth may be described as the establishment of the ethico-political society. It is a society that in its most advanced state does away with statutory religion altogether. Jewish theocracy is viewed by Kant as having incrementally advanced humanity towards that end: witnessing for justice and the Jewish prophetic tradition, for instance, anticipates and contribute to latter-day liberation theologies and
the Christian social gospel. According to Kant, ancient Judaism required the augmentation of Greek philosophy to accomplish this.\textsuperscript{681} We may think of the Greek concept of democracy and the importance placed on reason. At the same time, Kant notes that ancient Judaism has heteronomous elements, including “reward and punishments” and a “hierarchical constitution” (R, 6:79). He further views Jesus’ reformation of Judaism as enlightening for the world, because Jesus dispenses with statutory laws in favour of ethical teachings that more closely accord with ML. Moreover, the very person of Jesus, as Urbild, becomes a symbol of moral purity, one that significantly is opposed by a ecclesial authorities (the Pharisees), bent on maintaining despotic power. Today, the most prevalent form of theocratic despotism is in the Islamic world, though there is an attempt to create a Christian theocracy in the U.S., though it seems likely to fail, because the Enlightenment values upon which the U.S. were founded require separation of church and state.

(ii) Application. If the world becomes a more conflicted and violent place because of climate change, overpopulation, and competition over scarce resources, a major challenge facing liberal democracies in the global North will be the question of “open borders”: that is, whether to admit large numbers of eco-refugees. In fact, it is a question already before them, leading to political conflict in Western Europe, and the question of borders and immigration is a divisive issue in American politics. This question, in addition to the question of what is to be done about climate change, is evolving into an urgent problem for the twenty-first century. National self-interest is set against humanitarianism, and there is an increasing likelihood of what Samuel P. Huntington calls “the clash of civilizations.”\textsuperscript{682} One of the forms this “culture clash” can take is between societies that embrace the Enlightenment value of separation of church and state, and those that prefer Islamic theocracy. Kant makes a strong argument against theocracy where the
clergy “is the single authoritative guardian and interpreter of the will of an invisible lawgiver [and] has the exclusive authority to administer the prescriptions of faith [and with] this absolute power . . .” (R, 6:180). Today, there are numerous Islamic theocracies (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iran), where human rights abuses sanctioned by the ruling clergy demonstrate the truth of Kant’s analysis. Nor do these theocracies have regard for environmental issues, and some of them in the Middle East have the highest per capita GHG emissions on Earth. Despite this, environmental concern is often dismissed a Western or ‘global north’ concern and responsibility.683

In secular liberal democracies, religious authorities have less political power and there is a corresponding increase in their tendency to advance pluralism and universalizable moral positions. From the standpoint of advancing an ethical society that addresses environmental concerns, the separation of church and state is desirable because internal contestation within religious traditions – which is a phenomenon that seems to flourish in secular societies – has led to some factions and denominations that oppose despotic power and are concerned with environmental issues, social justice, and human rights. The Catholic Church’s separation from political power has allowed it to relocate its ethical vocation. For religions to be able to play an active role in climate mitigation, the separation of church and state is practically necessary. A problem, however, is those who advance Enlightenment values and religious pluralism tend not to be militants, whereas those who would advance fundamentalist religions, explicitly against Enlightenment values, are.

The majority of theocracies in the twenty-first century are Islamic, and they are the result of the growth of religious fundamentalism, or the “un-secularization of the world” and “re-Islamization of the Middle East.”684 There is an attempt, with the aid of Dominion theology, in the United States, to create a Christian theocracy, which is often justified by its proponents as a
measure of self-defense against radical Islamism and the encroachment of the alleged evils of secularization. Doing so would run contrary to the Enlightenment separation of church and state upon which the country was founded. The implications of the establishment of a Christian theocracy are not promising, environmentally, since the official position of the Christian Right, at present, is climate change denial. It is a political position that has already influenced two U.S. presidents (G. W. Bush, Donald Trump) to openly endorse climate change denial. In Muslim theocracies, there is effectively little or no effort to establish a climate change mitigation policy, although it should be added that according to John Wihbey (in “Green Muslims”), Muslim thinkers are “increasingly embracing climate change issues through the lens of a global political analysis.”

Traditional metaphysics and theology emphasizes spiritual salvation at the expense of the material world (considered subordinate). This is true of all three Abrahamic faiths, and has been an issue that eco-theologies of all three traditions have tried to correct. It may also be because environmental regulations are seen to circumscribe economic prosperity, which is viewed as necessary and desirable by the leaders of all industrialized economies. It has in large part been the role of public concern in the West (i.e., global North) that has led to the imposition of environmental regulations, but in despotic regimes, public protest and public concerns (except those that support the regime) are not typically permitted. It is well established that Islamic theocracies violate human rights to establish a repressive social order, which favours the parochial interests of the ruling elite, including ecclesiastical authorities.

Theocratic rule, if based on strictly enforced religious exclusivism, can contribute to military conflicts, fought over scarce resources. Support for such conflicts would be established by religious authorities through use of supersensible imagery, invoking God’s favour and power.
to gain political power. While secular states are certainly not immune to violent conflict, there is little doubt that authoritarian forms of religion do much to contribute to the legitimization of repression and violence, as documented by Juergensmeyer and Selengut. Allegiance to religious dogma is established through the force of the state, establishing statutory laws based on the truth-claims of revelation, making dissent punishable by death, in defense of orthodox religious law. In liberal democracies, corporations sometimes serve the same role that religions perform in theocracies (though less repressively, perhaps because repression is not profitable, as it disrupts the society). They bring to power political leaders who are beholden to them, to serve their ends. The power of the fossil fuel lobby in certain U.S. states where coal is produced is testament to this. Kant’s argument against the abuse of religious power is applicable, to a degree, to corporate hegemony, which has an undeniable and often malign influence on the environment, and therefore upon humanity, as well as the entire Animal Kingdom.

It was previously noted that the purpose of a totalizing ideology is self-reinforcement and protection against heterodox influences; it is thus the totalizing ideologies that are most in need of ethical assessment. An important example of the need for this assessment, in today’s world, is militant Islam (sometimes called Islamism or jihadism, which is strongly influenced by a modern interpretation of Wahhabian school of Islam, but more particularly the twentieth century writer Sayyid Qutb). It seeks to impose some measure of theocracy wherever possible, sometimes even incrementally and lawfully within liberal democracies, as the failed attempt to bring shariah law in Ontario serves to illustrate. Islamism, which must be differentiated from more benign forms of Islam, is guilty of some of the most heinous acts imaginable, and maintains social and political control over vast populations in defense of religious orthodoxy, through fear of violence and social exclusion. This form of the tradition brooks no disagreement.
or dissent: alleged “blasphemers” (for the most part other Muslims) often meet with a violent end. Criticism from non-Muslims might serve to reinforce its hegemony; for example, burning the Qu’ran inflames enthusiastic hatred of the West and gives Islamists a greater raison d’etre.694

Using autonomous ethical reflection, one can differentiate Islamism from those parts of the tradition that are benign or even help to advance morality (through ethical teachings). To do this requires a regulative interpretation of its scriptures, either from within the tradition (often called moderate Islam), or from outside any tradition, through secular ethics. Kant’s philosophy of religion is well suited for the latter task. As with the Jefferson Bible, which excised portions that seemed inimical to enlightenment, there are parts of the Islamic canon, endorsing violence, where the danger of literal interpretation outweighs the benefit of any possible regulative interpretation, and thus should be ignored or contested. Kant believes that revelation should be given no moral authority, as it represents a heteronomous force, so on that basis, challenging the authority of scriptures is a perfectly legitimate undertaking (although Islam is the only religion, at present, where doing so can result in a death sentence, recalling Kant’s analysis of the Inquisitor). There are many within the tradition who have done the work of regulative interpretation,695 even on the question of environmental ethics.696 This is important because there is value in advancing an ethical argument from within the tradition. As Nicholas Tampio notes, “an overlapping consensus is formed in a pluralistic society when reasonable citizens endorse minimal standards of justice from the vantage point of their own comprehensive worldviews. The overlapping consensus agrees to ius strictum but not to the metaphysical reasons that support it.”697 An independent ethical assessment of the entire tradition with regard to climate change is also in order because one of the most common objections to an interpretation from within, by literalists, is the exclusivity of their interpretation. Tampio argues there is a basis in Islam for the
creation of an ethical community, in the Kantian sense, which practically speaking requires separation of church and state and co-existence with secular forces dedicated to the same objectives. Coercion in religion, from the state, runs counter to the idea of the ethical community, he argues, because it promotes hypocrisy, which is condemned by the Qu’ran. Tampio cites ideas in Abdulla Ahmed An-Na’im’s *Islam and the Secular State*, to argue for the application to Islam of the Kantian thesis that historical religions may have the potential to help advance an ethical community, based on the ideals of “social justice, peace, goodness, and virtue” and also “human rights” and “public reason.” Of course, those who perpetrate religious violence in defense of orthodoxy are not interested in reason; they perpetrate it in defense of an irrational worldview, an ideology given sacred status, which cannot permit rational scrutiny or risk being exposed as false. Ideologically motivated violence is often an attempt to silence apostates or critics, i.e., those who would expose the ideology as false, or who are seen as undermining it through their very existence. The benefit of the rational ethical assessment is to point out elements of the tradition worth preserving, or utilizing for good, and this should not pose a threat to the identity of reasonable persons within the tradition. Islam as a whole must be distinguished from Islamism, which many Muslims fear and abhor. As Tarek Fatah says “Islamophobia is fear of Islam. The point is that one million Muslims came to Canada because they fear Islam” (by which he means Islamism). We may recall the maxim that the Inquisitor tells himself (that it is God’s will that he should kill heretics); this, clearly is not rationally defensible. The practical value of identifying elements of the tradition for conveying ethical principles is not to defend Islamism (as is often thought by critics of Islam), but to evaluate it using objective principles of understanding, and with reference to the supersensible objects it claims to defend. If the basis for assessment is practical reason, and not the authority of revelation, this makes it easier to identify
where an interpretation of a scripture may be morally wrong. The problem with regulative interpretations solely from within the tradition is that there will always be some degree of heteronomous reference to scriptural authority. Both an internal regulative interpretation and an autonomous ethical assessment are needed, in tandem.

The principal way in which this discussion of religion, violence and interpretation applies to climate change is regarding the influence that religion is having on eco-refugees and resource conflicts. Fatah also notes that even though Saudi Arabia is adjacent to Syria, no Muslim Syrian refugees want to go there, to escape the war. They sought refuge in Western Europe, places where there are civil liberties that are the inheritance of Enlightenment values. This is telling. It serves to indicate that most people understand that a culture based on Enlightenment values is preferable to a violent theocracy with no regard for human rights or civil liberties. There is an immediate and practical necessity to safeguard these values by affirming them, as Kant does, in relation to counterfeit faith, in Religion. Paul Berman argues that Western civilization is vulnerable to erosion and attack because of its reluctance to defend Enlightenment values from external attack. Whether this is true or not, it begs the question of how to defend Enlightenment values from the incursion of more malign ideologies, such as Islamism, totalitarianism, fascism, or anarchy. Kant’s exploration of the dynamics behind theocratic despotism, and religious heteronomy, in general are helpful for finding answers to this question.

4.9 Morality

(i) Principle. In the first sentence of Religion, Kant writes “So far as morality is based on the conception of the human being as one who is free but who also, just because of that, binds himself through his reason to unconditional laws, it is in need neither of the idea of another being above him in order to recognize his duty, nor, that he observe it, of an incentive other than the
law itself . . . morality in no way needs religion . . . but is rather self-sufficient by virtue of pure practical reason” (R, 6:3). Here Kant is saying that morality may be understood as freedom, which limits itself in consideration of others, as in the ideal of RE, without need of external coercion in order to do so, and that the idea of an external authority, such as God, is unnecessary to accomplish this. Thus “morality in no way needs religion.” Although Kant also, at length, explores the way in which religion may be of practical use in advancing morality (it may serve as a vehicle for the transmission of regulative ideals), this original statement stands as an affirmation of the priority of morality over historical religion, which is not needed to give morality authority, and may even hinder morality, if this priority is not recognized.

Kant further adds that “morality can perfectly well abstract from ends altogether, and ought to do so” (R, 6:4). This is another expression of the idea that morality does not need religion. The act of setting ends is, for Kant, “the fundamental normative act [and] the prerogative solely of rational nature.”703 If morality has the ability to establish ends, it has no need of religion, strictly speaking. In practice, though, it can make use of religion to assist it. Rational nature – reason itself – exists prior to all social constructions and contingent factors, which include historical religious traditions, so its seat of authority does not lie in them. Kant makes it clear that literal belief in God is not only not necessary for morality, but can serve as an impediment to it. However, Kant adds a second important theme in Religion: that although morality in no way needs [historical] religion, it can nonetheless be shared through religions. Historical religions may be practically useful for this purpose, to advance moral education. They are, in a sense, vehicles for the transmission of supersensible ideals that otherwise may not be easy to convey. Systems of religious ethics, and the use of religious concepts to promote social justice and the common good may serve to illustrate the point.
The idea that morality does not issue from or need historical religious traditions is supportable, in part, through universal claims regarding the origin of morality. For Kant, this is based on the idea of pure practical reason, and in part through the sociology of religion, which demonstrates that all religious traditions, ideas, and practices are socially constructed. The implication of this is that religious traditions are not products of divine revelation; they are products of human imagination that serve a social function, sometimes benign and sometimes malign. Kant, of course, does not merely anticipate the secular view of religion as issuing from human imagination; he is one of the seminal thinkers to whom the idea is owed.

(ii) Application. Some conservative religious sub-traditions practice indifference or even hostility towards social and environmental justice issues as idolatrous; they disdain worldly politics except perhaps for the purpose of imposing religious authority and instituting their own worldview. The Cornwall Alliance has been given as an example of this. Kant’s philosophy of religion may be understood to convey the idea that the moral authority of religious leaders issues from ML, not from any external (human or divine) authority. As an example, Pope Francis’ concern for social and environmental justice may be understood as indicative of a regulative interpretation of scriptures, originating in practical reason, even if it is not articulated as such. If religious authorities act in accordance with ML, this may serve to liberate morality from the trappings of historical religion, which is a gradual progress away from forms of religious and political heteronomy towards enlightenment. Tillich calls this process of questioning religious belief “the Protestant Principle.” There is a certain irony that Roman Catholicism is today a better demonstration of this principle than many Protestant groups. This principle is unconditional, which means that it requires Protestantism itself to also be questioned; one can argue that this has led to forms of Protestant agnosticism and even open atheism among clerics.
This is not to say that a secular society is automatically a moral good: we can see from the present age that predominantly secular societies are not free from serious ethical shortcomings. A Kantian perspective can help locate a positive role for religion in secular societies – one in which religions can help humanity negotiate moral crises, provided they act in conformity to ML and they are separate from the state. This can be done through religious pluralism and the cooperation of secular and religious movements for the creation of an ethical community, which includes sustainable sufficiency.

As previously noted, religions can also represent a danger to human freedom if they deviate from conformity to ML. Kant’s emphasis on the gradual progress towards enlightenment, and away from all forms of heteronomy, takes on a new urgency if it is understood that this progress is unavoidably necessary for collective survival. The climate crisis is at its heart a crisis of morality: it exists only because of moral decision making that has thus far erred in favour of evil (as Kant defines it). A needed remedy is the moral transformation of society, which is practically necessary to wean it away from unsustainable energy, food, transportation, housing, and infrastructure models. Realistically, this will require the interim measure of economic incentives, provided they have incremental value in pushing people towards habitual reduction in consumption. This process of moral transformation that needs to accompany interim coercive measures could benefit from eco-theology, infused with rational hope and striving towards an ethical community based on Enlightenment values. For example, if there a tax on meat, this would reduce consumption, and at the same time, faith communities would benefit from greater knowledge of animal liberation theologies by Andrew Linzey, Daniel Cohn-Sherbok, and others. Societies could also benefit from a rejection of traditional forms of religion that have no moral value or which impede collective efforts to mitigate the crisis, by rationally identifying the
ethical shortcomings of that interpretation of the tradition (and not by attacking or belittling its adherents, which only serves to reinforce religious exclusivism). Thus, to continue the example with animals, the application of Divine Command Theory to argue for eating animals (based on Gen. 1:26-8) could be considered heteronomous. It should be added here that eco-theologians, such as Linzey, interpret the idea of “dominion” regulatively, to argue for good stewardship, not exploitation.

4.10  The sublime

(i) Principle. The sublime is an important concept in the third Critique, applicable to Kant’s philosophy of religion insofar as the human capacity to experience the sublime exists “in our mind” (CJ, 5:264). This experience predisposes us to feel respect for the power of the Creator of nature (understood as a postulate of pure practical reason), and respect for the moral law within, which is “the capacity that is placed in us for judging nature without fear and thinking of our vocation as sublime in comparison with it.” This is also expressed more poetically by Kant in the famous passage in which he expresses admiration and awe for “the starry heavens above me” and “the moral law within me” (CPrR, 5:162). While the “starry heavens” and the natural world may catalyze the feeling of sublimity in us, the origin of that feeling is not in the thing itself, but in our capacity to generate supersensible objects that transcend the sensible world. Thus, the feeling of awe for a grand mountain (a sensible object) can also be generated in response to the idea of God (a supersensible object), and in such cases “... the imagination, although it certainly finds nothing beyond the sensible to which it can attach itself, nevertheless feels itself to be unbounded precisely because of this elimination of the limits of sensibility; and that separation is thus a presentation of the infinite ... [which] expands the soul” (CJ, 5:274). The purpose of the feeling awakened in us by the sight of the mountain or
awareness of the cosmos, like the idea of God, is to awaken in us respect for ML: “The feeling of
the sublime in nature is respect for our own vocation, which we show to an object in nature
through a certain subreption (substitution of a respect for the object instead of for the idea of
humanity in our subject), which as it were makes intuitable the superiority of the rational
vocation . . .” (CJ, 5:257). Respect for the natural world is purposive: it has a practical end, to
help generate in us the idea of God as Creator as a representation of the highest good (ML), and
the idea of ourselves as ends, so as to advance ML (where nonhuman nature, and the sensible
world as a whole, is viewed a means to the end). Kant notes that “it is something very sublime in
human nature to be determined to actions directed by a pure rational law . . .” (CPrR, 5:11).

The use of the term ‘sublime’ in relation to the experience of the majesty of nature is not
new with Kant. As with the term enthusiasm, other Enlightenment thinkers have reflected at
length on the meaning of the term sublime. When Kant takes up the task in the third Critique, he
applies a purposive (regulative) meaning to it. Kant adapts it to his ethical system, suggesting
that our capacity for the feeling of sublimity must be understood as having a practical purpose. It
is thus described by Kant in terms of its “purposiveness” and as being part of the teleological
vision, in which the telos is the realization of ML in the phenomenal world. Kant is concerned
with sublimity in relation to nature and ML, but he notes that the experience of the sublime can
occur in response to other phenomena, including war (CJ, 5:264). The sublimity of war, it may
be added, derives from the sublimity felt in response to ML, because in war there are many
examples of heroic selflessness, there is a sense of grandeur and magnitude of destruction, and it
is a situation in which both the worst examples of evil and the best examples of moral goodness
co-exist. The worst consequences of climate crisis, like war, will elicit both extremes from those
who experience it. Kant notes:
... sublimity is not contained in anything in nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of being superior to nature within us and thus also to nature outside us (insofar as it influences us). Everything that arouses this feeling in us, which includes the power of nature that calls forth our own powers is thus ... called sublime; and only under the presupposition of this idea in us ... are we capable of arriving at the idea of the sublimity of that being who produces inner respect in us not merely through his power, which he displays in nature, but even more by the capacity that is placed within us for judging nature without fear and thinking our vocation as sublime in comparison with it.  

The experience of awe at the sight of a majestic mountain – to return to that example – awakens “inner respect” for the Creator (which elsewhere Kant cautions us to understand regulatively, as a postulate), and by extension respect for morality itself, the fact that we are beings in whom morality is generated (i.e., lawmakers), and this respect brings with it a “vocation” and duty to act with moral responsibility. Understood regulatively, our capacity for appreciation of nature is meant to awaken respect for and adherence to ML in us. This understanding of a moral vocation, as we shall see below, is important in terms of the climate crisis.

It should be added that this respect for ML need not translate into the type of human superiorityism that excludes consideration of the nonhuman, in the sense it accrues to the same capacity that exists in all rational beings, universally. As Wood notes “It should not be supposed that Kant believes human beings are the only rational beings ... there is the distinct possibility of rational beings in parts of nature, that is, intelligent life on [other worlds].” Kant seems to be saying that the sublime exists, as a feeling, to help us find our moral vocations. Its very existence is evidence, for him, of ML. The best example of this is the ethical value of the photos of Earth from outer space, which awaken in us a sense of the beauty and fragility of Earth and to inspire the idea of the unity of all living beings (Berry’s “communion of subjects”). However, Edward Burtynsky’s photos of the tar sands and environmental destruction may also awaken a
sense of the sublime, but interestingly, they seem to lack purposiveness in the sense that Kant suggests. Instead, the photographs may serve as a cautionary tale against environmental destruction, and in that way, they might be said to have some ethical value. The fact that they may be considered beautiful, despite showing environmental destruction, it important for illustrating the way in which the feeling itself has no moral worth unless it is put into service by moral judgement, guided by conscience. In support of this idea – meaning the purposiveness of the sublime – Kant clearly differentiates the experience of the sublime from emotion that has no practical import: “tumultuous movements of the mind, whether they be associated with ideas of religion . . . no matter how much they stretch the imagination, can in no way claim the honour of being a sublime presentation, if they do not leave behind a disposition of mind that, even if only indirectly . . . brings with it intellectual purposiveness (the supersensible) . . . Thus, the sublime must always have a relation to a manner of thinking, i.e., to maxims for making the intellectual and the ideas of reason superior to sensibility” (CJ, 5:274). We can have an emotional reaction to beauty or grandeur or some other momentous thing (including political activism), but unless it has ethical value, it cannot be called the sublime.

(ii) Application. The experience of the sublime, so understood, is having an enormous impact on the climate crisis. As noted in the example of Burtynsky’s photos, the emotional experience itself can be given no moral meaning. However, there is another sense in which the emotion does have moral meaning, but in a destructive direction: it has been employed in service to the combined supersensible ideals of endless economic growth and technological progress and nationalism, in service to humanity. Is this strictly speaking the sublime, if it runs counter to the ethical purpose that reason generates it for? This is debatable, but if war can be considered sublime, according to Kant, then it can be argued that the definition can be expanded to describe
its corruption into enthusiasm. The argument here is that there is a very fine line between the two. A good example, to illustrate this, is the short video to promote engineering – “American Engineer” (1956) – which promotes the good that can come to society from technological progress and learning how to master and use nature instrumentally on a grand scale.\textsuperscript{710} Nature itself is desacralized, and used in service to progress, while progress itself is given transcendent status. The purpose is without question an ethical meaning attached to the emotional response the video is designed to elicit: the good of society can be served by technology, and this is a perfectly valid argument, in keeping with the Enlightenment project of material and moral progress for humanity. However, the video now seems overly optimistic in light of the environmental problems these technologies have produced. Missing from the video is any sublime feeling for nature, which is described only as a resource awaiting harvest for the grand project of modernity. Francis’ \textit{Laudato Si’}, by way of contrast, questions unlimited economic growth through technology, arguing instead for the sacred status of nature, as well as invoking imagery of nature designed to excite the experience of sublimity in order to do so. These two interpretations of nature stand in opposition to each other, and yet both have the good of humanity in mind, further illustrating the value of applying ethical principles to differing interpretations. In this case, the thing interpreted is not a scripture, but nature itself. Thomas Berry says nature should be given the same status as a scripture, and can impart revealed knowledge directly to us: “the earth” is the primary source of revelation.\textsuperscript{711} Kant is skeptical of the idea of revealed knowledge, insofar as it can be heteronomous, but provided that what Berry is referring to has regulative meaning (and there is reason to suppose this to be the case), then their meanings are not inconsistent. The only danger, from a Kantian perspective, is that a
cosmocentric vision, which is a supersensible ideal, could be interpreted constitutively; it thus needs to be reined in by reason, like the regulative understanding of God as a postulate.

There is good reason to support Kant’s view of the sublime, considering the unique complexities of the current ecological situation. In fact, one could argue that climate change is so complex, and moral responsibility so difficult to assign (because nearly everyone is implicated to some degree), that only the principle of universalizability at the heart of the Categorical Imperative is adequate to the task of providing a robust ethic to assess these problems. This is because that principle is universally applicable and not susceptible to emotion, being based on reason alone. Environmental conservationism, at its best, is acting with as much consideration for the natural world as possible, to preserve it, from a sense of moral duty. In Kant’s view our respect for the majesty and beauty of nature has an important function: it can help us locate our sense of moral duty. This sense of moral duty can be understood, in the modern context, to include concern for nature, not disregard for it or mere instrumental use for it. This should not be understood as a rejection of the Enlightenment project, only a new interpretation of it, based on scientific evidence and an ethical evaluation of its implications.

The shift in thinking in this regard started to occur in the late 1960s with the emergence of the environmental movement. The sublime played a role in this though images of Earth, which is said to have helped inspire this movement, in part.\(^7\)\(^1\)\(^2\) However, like other elements of religion, the sublime can be malign: if, for example, it were to lead to misanthropy, as it does for some (e.g., those who openly wish for the end of humanity, for the sake of the rest of the natural world, whose controversial comments to this effect are often made using pseudonyms),\(^7\)\(^1\)\(^3\) Kant would view this misanthropy as “hateful” and “contemptible” (CJ, 5:276). At the same time, Kant should not be understood as endorsing the kind of human superiorism that eschews moral
responsibility vis-à-vis the natural world, or as viewing human beings as entitled to exploit that
natural world with impunity without consideration of future generations.

Kant’s argument for the indirect rights of animals is applicable in arguing against the
mass extinction of species and the cruelty of animal agriculture and, as noted previously, ML, in
the context of climate change, can be used to argue for limitations on consumption of every kind.
The kind of human superiorism that has led to the environmental crisis and mass extinction of
species must be understood as a corruption of reason, as an example of radical evil, at least in the
current historical moment, when knowledge of the consequences of profligate consumerism are
well known. Kant’s anthropocentrism is based on respect for ML, which points to the necessity
of social ecology, which is to say ecological consciousness that includes consideration of human
welfare. Social ecology is sometimes viewed as distinct from deep ecology, where nature is
viewed as an end in itself (which Botzler and Armstrong refer to as “extreme holism”). Of the
two, Kant’s vision is more in alignment with social ecology.

Is our mental capacity for generating the sublime, in response to nature and other
phenomena, in any way responsible for the climate crisis? In other words, is this inborn capacity
subject to the corruption of reason? Is this what led to technological progressivism, which
regards the wonders of human creation as beautiful, and sees nature only as what Heidegger calls
“standing reserve” to be used in service to human ends. The sublime, properly speaking,
stimulates respect for ML, but is it also, as noted above, close to enthusiasm, which is devoid of
moral content (or even counter-purposive). Kant argues for the need to “moderate the momentum
of an unbounded imagination so as not to let it reach the point of enthusiasm” (CJ, 5:274-5). In
other words, we need a regulative understanding of supersensible cognition, to not allow it to
deviate into enthusiasm, which it often tends to do, giving great political power to those who are
able to effectively manipulate the emotions of the masses. The line between the experience of the sublime and enthusiasm can be crossed. Kant adds that this “is why even governments have gladly allowed religion to be richly equipped with such supplements and thus sought to relieve the subject of the bother but at the same time also of the capacity to extend the powers of his soul beyond the limits that are arbitrarily set for him and by means of which, as merely passive, he can more easily be dealt with” (CJ, 5:274-5). The idea here is that ecclesiastical authorities, working in tandem with governments, are better able to control the masses through manipulation of their emotions – the most extreme example of which is political theocracy. The danger of “the momentum of an unbounded imagination” that generates supersensible objects is that it loses sight of purposiveness and practical import. If that does happen, the feeling of the sublime can degenerate into enthusiasm. An example is the way in which the delusion of divine favour visited on believers may contribute to unconcern for the fate of others.

Another example of the corruption of the sublime into enthusiasm devoid of moral content, in the context of the climate crisis, is the misuse of the enthusiastic idea of God to justify the conquest of nature at the expense of future generations (e.g. the use of Genesis 1:28 to argue that Dominion means exploitation, and not good stewardship, which would be its regulative meaning). Divinely ordained human superiorism as a justification for giving priority to self-love over morality runs contrary to the purposiveness of our capacity for the generating the sublime in our minds. Thus, for example, the idea of divinely ordained Manifest Destiny, from nineteenth century colonialism, is non-universalizable, because it excludes non-Europeans and aboriginal peoples from moral consideration. In a more recent example, if technological optimism in service to endless economic growth is understood deterministically, as an inevitable form of progress, ‘technophiles’ can experience enthusiastic fervour for it. An extreme misanthrope
might also experience enthusiasm in his or her hatred of humanity’s devastation of the Earth and the utopian vision of a world liberated from our species. In another example, previously noted, we can identify the constitutive understanding of the experience of the sublime in the unfolding of the climate crisis, in the form of apocalyptic dispensationalism based on revelation.

The role of the sublime in climate mitigation can be compared to the ideas of social ecology – meaning, ecological consideration based on consideration of universal human welfare. This is the ethically proper application of this capacity, in line with ML. An influential expression of environmentally sustainable anthropocentrism is Thomas Berry’s idea, adapted from Teilhard de Chardin’s theology, that human beings are the manifest consciousness of the universe. It is an anthropocentric idea that is also cosmocentric at the same time, and balances the two foci, which Berry argues is important for the awakening of a biocentric respect for the life systems of Earth of which we are a part, and upon which we are dependent. Berry’s conception of humanity strikes a balance between the anthropocentrism of the European Enlightenment, of which he is critical, and the biocentrism of deep ecology, which in its extreme form can be misanthropic. We can apply Kant’s concept of the sublime to refer to an epistemological anthropocentrism, which sees our respect for the majesty and beauty of nature as generated in the mind of the rational being, for the purpose of advancing practical ends. Berry argues that empirical science represents “the new story” for humanity, supplanting the ancient anthropocentric cosmologies, but like them locating our importance within the matrix of the natural world. For Berry and de Chardin, we are the universal being, conscious of itself, and that is our place in it, not to dominate it, but to appreciate and respect it. This idea is supportable, says Berry, through reference to ancient cosmologies in which humanity is represented as living harmoniously with the Earth. Kant, as part of the tradition of German idealism, locates our
capacity for such appreciation and respect in our apprehension of nature, not in the thing-in-itself. This in turn is used to argue for its practical purpose. Berry argues that the paradigm shift to cosmocentrism is necessary for us to survive the environmental crisis. Similarly, our capacity for experiencing the sublime in nature has a practical purpose, according to Kant – which in the modern context must necessarily include the survival of humanity, and its successful adaptation to the changing climate.

Another point of comparison is with the feeling of awe, as described in Rudolph Otto’s idea of thenuminous experience. The experience of the sublime has much in common with the numinous, except that the latter lacks moral content and is purely emotive, whereas the sublime – according to Kant – must be understood as purposive.

The last application of the sublime to be explored here is Kant’s reference to the ethical community (R, 6:100): “the sublime, never fully attainable ideal of the ethical community . . .” This is important, because without sublimity (which can be equated with the highly emotive and ecstatic feeling of what Tillich refers to as “ultimate concern”) many people would not be inspired to join formations for social change (which Kant describes in terms of the ideal of the visible church), and with others strive to build a better world. Ideally, an ecstatic experience is guided by reason. If it is not, it is in danger of what Tillich refers to as the emotionalistic distortion of faith. He says there is a range of false ultimacies and the problem of idolatry. The sublime vision of the ethical community that inspires some activists, and to which many give their lives, can be hugely disappointing if discovered to be idolatrous (it can lead to what Tillich terms “existential disappointment,” or what Berger terms anomy, which, it can be argued, is essentially the same thing). This is a real danger with social justice activism, insofar as the
ecstatic experience draws in people who desire that sense of meaning and belonging, but can then be misled by constitutive interpretations of the utopian ideals to which they subscribe.

Kant to ask rhetorically, “how could one expect to construct something straight from such a crooked wood?” His answer is that God alone (i.e., ML) can form a “moral people,” but “human beings are not permitted on this account to remain idle” (ibid). This means that although these social formations are far from perfect (and never will be perfect), they should nonetheless be things we participate in and help to improve, because there is no other choice in the matter. In fact, trying to make them perfect, in terms of absolute conformity to ideological purity, runs the risk of violating ML. Striving to align ourselves and the groups or institutions that are dedicated to social and political change, in accordance with universal ethical principles, is the best we can do. It is interesting that the sublime should play a role in creating an ideal vision for society in this way. Just as the sublime can turn into enthusiasm, the vision of the ethical community can be misunderstood as a utopian vision which is then wrongly given precedence over moral considerations.

4.11 Predispositions and the vices of savagery of nature

(i) Principle. The three “predispositions to good in human nature” enumerated by Kant are referred to as “original”—by which we could understand them to be an essential and inescapable part of our natures. The predisposition to animality refers to physical needs and drives, including self-preservation, sexual drive, the instinct for preservation of offspring, and “community with other human beings, i.e., the social drive” (R, 6:27). Kant does not note this, but it is implied by the title that we share these drives with other animals. Kant describes it as “physical or merely mechanical self-love, i.e., a love for which reason is not required” (R, 6:27). The predisposition to humanity is also a form of self-love, but “involves comparison [with
others] (for which reason is required)” and “out of this self-love originates the inclination to gain worth in the opinion of others” (R, 6:27). It does involve reason. In its original form, before it is corrupted, this predisposition implies equality – meaning that we seek to gain equal worth in the eyes of others. In its corrupted form, it becomes hierarchical. The predisposition to personality is “the rational capacity to respect the moral law and to act having duty or the moral law as a sole sufficient motive of the will”720 (see A.18). By themselves these “predispositions to good” are not evil, but they can all be corrupted by the propensity to evil in human nature: onto these predispositions “can be grafted all sorts of vices (which do not of themselves issue from this predisposition as a root)” (R, 6:26-7). Our sensuous nature is not evil in itself, but can be corrupted when we choose, of our own free will, to give priority to those desires over moral considerations. It is clear that Kant describes them in their original state, as “good,” in order to illustrate how they are corrupted by the propensity to evil in the determining ground of choice.

These predispositions are premised on the idea of “goodness in our nature . . . thereby thoroughly rejecting any deterministic notions concerning innate or inherited corruption, or dualistic paradigms categorizing matter and the body as inherently evil.”721 In this sense, Kant’s discussion of these predispositions mirrors his discussion of happiness: it is not evil in itself (contrary to the rejection of the pleasures of the flesh within the history of religious asceticism); rather, it contributes to evil when we subordinate the maxim of action that gives us ML to the maxim of action that serves self-love. We may add that this assumption of originary goodness in human nature also rejects nihilistic misanthropy, which many who despair over the climate crisis experience. Drives and instincts are of themselves not vices; their fulfillment is necessary, but when we exceed what’s needed at the expense of others, natural predispositions become vices. These vices are what Kant calls “bestial vices of gluttony, lust, and wild lawlessness (in relation
to other human beings)” (R, 6:27). The vice of gluttony refers to the corruption of the need for self-preservation, the vice of lust refers to the corruption of the sexual drives, and the vice of wild lawlessness refers to the corruption of the social drive.

(ii) Application. The connection of Kant’s so-called vices of savagery of nature to the climate crisis should be immediately apparent. The corruption of the predisposition to animality, resulting in the vice of savagery of nature, is evident in a world in which consumerism is the dominant worldview. To be sure, there are competing worldviews, but consumerism has spread to every corner of the Earth, and is able to absorb almost every other worldview, making it also impossible to oppose. It has been so successful that it has exhausted the limits of the Earth, creating the need for an alternative worldview. This is where religions can play a role, because they have traditionally been the creators and maintainers of cosmologies.

The value of Kant’s distinction between the predisposition to animality and its corruption is that he does not locate the problem in the predisposition itself, but in our free choice to give precedence to our appetites and desires over ethical consideration of other persons. As previously noted, Garvey distinguishes between “luxury emissions” and “necessary emissions.” The former are GHGs issuing from actions and practices that are not necessary for survival. Garvey, in this way, provides a distinction similar to Kant’s distinction between predispositions and their corruption: GHG emissions (or more specifically, practices that result in emissions) are not all morally wrong, of themselves, and nor is the predisposition to animality, which ensures physical survival, but when these emissions are the result of actions and practices that are clearly not necessary, and upon which limitations should be placed (in consideration of the rights of others), they can be said to issue from the moral decision to give priority to self-love over ML. There are a great many practices in our daily lives which might be described as producing “luxury
emissions” (e.g. unnecessary air travel, consumption of animal products, car ownership in cities that have public transportation, etc.). It is not possible to eliminate them all, but it is possible to reduce them greatly, and it can be argued that there exists a moral duty to do so. Ethical consumption that strives to eliminate luxury emissions requires some degree of moral judgement because these practices are protected by law, and encouraged by cultural traditions (to the point where abstaining from them may result in being criticized or socially ostracized). They are promoted through advertising, and supported by governments and public institutions. Those who argue for limitations on consumption stand outside the social norm, and may be said to be exercising some degree of autonomy of the will, if their critique of these practices is motivated by moral concerns, and if they are willing to lose social standing among their peers for doing so. Conversely, if there is a social incentive to abstain from luxury emissions, to claim moral superiority, this negates the moral worth of the abstention. A self-aggrandizing incentive (sometimes called ‘virtue-signaling’) has no moral worth. The distinction lies in the volition of the determining ground of morality, through which the maxims of actions take shape.

To move away from the vices of savagery of nature humanity need not renounce those things that ensure collective survival, or even a minimally good standard of life, but we do need to set limits on our current practices (especially in terms of energy, food, transportation, extraction industries, waste management, and consumption). Currently, there are essentially no limits in consumer societies, even to the point that consumers are encouraged by advertisers to buy more and consume more to be happy. Advertisers have reportedly learned how to activate incentives in consumers, at an unconscious level: “the strong claim for subliminal advertising shows specific behavioral consequences resulting from subliminal directives” (though it should be noted that there is scientific dispute over this). These incentives issue from the
predisposition to animality, which can be likened – in Darwinian language – to inherited traits. Gad Saad traces modern consumption to evolutionary drivers, and concludes that “humans have an evolved capacity to engage in self-deception in order to navigate through life . . .” Kant’s critique that the great mass of humanity engages in the self-delusion of deferring moral judgement to authority figures, because of laziness and cowardice, is applicable here (O, 8:137). Ironically, even our natural predisposition to love nature (what E. O. Wilson calls biophilia), is used by advertisers to promote consumption which can be environmentally harmful (e.g. large vehicles shown in nature in advertising, or animals used to sell things). “Economic freedom” (also called “economic liberty”), and the enjoyment of economic wealth and prosperity that issues from this liberty – even though environmental destruction is a side-effect of it – is advanced by classical liberal and libertarian thinkers as a positive right. This right is considered by some to be divinely ordained (e.g. as in the prosperity gospel), even if it infringes on the rights of others, such as those born in the future, those who work in countries with no labour standards under adverse conditions, or animals. This ethos of limitless consumption, framed as economic liberty and right to prosperity, is a good example of a non-universalizable maxim of action receiving unconditional commitment when linked to supersensible objects.

Kant refers to the tendency among human beings to create social hierarchies that lead to inequity, noting that from “self-love originates the inclination to gain worth in the opinion of others, originally, of course, merely equal worth … but from this arises gradually an unjust desire to acquire superiority for oneself over others” (R, 6:27). Over-consumption of finite resources resulting in increased emissions and environmental destruction is prompted by social competition.
Kant's theory of self-love, linked to his second predisposition and its role in radical evil provides, insight into the dynamic of social competition which is driving over-consumption. Economist Richard Layard contends that GDP growth has become an end in itself. He argues that increased consumption does not lead to increased happiness because “happiness associated with consumption largely depends on one's wealth relative to other people [and] since is it impossible to make everyone wealthier relative to everyone else, it is impossible to increase overall happiness by pursuing greater GDP per person.” An idealized no-growth or steady-state economy, consistent with Layard’s thought, can be framed in terms of the co-health and well-being of all its members. The actual welfare of the human subject and not that of the institution is deemed paramount in this vision. Similarly, Kant, as we may recall, refers to the principle of “limiting the freedom of each to the conditions under which it can coexist with the freedom of everyone else, in conformity with a universal law” (R, 6:98). This universal ethic, if adhered to by its members, would result in restrictions on the consumption of finite resources, resulting in “low stabilization” of greenhouse gas emissions, but with the important caveat that such restrictions be implemented in an impartial and egalitarian manner. A Kantian ethic, if adhered to universally and consistently, would act as a safeguard against the use of instrumental reason in the formulation and implementation of technological remedies.

Another important point is that the growth of consumerism and the middle-class in China and India is already having large environmental effects. Kant can also provide insights that may help us answer the difficult question which often arises when this is discussed in public fora: what right do so-called Western or “global north” consumers have to talk about environmental issues in China and India if they themselves contributed historically to the majority of GHG emissions, and doesn’t the global South have a right to industrialize and enjoy
the same standard of living? The questions are predicated on national and racial identity and ignore a global perspective and the problem of Hardin’s ‘tragedy of the commons.’ The questions also side-step the moral imperative of behavioural change; they seem to be inspired by the idea that unlimited economic growth and unsustainable industrialization are basic rights for all. The vices of the savagery of nature are, to a great extent, responsible for the growth of the middle-class in China and India, because affluence increases social status through such unsustainable activities as increased meat-eating. At the same time, some environmentalists and religious practitioners in those nations have begun to question unlimited growth and environmentally destructive consumption through the regulative application of traditional religious values, from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

4.12 Supersensible cognition / objects

(i) Principle. Kant distinguishes between sensible cognition and supersensible cognition, where the former refers to apprehension of the sensible / phenomenal world, and the latter may be thought of as our ability to imagine things that have no constitutive reality, but which often make use of sense imagery (e.g. imaginary monsters, supernatural beings). Rational judgement gives us the ability make this important distinction, so as not to make the error of believing that supersensible objects have constitutive reality. Kant notes that “the reliability of judgement is to be sought in reason alone” (O, 8:140). The common error of reason, which attributes objective reality to supersensible objects, contributing to counterfeit faith and religious heteronomy, has momentous implications that have significantly shaped human and world history for the worse, and continue to do so. There is no limit to the variety of imaginary objects that this type of cognition can generate. In “What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?” Kant has a dismissive view of types of supersensible cognition that he describes as “figments of the brain”
and as “impertinent inquisitiveness straying into empty dreaming” (O, 8:137). He adds that “many supersensible things may be thought (for objects of sense do not fill up the whole field of possibility) to which, however, reason feels no need to extend itself, much less to assume their existence,” but then says that there is another type of supersensible cognition that does have great practical value: the postulate of God (an “original being as supreme intelligence” and idea of the “highest good”) (ibid).

Other supersensible ideals that have practical value, and which he describes as postulates of pure reason are freedom and immortality. Postulates, it should be added, are complex ideas that utilize supersensible cognition and which have practical value. The concept of human rights might also be thought of as a postulate of pure practical reason, one that is predicated on the boundless worth of human life, requiring our unconditional moral duty. What it refers to is intangible: it’s an ideal that can have a powerful social and political influence. If we broaden the definition of supersensible objects in this way, to include ideals, it is useful for providing an analysis of secular politics, where such ideals have a great deal of power over the human mind and can motivate millions of people in one direction or another (e.g., the use of such ideals in electoral politics, or to justify wars). Kant opens the door for this broader definition when he refers to “the highest good possible in the world” (O, 8:139).

When some quality of the sensible world is cognized as limitless, unconditional or infinite in scope, this unconditionality itself turns sensible objects into supersensible objects, by extending some quality of the object infinitely. There is something in human nature that is drawn to supersensible objects (perhaps because of the sense of meaning, purpose or certainty they provide), and wishes to see them as referring to objectively real by conflating them with the interests of an in-group (e.g., nationalism). However, the only force or power they contain is the
ability to influence the beings in whom they originate (human beings) to subscribe to and advance them as frameworks upon which to build societies. Kant is primarily concerned with supersensible objects from traditional religion (e.g., God), but his analysis is applicable to such objects that appear in the context of secular politics as well (e.g., truth, justice, freedom, liberty, democracy, sustainability). What characterizes them, above all, is the idea of perfection. The way to negotiate one’s way through these beliefs and ideals without misusing them is to stay grounded in practical reason: “the final touchstone of truth is always reason.” (O, 8:141)

(ii) Application. Aside from the use and misuse of God already referred to in this thesis, an example of a supersensible object worth exploring – one that has great relevance politically in terms of the climate crisis – is the ideal of sustainability. While it ostensibly pertains to the material world, the principle of sustainability has within it an element of limitless perfection of the kind that can command unconditional commitment in those who subscribe to it. It is an ideal that can go either way, ethically speaking: it can inspire moral conduct and help in the construction of a good society, but it could also provide the justification for a misanthropic violation of human rights if civilization itself is thought to be inherently unsustainable. As an ideal, it is more commonly used by governments and corporations and institutions to convey the idea that they are environmentally friendly when in fact they are not (i.e., the problem of greenwashing), which has its parallel in religious hypocrisy in the sense that there is an incentive to claim the moral high ground in the public arena without having warranted it, to garner acclaim or to quell criticism. Kant refers to the “habit of hypocrisy” among religious leaders undermining the loyalty of the faithful: it “brings about the opposite of what was intended” (R, 6:180). In the same way, corporate and government disingenuity regarding the environment can result in the
moral disintegration of society, as demonstrated in the despair of some young people who are
cynical regarding their own prospects and the state of the world, due to climate change.\textsuperscript{736}

Another example of the use of supersensible objects, in the arena of secular politics, is
the way in which the climate justice movement has emerged in recent years. Jethro Pettit, in
“Climate Justice: A New Social Movement for Atmospheric Rights,” writes:

In the [global] South climate change has emerged . . . as a sustainable development
issue, whose solutions are seen as inseparable from the larger issues of poverty, trade,
and globalization . . . they are making the links between poverty and climate change
[through] the theme of \textit{anti-globalization}, connecting climate change with unjust
North/South economic relations. Others build on the long-standing \textit{environmental
justice} campaigns, which have been concerned with the hugely disproportionate
impact of pollution and ecological degradation on poor communities. Together, these
diverse social forces have adopted \textit{climate justice} as a rallying cry . . . articulated in
the language of \textit{rights}, their foremost concern about climate change is with who is
responsible for this enormous new threat to their survival.\textsuperscript{737} [italics added]

The words to note, above, are “climate justice” (which evolved from “social justice”), as
well as “rights,” and “anti-globalization.” ‘Globalization’ is word that typically implies free
trade, but has evolved to convey other, sometimes nebulous meanings; its fluidity and
expansiveness of meaning explains why it has become, for many, a catch-all world to signify all
that is wrong with the world, on the basis of which it inspires massive and often violent anti-
globalization rallies worldwide.\textsuperscript{738} It is seen by its critics as business-driven imperialism, forcing
capitalism on the world.\textsuperscript{739} These mass rallies and protests are characterized by protest rituals,
groupthink, and enthusiasm (see 4.13 on enthusiasm, and 3.3 on secular climate activism), and
take on a religious character.\textsuperscript{740} The clash with police officers contributes to this, elevating it,
through force, to the scale of a “cosmic war” between good and evil.\textsuperscript{741} The argument being
made here is that all these concepts, while originating from apprehensions of sensible objects,
have the idea of limitlessness (either absolute goodness or absolute evil) grafted onto them (so to
speak), and then are used as symbols to mobilize political movements to strive for the ideals envisaged by these concepts. Like the concept of God, they have the power to excite mass demonstrations and conflicts and life-time service by countless individuals in pursuit of what they represent. This can be a force for good if the ideals themselves, and the means by which they are implemented, are ethically purposive. They can also (as with some traditional religions) be used to justify mass violence in pursuit of the political objectives they become linked to.

It should be added, that in the future, for the climate justice movement to be able to retain any moral legitimacy, it must adhere to the principle of nonviolence to the same degree that Martin Luther King Jr. did. It is interesting that in his use of supersensible objects and ideals (e.g., justice, God, freedom) he always adhered to nonviolence as a guiding principle, because of which the movement he led managed to retain the moral high ground. This is an important example for climate justice movements to emulate.

4.13 Enthusiasm

(i) Principle. Enthusiasm, a term used by several Enlightenment philosophers, refers to being swept up by irrational emotions and excessive sentiment, similar to what happens with religious fanaticism and charismatic religion. It could also refer to nationalistic patriotism, or excessive emotion in response to any number of ideologies and political identities, which often merge with ethnic and religious identity (e.g. American Civil Religion, Hindu nationalism, Israeli nationalism, Palestinian nationalism, National Socialism). It can also occur in any number of other secular social contexts (e.g. team sports, raves).\textsuperscript{742} It can be excited by music, imagery (e.g., the emotions intended to be stirred by the film “Triumph of the Will”\textsuperscript{743}). The etymology of the word enthusiasm is \textit{Schwärmtum}, a “swarm.” It’s a useful term for describing the process whereby people abandon the use of reason in favour of emotion. Enlightenment and Reformation
thinkers used the term pejoratively to refer to religious superstition and despotic manipulation of the masses. An individual surrenders his or her autonomy of will to a heteronomous force by allowing their maxims of action to be unduly influenced by emotion, and this can result in a violation of ML. The clearest example of this is the lynch mob, in which individuals surrender themselves to the collective identity of the group, which is driven by an unconscious drive to unite against a perceived threat. This process is identified by René Girard as *scapegoating*, a social phenomenon common to the history of religion, which he claims is the origin of violence in human history.744

Enthusiasm is a useful term for describing the process whereby people abandon the use of reason, in favour of emotion. Luther used the term pejoratively to describe Anabaptists.745 DiCenso explains that enthusiasm “conveys the sense of narrowly focused passions and allegiances insusceptible to the mitigating influences of reason and argument,” and notes that “Spinoza argues against the manipulation of religious emotions for despotic political ends.”746 Spinoza says that individuals “parade their own ideas as God’s word, their chief aim being to compel others to think as they do, while using religion as a pretext” and that religious authorities spread hatred “under the false guise of zeal in God’s cause and a burning enthusiasm.”747 Locke also describes the phenomenon, as noted by DiCenso: for Locke, enthusiasm is substituting revelation for reason and in the process abandoning both for fantasy, delusion and dogmatic claims, “the ungrounded Fancies of a Man’s own Brain.”748 According to Locke, enthusiasm is the means whereby some religious authorities wield despotic political power over followers; the religious authority “Tyrannizes over his own Mind” and does the same to others. Hume, according to DiCenso, describes superstition and enthusiasm as “the corruptions of true religion” and describes the personality given over to it as prone to “raptures, transports, and surprising
flights of fancy.” Historically, the term arose in response to the rise of charismatic preachers and religious revivalism following the English Civil War. Implicit in the term is a criticism of religious authorities who manipulate the masses emotionally through the use of supersensible ideas. It is a pejorative term, denoting morally devoid emotionalism, juxtaposed to the use of reason. The Kantian idea of the inclination is closely related to enthusiasm: an inclination is a desire or drive that has a heteronomous influence on us if we allow it to take precedence over the use of reason.

For Kant, rituals play an important role in supporting superstition. Kant is critical of religious authorities who obtain power through the use of religious rituals. He denies that they are a necessary part of religion. From a structuralist and ritual theory perspective, ritual is in fact a major component of religious practice, worldwide; but Kant is referring here not to elements of historical traditions, when he mentions religion, but to the “true pure religion” of ethical principles and good life conduct. The problem with rituals, which can excite enthusiasm, is that they distract the practitioner away from good life conduct and foster the religious delusion that Providence will make one a better person, and not one’s own effort: “If the delusion of this supposed favourite of heaven reaches the heights of enthusiasm to the point of imagining that he feels the special effects of faith within him . . . virtue finally becomes loathsome to him and an object of contempt” (R, 6:201). The problem with faith in rituals and historical forms of religion in general (including scriptures literally interpreted, religious authorities, and orthodox belief systems) is that they can foster “artificially self-induced deceptions,” which create the misimpression that the practitioner is favoured by God for performing them, when in fact the only thing “well pleasing to God” (where God is a postulate) is good life conduct.
John Corrigan, a scholar of the study of the intersection of emotion and religion, argues that there is a division between universal and culturally relativistic theories of emotion, and that there are five universalist theories: (i) biological / evolutionary; (ii) linguistic; (iii) structuralist; (iv) theological/philosophical; (v) neurobiological. The theological/philosophical type of universal theory perhaps best describes Kant’s view, which is similar to the Cartesian dualism of body and mind, in that it frames emotion (in particular enthusiasm) negatively in contrast to reason. The study of “enthusiasm” in charismatic religion lends itself more to a relativistic model (in contrast to the view that emotion can provide the basis for a universal theory of religion), because it is such a culturally specific ritualized use of emotion, within a certain context (e.g. Pentecostal revivals, where practitioners are “slain in the spirit”), and has particular meanings in that context. This culturally relativistic view of enthusiasm is not inconsistent with Kant’s philosophy of religion, because he views religious rituals – which would include charismatic rituals – as empty and lacking in moral content, and as examples of statutory observances. Pure reason is the foundational element of ‘true’ religion for Kant, and not emotion, so emotion cannot be part of a universal theory of religion, from this perspective, except inasmuch as it describes a heteronomous element of historical religions. Charismatic rituals, in this view, represent heteronomous elements. Whether emotions are seen as universal, or viewed in a culturally relativistic way, they still represent a heteronomous element.

Rudolph Otto, whose theory of religion revolves around the highly emotional ‘numinous’ experience, eschews the idea of reason as fundamental for a definition of religion. In contrast to Otto, emotion (in the form of enthusiasm) is viewed by Kant as a heteronomous element, deriving from ‘nature’ a posteriori, in contrast to pure practical reason a priori. The experience of the numinous may turn into enthusiasm, for which reason we need rational principles for the
determination of moral worth. The numinous experience, which by itself could be transformative and redeeming, can easily be harnessed by unscrupulous religious authorities in service to parochial interests, through culturally mediated interpretations of it. For Otto, the numinous experience is foundational for a definition of religion, and this experience lacks any moral content in its original form. If there is moral content, it is in the form of regulative interpretation of the numinous. In contrast to Otto, Kant maintains that pure practical reason is the foundational element of ‘true’ or ‘pure’ religion, and every contingent element added to it (to make it more accessible, or just as a matter of circumstance or arbitrary cultural influence), should be assessed by the degree of its conformity with or deviation from moral principles.

Kant’s theory of the sublime, in the third Critique, may allow for a regulative interpretation of emotional religious experience, similar to the numinous, but with one major difference: where Otto’s theory of the originary element of religion is devoid of moral content, and describes only a primary emotional experience (fascinas et mysterium tremendum), for Kant the experience of the sublime is necessarily purposive, and exists only within a teleological context (CJ, 5:249-50). Thus, even if we were to say that through the theory of the sublime Kant allows some element of emotion into his otherwise rationalist ethical theory, it must necessarily be subordinate to rational principles.

(ii) Application. An example of enthusiasm in the context of the climate crisis is the way in which consumerism is abetted by the religious enthusiasm of those who subscribe to the prosperity gospel, which gives divine sanction to material wealth and success. While Kant undoubtedly had in mind the contemporary examples of the charismatic fervour of Anabaptists and Pietists and the institutionalized mysticism of Roman Catholicism, religious enthusiasm is more prevalent today than it was then, because televangelists and missionaries have spread it to
every corner of the world. Kant’s critique of religious delusion, when practitioners mistakenly believe they are favoured by supernatural grace, applies to those who subscribe to the prosperity gospel: they believe that by performing statutory observances (e.g., prayer, giving ‘gifts’ to televangelists, laying hands on the television screen, attending revivals), they will be rewarded, spiritually and financially.

Traditional religions have played a role in terms of justifying nationalism and consumerism. For example, Rev. John Hagee is well known for diatribes in support of American superiorityism and militarism, as well as dispensationalist prophecies, and is very successful, through the use of rhetoric for stirring up uncritical emotional support for these ideas, invoking divine sanction to support them. As Kant notes, this stirring up of fervent emotions, results in the delusion among practitioners that they are divinely blessed because of their emotional stirrings, which at the same time has the detrimental effect of allowing them to ignore their moral duty, which in the modern context, should include the duty to not consume more than is needed, and to preserve the world for future generations. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Christian Right vilifies environmentalism, which is precisely about changing society in accordance with that moral duty, as a threat and as idolatrous.

For Christians who subscribe to dispensationalist theology, a divine apocalyptic scenario excites a form of enthusiasm. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) provided a definition that refers to “imaginary sights of God and Christ in Heaven, all supposed witnessing of the Spirit . . . and all impressions of future events, [italics added].”754 By “future events” he is presumably referring to prophecy of historical events, since Apocalypticism is not a new phenomenon. Spinoza’s critique of those who “parade their own ideas as God’s word” accurately describes the use of the concept of God to promote climate change denial (as well as any number of other non-universalizable
actions or beliefs, such as the use of God to justify wars). For example, prominent climate change denier Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), one-time minority leader of U.S. Committee on Environment, declared “The arrogance of people to think that we, human beings, would be able to change what He [God] is doing in the climate is to me outrageous.” Inhoffe, famous for being the most outspoken exponent of climate change denial, also received considerable election campaign funding from fossil fuel companies, so his sincerity is questionable. Inhoffe’s stance on this issue is also a perfect example of Kant’s definition of evil: putting self-love ahead of the moral law by inverting the command of duty to obey reason. It speaks to the dangers of theocracy, which contributes to religious heteronomy: “an aristocracy of priests or leaders who boasted of instructions directly imparted to them from God” (R, 6:125). The political ascendance of the Religious Right in U.S. politics has led to the adoption of climate change denial as an article of faith. This has been done through use of enthusiasm, by appealing to a nationalist interpretation of the meaning of God.

Intensity of emotion is taken as evidence of the veracity of the belief: the more emotion, the greater the belief in the truth of the belief. We see this demonstrated with American Civil Religion, which has also been used to argue for climate change denial. To underscore the veracity of the belief, charismatic preachers have appealed to allegiance to God and to patriotism. Kant rejects the role of emotion in ‘true religious belief’ or more precisely he limits it. He views it as tied to inclination, which can compel us to deviate from duty to the moral law. This does not mean that he rejects the fact that emotions occur in religions. He acknowledges that they do, but he makes an ethical assessment of them by saying that their occurrence, through inclinations, can contribute to instances of counterfeit faith, if the inclination is given precedence over the moral law. Duty is ideally informed by reason alone, not by inclination. Apocalypticism,
frequently expressed in charismatic denominations, is a very good example of this, because the slavish faith demonstrated by the desire for personal salvation is given precedence over concern for any conception of a social or political good. In contrast, rational religion prescribes autonomy of the will, which includes distancing oneself from the inner heteronomy of such emotional impulses. The constitutive interpretation of the Apocalypse (and of scriptures in general) lend themselves to placing inclinations ahead of duty, because the constitutive interpretation frequently serves as a vehicle for self-love, whereas the regulative interpretation places inclination in its proper place by keeping its sights on moral duty. Theoretically, a person living in accordance with the moral law would be allowed to experience emotions brought on by charismatic worship, but this happiness and these for the good of society in this world if they are to have any moral value. If emotions, thus stimulated, rest on an other-worldly eschatology that distracts practitioners from a focus on their moral duty in this world, they can have a negative moral value.

At this point it is important to distinguish empathy from rational principles. There is some evidence from the study of empathy to support the Enlightenment contention that reason, and not emotion, forms the cornerstone of moral decision-making: psychologist Paul Bloom claims that the emotion of empathy is capricious because it plays on prejudices. As an example of the problem with the use of emotions to guide morality, Bloom notes that “racist biases show up tremendously in who [sic] we feel empathy for.” We could add here that such biases and prejudices represent heteronomous influences, imposed through socialization and internalized by individuals. Historical religious traditions can play a role in creating and maintaining such prejudices, through the use of enthusiasm. An example is the highly emotional combination of religious identity, racial bias, and nationalism in the so-called Christian identity movement,
which stirs some of its members to acts of religious violence. Some of the worst examples of mass violence in human history were committed when large numbers of people succumbed to emotional hysteria and abandoned rational principles. Bloom argues in favour of “rational compassion” – that is, the use of rational principles in moral-decision making. Philosopher Peter Singer expresses a similar view in his ethical treatment of the issue of animal rights, arguing that he does not approach the issue emotionally; for him the issue is one to be decided entirely through rational principles (in his case, utilitarianism). And if rational principles should serve as the basis for moral decision-making, then it becomes a matter of which principles are best. If they are principles that give priority only to the interests of one group, at the expense of another (that is, if they cannot be universalized), they can become rationalizations for grave moral wrongdoing. Cultural relativism, although sometimes predicated on the moral stance against the historical wrongdoings of colonialism, stands as example of an ethic that cannot be universalized and can be used to excuse the violation of human rights.

Bloom claims that a shortcoming of empathy for moral-decision making is that it cannot be extended beyond concern for one person. This leads to the practice of priority to individual cases over universalizabe principles: “It's because of empathy that people care more about a little girl stuck in a well, than they do about climate change.” Statistics regarding suffering, on the other hand, often evince indifference. This may help explain why those who witness the ravages of climate change are increasingly hardened to human suffering. It is a quirk of human psychology that predisposes us to have no emotional response to statistics that record suffering and death, even though we may have a strong emotional response to the image of the suffering of an individual: according to researchers Paul Slovic and Daniel Västfjäll, “as numbers get larger and larger, we become insensitive; numbers fail to trigger the emotion or feeling necessary to
motivate action.” It is for this reason that fundraisers for charitable causes avoid the use of statistics and have learned to manipulate the emotions of potential donors by showing individual suffering. These facts provides us with a strong argument in favour of the use of rational principles, as opposed to appeals to emotion, as a basis for moral decision making: rational principles are needed to guard against the tendency of human beings to make such decisions based on emotions, which may be well intentioned, but are prone to error, and which contribute to bias.

4.14 Autonomy and heteronomy of the will

(i) Principle. Kant states that “If the will seeks the law that is to determine it anywhere else than in the fitness of its maxims for its own giving of universal law – consequently if, in going beyond itself, it seeks this law in a property of any of its objects heteronomy always results. The will in that case does not give itself the law; instead the object, by means of its relation to the will, gives the law to it” (GR, 4:441). For the purposes here, the term “objects” above can refer to any religious or political ideology, or any external compulsion to think a certain way, influencing the formation of the maxim of action in the determining ground of morality. Allegiance to religious orthodoxy is a good example. So is the ideology of political correctness, or that matter, conformity to “corporate culture” or the dictates of any group or external authority other than reason. Any external influence (which can be internalized as beliefs and ideologies) which does not issue from autonomous moral judgement is heteronomous. The conflict between autonomy and heteronomy of the will can cause cognitive dissonance, resulting in complicated rationalizations for unjust decisions. Kant says, “whenever an object of the will has to be laid down as the basis for prescribing the rule that determines the will, there the rule is none other than heteronomy . . .” (GR, 4:444). This “object” can take myriad forms, including
the traditions of one’s own culture, military, political, or religious authorities, but it most often takes the form of internalized norms and beliefs derived from an external source and accepted uncritically, contributing to self-censorship. The incentive to conform and disincentive to autonomy can be very powerful. When a person with such beliefs is forced to confront them, when faced with a moral dilemma, and chooses not to defer to said “objects” in making the decision, that is autonomy of the will, which Kant defines as freedom: “the principle of morality – that an absolutely good will is that whose maxim can always contain itself regarded as a universal law . . .” (GR 4:447). Autonomy of the will is an ideal that for Kant is the equivalent of ML (GR, 4:449): “in the idea of freedom we have actually only presupposed the moral law, namely the principle of the autonomy of the will itself . . .” In a social and political context, autonomy of the will is difficult to achieve, for which reason societies should adopt principles that facilitate autonomy. One example of such a principle is the idea of academic freedom, which has a positive social benefit and must be protected, even if it offends orthodox thought.761 In the history of religions, there are numerous examples of the exercise of autonomy, including the political schisms motivated by moral objection to unjust practices, and rejections of orthodox forms of faith felt to be too repressive or limiting in some way. Religion is an expression of the difficult task of rejecting religious heteronomy in toto, while retaining space for moral faith.

(ii) Application. There are numerous applications. Absolute independence from the socially dominant practice of consumerism and autonomy of the will is perhaps impossible to achieve, but moral striving towards ethical consumption is indicative of autonomous ethical action. Consumerism is now a dominant mode of thinking and practice; it has permeated every corner of the world and is reinforced through the threat of loss of social standing for those who don’t conform to it. The incentive to be socially accepted is perhaps what is driving consumerism
even more than base desires themselves. While it is certainly not the equivalent of totalitarianism in the degree to which it attempts to control thoughts, consumerism is extremely influential because it appeals to natural incentives, which are manipulated through advertising.

Independence from unethical consumerism is a work in progress, for both individuals and potentially for the entire societies. Independence from fossil fuels (towards renewable energy and conservation) and the transition away from animal agriculture (towards plant-based foods) are two important examples. The idea of autonomy of the will is important in the context of a consumerist society, because it represents the freedom to choose. Advertising, which helps to manufacture desires and the pressure to socially conform, can be a heteronomous influence. Ethical consumerism requires the exercise of moral judgement. In the context of the climate crisis, pure practical reason may be represented by the freedom to choose to act in such a way as to mitigate the crisis or to work to alleviate its detrimental effects, in consideration of others. As conditions worsen, the ethical implications of these kinds of choices will become more evident.

Another application of the idea of heteronomy of the will pertains to corporations. The issue of corporations as a legal person, as designated by the U.S. Supreme Court, from a Kantian perspective, is worth noting. Religious and cultural traditions and institutions exist for the good of human beings, not vice versa. To put the rights of an institution ahead of the rights of persons is to invert the proper order of means and ends. This argument properly applies to corporations, especially when corporate rights trump human rights. This is evident in the case of climate change, when the rights and interests of fossil fuel and animal agriculture corporations, which produce unsustainable GHG emissions, are given precedence over the rights of human beings who are adversely affected by the results of their industries. The corporations themselves are merely instruments for the will of individual human beings who, in many cases,
heteronomously defer their moral judgement to corporate interests. A similar ethical case can be made against state bureaucracies or large institutions wherein people tasked with decisions that affect lives see themselves as mere functionaries with no power, and learn to adopt the attitude of institutional indifference as a means of emotional survival or advancing careerism.

Corporations that contribute to climate change do not have a will of their own, because they are not persons; they are merely legal entities, and in practice they are the sum of the actions and wills of individual human beings who often make the moral choice to allow the propensity to evil to influence their maxims of actions. Corporations, like religions, can also be instruments for good, which the movement for “corporate social responsibility” ostensibly aims towards. There is an interesting parallel between corporations of this kind and traditional religions engaged in activities that violate ML: in both cases, parochial interests are given precedence over moral considerations, which constitutes radical evil since corporate interests serve the self-love of those who advance them. When ultimate responsibility for the decision can be deferred to the corporation, church, or collective entity, it is easier to abandon moral responsibility – for some people – than to oppose the will of the collective entity, and face negative repercussions as a result. The corporations themselves do not make a choice, nor can they. The decision of the individual caught up in large institution that influences his or her decisions through incentive and disincentives is a good example of heteronomy of the will. A similar (though more egregious) phenomenon is present also in a lynch mob, in which individuals fail to act autonomously, and in historical examples of religious violence, where individuals succumb to collective thinking to justify scapegoating. In societies where law and order prevail, but human beings still retain violent instincts, they have an easy and comfortable way to express aggression: through virtual lynch mobs engaged in public shaming tactics online. Virtual worlds have become for many
such an all-consuming alternative to social interactions in the embodied world that for young people especially it contributes to heteronomy of the will, where they surrender independent thought and moral judgement to the ‘groupthink’ of virtual communities. According to philosopher George Grant, the computer is not neutral, but dictates the way in which it to be used.\textsuperscript{765} At the same time, it should also be added that the Internet, especially through interactive social media, has also become a vehicle for community building and activism, especially for persons who are geographically dispersed but united by common social and political ideals, such as climate justice (but also climate change denial).\textsuperscript{766} Social media have become an important vehicle for the transmission of ideals, and the argument can be made that like historical religions, social media and online worlds are a dominant cultural force that can be used to foster either autonomous or heteronomous ethical conduct.

The ideal of autonomy of the will is absolute independence from heteronomous influences, the full expression of pure practical reason. Allen Wood gives insight into the historical context of the concept, which was fully developed by Kant into a systematic ethical concept. He notes that historians of the idea trace its development from the use of ‘self-government’ as political metaphor into a “fundamental conception relating to individual persons . . . capable of making revolutionary demands on political institutions themselves.”\textsuperscript{767} It seems very plausible, in this case, to suggest that an idea which has as its origins in a political ideal (the ideal of political autonomy and freedom from despotic rule) should not therefore be limited to a mere apolitical usage for use only by individuals. As Wood notes, the ideal of autonomy of the will even has revolutionary implications, where by ‘revolutionary’ is meant the ability to challenge dominant paradigms and modes of thinking, to break the boundaries heteronomously imposed by restrictive traditions, fixed cultural identities, established social norms, and narrow-
minded religious codifications. As an ideal it is thus relevant for the climate crisis, which requires revolutionary thinking to escape the dominant economic and technological paradigms that have hindered progress in climate mitigation efforts.

4.15 The postulate of God and the regulative use of postulates

(i) Principle. Postulates are Heischeurtheile, or “a judgment on demand”, also relating to the Latin postulatum, (demand or request).\textsuperscript{768} Kant refers to a category of thought called a “transcendental hypothesis” in the first Critique, then uses the term postulate in the second Critique to describe the same type of thought. Already in the first Critique, Kant is clear that one can use such a hypothesis without believing it to be true.\textsuperscript{769} Frederick Rauscher explains that according to Kant, postulates are “an unproven claim required by a particular context.”\textsuperscript{770} They exist only for practical purposes: “if anything, it is a placeholder, that is, it serves to highlight a lack of concrete theoretical knowledge of objects in nature.”\textsuperscript{771} As such, postulates do not refer to anything objectively real and any reference to them as such is counter-purposive. Thus, biblical and Qu’ranic literalism rests on a grave conceptual error. Their true value lies in regulative interpretations of them (i.e., seeing in them what Kant refers to as schematism of analogy).

God, immortality, and freedom are three postulates of pure practical reason (CPrR, 5:5). The idea of God issues from supersensible cognition; it flows “from the necessity of the condition for such an intelligible world to be the highest good” (CPrR, 5:122). The intelligible world referred to is represented as a social ideal through RE. The idea of God can be practically useful, as illustrated by Francis’ \textit{Laudato Si’}. It can inspire good will, which for Kant is its only valid purpose. The practical use of the postulate of God is expressed variously by Kant as “the highest good” (as a representation of CI) and as the “lawgiver” (pure practical reason). It can
also have negative moral implications, if thought of as an external power, as illustrated by various forms of religious heteronomy. An interesting example of the two opposing interpretations, as concerns the environment, relates to the use of the word “dominion” in Genesis 1:28, to mean either good stewardship (a regulative concept, in line with the contemporary moral imperative towards environmental sustainability and the preservation of endangered species), or conversely, the license to exploit nature and animals with impunity.772

If we understand God as a postulate and ourselves as rational moral beings in whose minds the idea of God is generated for practical purposes, this is consistent with religious pluralism (provided the latter is based on the importance of moral precepts). The idea that all the world religions have some version of the Golden Rule embedded in their scriptures and teachings is a popular example of this idea. The constitutive / ontological interpretation is consistent with religious exclusivism. It could also contribute religious relativism: an ethical ranking of religious sub-traditions on different issues. God, for Kant, does not issue from “theoretical dogmas but [from] presuppositions having a necessarily practical [which is to say ethical] reference . . .” (CPrR, 5:132). Kant makes an important distinction between a standard claim of dogmatic theology (that God is an objective reality) – which issues from “speculative cognition” that extends beyond the limits of reason – and the practical/ethical use of the idea of God, generated by reason. Speculative concepts from dogmatic theology and metaphysics cannot be confirmed as apodictically real, but they can be used to represent otherwise abstract moral concepts, that in their ‘pure’ form (as universal principles) are ‘naked’ and in need of representation to make them more widely accessible. Put more simply, the purpose of the postulate of God is entirely ethical, to help advance “good life conduct,” and to help in the creation of the ethical community. It would be an error of reason to give what Kant terms “servile faith” to this object.
Frederick Rauscher, in *Naturalism and Realism in Kant's Ethics*, says that Kant’s concept of God can “be understood in a metaphysically naturalistic framework.” Rauscher says that “human beings . . . create the concept of God, and we comprehend this concept only as a thought in us, not as a separate substance outside us.” Instead, Kant’s God should be thought of as “the claim that rational beings must hold in their minds some particular concept or other that functions as a bridge to satisfy the systematic demands of practical reason, yet that does not, and is not intended to, refer to any existing object.” As noted previously, postulates that employ supersensible objects do not refer to anything objectively real, but they do incorporate elements of the sensible world, which makes them intelligible. Their purpose is regulative/practical. Rauscher refers to Hans Vaihinger’s *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob* (1875), which argues that “human life is structured by a set of assumptions and ideas which are themselves “fictions” but which help human beings survive and thrive.” Vaihinger claims that “the psyche finds it very useful to employ certain concepts which help it to fulfil the purpose of navigating the organism through its life; these concepts are purposeful functions” (*zweckmässige Funktionen*). This is essentially a functionalist understanding of supernatural concepts, one – it could be added – that corresponds to a naturalistic understanding of human beings as products of the selective forces of evolution. To say that morality evolved over time is not to negate the ahistorical apriority of ML. It is simply to suggest that practical reason evolved to help us survive. At some point in our evolutionary past we evolved the capacity to create supersensible objects and representations in order to convey them to one another, leading to mythology and conceptions of the world of spirits. Rauscher adds that Kant wrote a note to himself late in life: “The idea of that which human reason itself makes for the universe is the active representation of God. Not as a
particular (personality) substance outside me but a thought in me” (21:154). Rauscher traces the history of the development of this understanding of the postulate of God throughout the critical philosophy, demonstrating that it is implicit throughout it. DiCenso (2011) does the same.

Hypothetically there could be an infinite number of postulates of practical reason, provided there are rational beings to generate them. Some concepts that might be classed as postulates include human rights, democracy, social justice (and its variants, environmental justice and climate justice), natural justice, satyagraha (nonviolence, or ‘soul force’), Nibbana, and ahimsa. They do not refer to anything objectively real, but are clearly of practical use because they can and do shape our social and political worlds. Eco-theologians have begun the project of applying such ideas to environmental issues. The Jewish concept of prophetic social justice and Jesus’ ethical teachings applied to environmental justice issues are two important examples. Eco-theologians from other traditions (e.g. Buddhism, Jainism), are doing the same: referring to representations of supersensible objects from their own traditions.

Rational beings are able to cognize a supreme being, though we cannot cognize its nature, which is speculative; we can, however, arrive at a practical application of the idea. Postulates stem from the moral imperative of CI, which is “grounded in the nature of our being as free and rational creatures” (LPR, 28:1083). Kant, as an Enlightenment thinker, is here trying to locate morality within the framework of a scientific understanding of the world (as science was understood two centuries ago). Locating the origin of the concept of God within our capacity for reason is an important claim, which furthers autonomous ethical thought, because it removes the locus of authority from an external source that is, at best, merely speculative. The use of the term God should also be understood as an appropriation of religious language to convey moral meaning. DiCenso notes that “Kant draws upon conceptions that were shown to be
epistemologically unsound in the first Critique, such as soul, cosmos, and God, and reinterprets them as practically significant . . . he readily appropriates religious ideas to address issues of motivation, focus, and the actualization of principles in our lives.”

Supersensible objects cannot be known as apodictically real, but they are practically useful as representations of subjectively experienced and otherwise difficult to articulate complex interpersonal dynamics that today might otherwise be examined through the social sciences, and which certainly can be brought into focus through the sociology of religion.

In this respect, another important postulate, according to Kant, is the idea of human dignity. It is described as “a necessary hypothesis without which moral experience would be neither possible nor explicable.” Its importance for ethically assessing social upheaval caused by climate change should be apparent: human dignity is a value that needs to be protected against the forces that would actively undermine it for the advancement of power. Wood argues that FH itself is a practical postulate and adds that “practical postulates presuppose a rational moral principle.”

DiCenso demonstrates that postulates of practical reason work in conjunction with regulative principles (principles whose function is to advance ML). DiCenso notes that in the first Critique Kant differentiates theoretical cognition (vis. what exists) from practical reason (vis. what ought to exist). Kant then “applies the procedure of regulative principles to indicate a movement . . . from an ought or imperative to that which is required for the fulfillment of that imperative, and he calls this movement a form of postulating.” The postulate, in other words, may be understood as a moral imperative. Kant writes: “Since there are practical laws that are absolutely necessary (the moral laws), then if these necessarily presuppose any existence as the condition of the possibility of their binding force, this existence has to be postulated” (A634/B662). God, as an anthropomorphized being, may not exist, but the practical law which
the postulate of God refers to does. DiCenso adds that “these passages supported by arguments running through the critical writings, make it clear that our capacity to generate ideas of the highest being is interlinked with the moral law . . . The idea of highest being results from this practical postulating.” The postulate of God is generated (in Kant’s view) by practical reason to convey the unconditionality of the highest moral imperative. The concept may certainly have other functions and be used in other ways, but according to Kant, that is its true function (and in this thinking he is adapting the Aristotelian concept of telos and function to our capacities). Certain persons in history, such as Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day, Rosalie Bertell, and Bishop Luc Bouchard, perfectly illustrate this moral imperative and utilize religious language to articulate it. They are driven by a moral imperative to advance social justice, to which they give religious expression.

A constitutive understanding of postulates is one that sees them as objectively real, or within human power to achieve (in the case of idealistic objectives, such as utopian political visions). This is important for our understanding of magic or statutory observances of traditional faith, which often seeks to manipulate historical events through appeal to supernatural forces. An interesting phenomenon that always accompanies constitutive interpretations of postulates is the way in which false and irrational beliefs and narratives are given credence, and are often widely accepted on faith, and skepticism regarding their veracity is discouraged or condemned by the faithful, sometimes through force, because the belief or narrative is not able to withstand rational scrutiny.

Kant is pragmatic in his endorsement of the practical use of such cognition because human beings, given their limited natures (in stark contrast to their potential), are unlikely to abandon it. It is very possible that they may be unable to do so, if this type of cognition is
hardwired in us, as some theorists speculate. Articulating the possibility of a practical use for such cognition is a major focus of *Religion*: “... if, instead of [extending to it] the constitutive principles of the cognition of supersensible objects into which we cannot in fact have any insight, we restricted our judgement to regulative principles, which content themselves only with their practical use, human wisdom would be better off . . .” (R, 6:71).

(ii) **Application.** Religious pluralism, ecumenism, and inter-faith dialogue are practically necessary in the context of the climate crisis, because faith traditions are called upon to affirm the importance of environmental justice for future generations. To understand God as a postulate of practical reason that has ethical meaning can be helpful for understanding the common moral imperative uniting different historical faiths around this global moral imperative. The World Council of Churches has issued ecumenical statements in support of climate mitigation efforts by nation states. While their understanding of the concept God may not be like Kant’s, their use of the concept is essentially regulative: God’s Creation, for example, is used to argue for conservation, and God’s love is referred to convey the idea of moral concern for others. Understanding God as a personified entity whose will is revealed through scriptures has historically contributed to religious exclusivism and religious violence. We should not suppose that as resource wars proliferate this pattern will change: the justification for wars will be articulated religiously in many cases, if history is an indication of how or why wars are fought. In some religious worldviews, a person can be killed for allegedly blaspheming against God, which can never be justified, since the very concept of God is (in Kant’s view) to advance a type of morality that recognize FH, and does not violate it. The purpose of the concept of God is to advance human welfare, not diminish it.
4.16 States of nature

(i) Principle. Kant's concept of the state of nature is similar to Hobbes' definition: brutish, nasty, and short, and the “war of every man against every man” (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). Ideally, we would not be in need of a juridical state to legislate morality, but practically it becomes necessary in order to ensure the conditions through which civilization is possible. Kant's innovation on the Hobbesian concept is to describe someone who obeys juridical laws but inwardly has no good will towards others. This is what Kant terms the “ethical state of nature.” This ethical state of nature has consequences: because of it, laws can be corrupted. The juridical laws do not always reflect ML. There are countless historical examples of this, including in our own time, the absence and erosion of necessary environmental regulations to rein in polluting corporations. Because there are people willing to commit evil actions, motivated by self-love, it is necessary for the juridical state to exist. Additionally, there is a need for moral education, because the power of the state is insufficient to address the ethical state of nature. The juridical state can police outward actions, but only the cultivation and awakening of inner ethical dispositions can remedy this inner state. This is the traditional role of religious traditions, for which they are still practically useful, in Kant’s view. In their absence, in secularized societies, other ethical frameworks for moral education have been adopted, both for good and ill, depending on the degree to which the framework in question conforms to CI. Some (e.g., those that tend towards totalitarianism) clearly do not, while others, such as the Enlightenment social imaginary of rights and freedoms are more universalizable by lack the representational framework (e.g., symbols, narratives, myths) such as those perfected over time by traditional religions. It then seems that laws, as well as moral education utilizing shared representations of
ethical principles, are necessary for a good society, because human beings are moral minors, in need of both.

The ideal, for Kant, is that we exist in an “ethico-civil state” in which people are “united under laws without being coerced, i.e., under laws of virtue alone” (R, 6:194-5). This is the best sort of society, the one most approximating the ideal of the ethical community, for which RE is the guiding principle, but it is an ideal that humanity is too immature to realize, so laws are necessary. At the same time, Kant is concerned with the question of coercive laws, and not only of the kind that advance parochial interests and perpetuate evil, but also laws that seek ethical ends, but are still coercive. Accordingly, he says “woe to the legislator who would want to bring about through coercion a polity directed to ethical ends!” (R, 6:96). Good laws do not always work; they be unpopular with the masses. For this reason, non-coercive education is also needed.

(ii) Application. The state of nature describes complete lawlessness and surrender to incentives, driven by self-love, and the total absence of good moral conduct. This may very well describe the state of things in the world to come, following the collapse of industrial civilization, should that occur. If we speculate about the future, it might go something like this: in the state of nature in the midst of civilizational collapse we witness the worst case scenario (e.g. heat stress, drought, water stress, crop failure, resulting famine, flooding, global sea level rise, resource scarcity, social breakdown and security risks, abrupt and irreversible change). The juridico-civil society describes the world we currently live in, where laws are imposed for the sake of maintaining social order, to defend against the state of nature; these laws are not always just, and many citizens obey the rule of law out of fear, not from moral duty. The juridico-civil society could also describe the society where structural violence is the norm, including unsustainable practices. It is virtually impossible for the ethically minded consumer to stand outside inequitable
structures imposed by such a society. Kant, in describing the concept of original sin in regulative terms, refers to an “infinity of violations of the [moral] law . . . because evil is in the dispositions and maxims in general (in the manner of universal principles . . .” (R, 6:71). The average consumer in whom a sense of conscience is operative, and who is locked into mandatory use of fossil fuels, feels himself to always be in a state of sin, in this way, since his daily actions carry with them the knowledge of his participation in the destruction of the world. There is no escape from this, only some degree of absolution in the form of ethical consumption and perhaps signing a petition or attending a rally or in some way working towards a more sustainable future. He or she may also be tempted to despair when witnessing continued government inaction (or lack of substantive action) on climate change. Nonetheless, by ideal of the ethical community can also serve as an inspiration to many: the ethico-political state, which is akin to the ethical community, is a regulative ideal, pointing to that which is possible if enough people can collectively envision it and work towards it. This can be accomplished, in part, through the agency of the visible church, which could describe any political formation united by egalitarian ideals and striving nonviolently to achieve them. Kant says, interestingly, that “the sublime, never fully attainable idea of an ethical community, is greatly scaled down under human hands” – by which he means it is “restricted” by our baser propensities and the “conditions of sensuous human nature” (R, 6:100). The ethical community is an ideal, and not a fully realizable one, but it is nonetheless what continually inspires sincere efforts by persons of conscience to attain it. The “visible church” wants society to conform to its ideals, whereas the Realpolitik of the juridical state is less idealistic and more pragmatic. As the climate crisis worsens the tension between these two visions for society could increase, and could well erupt into conflict in the form of protests against austerity laws. The erosion of civil society by the effects of climate
change will eventually manifest itself as a widespread state of nature, further increasing the power of the juridical state to exercise totalitarian rule, to keep order, but also at the same time inspiring utopian visionaries to bring about a more just order. Utopian visions for society can in turn manifest themselves into violent and nonviolent forms, but of these only the nonviolent forms conform to the ideal of the visible church. Historical religions play an important role on both sides of the ledger, both supporting and opposing violence and both supporting and opposing the despotism of the extreme versions of the juridical state of nature.

4.17 Non-consequentialism / the good will

(i) Principle. Non-consequentialism is a term often used to describe an important aspect of “the good will” as described in the Groundwork. Because the good will is a self-sufficient good, its goodness does not rely on a further end or consequence arising from it:

A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, because of its fitness to attain some proposed end, but only because of its volition, that is, it is good in itself, regarded for itself, is to be valued incomparably higher than all that could be merely brought about by it in favour of some inclination, and indeed, if you will, by the sum of all inclinations . . . Usefulness or fruitfulness can neither add anything to this worth, nor take anything away from it (GR, 4:304).

Non-consequentialism can be understood as an argument against moral-decision making based on utilitarian calculations, because the highest good in utilitarianism is aggregate happiness. Kant rejects happiness – which he regards as an “incentive” – as the highest good, and instead advances the idea that duty to ML is the highest good. To determine morality from incentives is heteronomous, according to Kant, because to obey incentives is to open the door to parochial interests. We see examples of this daily in the utilitarian decision making of military generals, politicians, and economists. A utilitarian decision, for example, is to sacrifice a group of soldiers and/or civilians in battle for the sake of attaining a military objective in a war that itself is fought for the sake of obtaining economic and strategic power. The military, economic,
and strategic ends, thought to achieve a greater aggregate happiness for the nation, are given priority over the lives of those sacrificed. At the same time, those who willingly give their lives in wars often do so from the highest sense of moral duty, from good will. The noblest and worst of humanity is demonstrated in times of war or other crises. The climate crisis is a situation in which we may expect the good will to be demonstrated in countless situations, even though the conditions that led to it betrayed moral callousness on a global scale.

(ii) Application. The inevitable question that arises when the world’s temperature is on track to surpass an array of dangerous tipping points, and fossil fuel use and other drivers of climate change do not seem to be diminishing to the degree that they ought to, is why should anyone bother with individual behavioural change? This is an argument against behavioural change often made by those who favour only structural change, or pessimistically conclude nothing can be done and that the best course of action for the present is hedonism. A Kantian answer is to act from a sense of moral duty, without consideration of the consequences – which is to say, we have a moral duty to do what we can to mitigate the crisis, even if it cannot be avoided. This requires a sincere effort on our part, even if that effort cannot guarantee any result, and may not be an effort shared by many others. An example is to change one’s pattern of food or energy consumption. The consequentialist argument for doing so is that it’s pointless: behavioural change by one person or even a million won’t make any substantive difference against the practices of billions. The non-consequentialist argument is that, regardless of circumstances, it is the moral duty of the person of conscience to “act as if everything depended on him” (R, 6:101).

The second application of non-consequentialism relates to moral choices that will occur as the crisis worsens and civilization collapses in degrees. There are those for whom moral
decision making will be undertaken based on self-interest alone, using consequentialist decision-making to justify their actions. A common excuse for immoral behaviour is that “if I did not do it, then someone else would,” but this does not obviate the responsibility of the person undertaking the action. There will also be others who will act on a sense of moral duty for the welfare of others. People in extreme circumstances have been known to act selflessly, from a sense of moral duty, which is a demonstration of the good will.\textsuperscript{793} A consequentialist ethic might make a utilitarian calculation that the collective good is best served by the sacrifice of some individuals, but the ethic of human rights cannot justify such a calculation. To say that a human right is inalienable is to say that it cannot be taken away or traded away for another end. A real-life scenario in which consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethics might clash is in the decision to save or not save eco-refugees who are at grave risk of death due to flooding or drought. Such scenarios will likely be played out countless times in the world to come.

Northcott defines the utilitarian ethic as the idea that we can “advance collective welfare in the new mass society by estimating the benefits and costs of particular courses of collective action, and choosing those actions which are calculated to advance the greater good.”\textsuperscript{794} It should be added that in the absence of the good will as the prevailing ethic in industrial societies, cost-benefit calculations have become predominant. These calculations are used routinely by politicians, engineers and economists in their assessment of decisions that have environmental impacts (e.g. whether to build a nuclear power plant or allow an open-pit mine to operate). Northcott is critical of this ethic, as it has been applied, in the modern age, to decisions that have environmental impacts: “the inability to affirm any measure of the human good . . . other than a hedonistic calculus of welfare reduces all human activity to an agonistic calculation of costs and benefits, and an agonistic competition for natural resources and space whose ultimate conclusion
is the present global contest over the atmospheric sinks of the planet.”

Cost-benefit calculations and technological optimism are widely employed in environmental decision-making, but far from helping to alleviate environmental problems, may actually be in large part responsible for them. This is why it is important to bring other ethical approaches to the table. The importance of religious ethics, insofar as they convey some semblance of universal ethical principles (such as demonstrated by the position taken by the World Council of Churches, or Francis, or other eco-theologians), should also not be underestimated.

4.18 Ethical hermeneutics

(i) Principle. “Ethical hermeneutics” is a term used by DiCenso to describe Kant’s approach to historical religions, where the word “ethical” refers to regulative principles and the word “hermeneutics” refers to an “interpretive framework,” established in the critical writings, for interpreting historical religions. The term conveys the idea of an “interpretive methodology” that can be applied to arrive at a regulative understanding of a text, but beyond that also to all elements of historical religions, and according to Wood, it is applicable to all human conduct. Kant’s Religion could be said to be an exercise in ethical hermeneutics, inasmuch as he is working out a systematic method for interpreting Biblical texts – and by extension, all religious texts and elements of historical traditions -- to glean their ethical value. This interpretation not only identifies regulative meanings; it also identifies meanings that run counter to them, i.e., those elements of historical religions that impede autonomous ethical progress. DiCenso notes that Kant’s approach is to interpret “historical religions as collective representations or symbols of moral ideas . . . [and] Religion formulates an ethically guided hermeneutics, directed mainly toward biblical sources [which includes an explication of] our failures in actualizing moral principles.” This approach, being based on universal principles, is applicable to all religious
traditions, and also, one could argue, to all social and political movements that rely on ideology, ritual, and a sense of community, and which require unconditional commitment of their members. Beyond textual analysis, any connection between ethical principles and conduct is “hermeneutical in nature . . . interpreting the meaning of actions regarding their respect or disrespect of the dignity of human nature.” DiCenso comments, “This reference [by Wood] to hermeneutical procedures is very important. It distinguishes our application of ethical principles from mechanical or instrumental forms of reasoning. It shows that we must learn to read and asses unique situations in order to judge ethically.” Rational principles are to be applied to specific situations, as part of the wider interpretive framework. The application of an ethical hermeneutics, based on the principles established in the critical philosophy, stands outside any religious tradition but at the same time tries to glean some ethical value from these traditions. It is thus very appropriate for the climate crisis, which is a unique historical situation, the magnitude and importance of which is immeasurable.

A good working example of an ethically oriented interpretation of scriptures is Paul Waldau’s Specter of Speciesism, which is what could be called an ethical forensic analysis of early Buddhist and Christian texts. It examines the texts for mention of animals, to determine whether the text recognizes the “lived reality” of the animal (for the most part it does not, and used the animal as a symbol of an undesirable human trait, or to establish human superiorism). Waldau’s analysis can be juxtaposed to texts which uncritically assess these religions as benign towards animals. The fact that Waldau approaches the texts from outside the religious tradition has value. An assessment from within the tradition might be tempted to avoid a critical assessment of it. At the same time, a regulative interpretation of scriptures from within is not to
be denied, as the value of eco-theology, animal rights theology, and liberation theology illustrates.

(ii) Application. The use of the term ethical hermeneutics refers to the application of Kant’s critical philosophy to daily practices and societal standards. A somewhat narrower meaning is to describe Kant’s philosophy of religion as a system derived from the critical writings (1781 onward, the publication date of the first Critique) directed to religious texts and religious historical traditions. As applied to the interpretation of biblical texts, an example of the exercise of an ethically minded interpretation is Northcott’s treatment of the climate crisis. Eco-theologians apply a regulative interpretation of biblical texts to the environmental crisis, trying to glean ethical meanings from ancient narratives to critique modern issues, including capitalism, consumerism, climate injustice, and the mass extinction of species. The efforts of the eco-theologians are important because they represent efforts to utilize the shared representations of widely accepted traditions in a way that is generally consistent with universal ethical principles.

An ethically oriented interpretation is applicable not only to biblical texts and other scriptures, but also to all elements of historical religious traditions (e.g., rituals, community formations, symbols), and to all political ideologies for that matter. Other elements, such as prayer, may err if guided by incentives; it is a “superstitious delusion (a fetish making)” (R, 6:194), but can also contribute to moral progress by individuals, provided it is guided by ML: it “can, at best, only carry with it the value of a means for the continued stimulation of that disposition within us” (i.e., ML) (R, 6:196). Thus, if we offer a prayer for the victims of global warming but take no action to prevent their suffering, and only thereby declare a “wish to a being who has no need of declaration,” (R, 6:194) this has no moral worth, but if the prayer serves to solidify our commitment to mitigation efforts, it has served a practical purpose.
Kant’s hermeneutics is applicable to all human conduct, and this paves the way for an assessment of secular social and political movements engaged in climate change politics. To what extent are the policies and practices of these movements and groups universalizable? Misanthropy, for example, is not universalizable. Those who advocate geo-engineering and nuclear energy as solutions do so through use of a utilitarian calculus that finds the human cost of such technologies (e.g. risk of radiation poisoning) acceptable. This, it could be argued, is ethically questionable, even if the end achieved is beneficial. There is some criticism of carbon trading (cap and trade schema) as harmful to some local communities, or as simply ineffective, although it should be noted this too – like nuclear energy and geo-engineering – is highly debatable. There are a number of mechanisms and policies and technologies being proposed or implemented in response to the climate crisis, and a coherent normative ethical system is needed to assess them. An ethical assessment does mean we ought to dispense with legal, policy, taxation, or technological solutions in toto. It could be argued that it’s impossible to entirely do away with such measures altogether, and the practical ideal is to advance incrementally towards them as part of the advance of a good society through voluntary measures. Voluntary measures by autonomous beings is an ideal: a republic of fully responsible people (such as envisioned by RE). In the absence of fully autonomous beings, our society can move incrementally towards that ideal through incremental measures. It can thus be argued that in the absence of self-imposed limitations some coercive measures may be deemed necessary, provided they are incremental and not regressive.

Some economic analyses employ a cost-benefit language; are they motivated by what Kant terms ‘good will’? Kantian ethics provides a good reminder of the fact that any worldview should not lose sight of the moral baseline of respect for the dignity and autonomy of individual
human beings. When it does lose sight of that, it is ethically questionable. For example, Donald A. Brown is highly critical of cost-benefit analyses because of the reductionism implicit in them, and because they employ instrumental reason. Brown lists several reasons why cost-benefit analyses should not be considered applicable to the environmental crisis, including the fact that the question as to how to weigh the interests of future generations is left inadequately answered by this theory. He identifies the type of ethic used to advance national self-interest as “preference utilitarianism,” which he says reduces happiness to market transactions, and is used to justify inaction on climate change – because austerity measures would make people unhappy. It is rationalized as beneficial to humanity because it advances economic prosperity, but this ideal is not universalizable, because it neglects the several types of cohorts who may be the victims of excess consumption (i.e., future generations, exploited workers, eco-refugees, animals), and because it reduces human welfare to happiness from consumption, which neglects a much broader definition of what it means to be human. Human welfare should not be narrowly defined as prosperity arising from material wealth, although without some wealth, human beings are destined to unnecessary suffering. Human psychological well-being is also advanced by proximity to nature, according to the field of eco-psychology, with the implication that as nature is increasingly used up, human welfare decreases accordingly. Moreover, a functioning climate is the basic precondition for human survival. Accordingly, the no-growth economists advocate sufficient income for all, to ensure happiness, but not to exceed that amount, due to environmental concerns.

In practice, there may never be a completely universalizable solution to the climate crisis, but CI is nonetheless a good standard to which to aspire, one that sets the bar very high. It challenges society to measure its practices against the highest moral standard possible, and to
alter those practices accordingly. It may be contrasted with the relativistic “best of sector” ethical approach, which deems a corporation “ethical” if it is the most sustainable or most observant of human rights within its industry.\textsuperscript{807} Setting the bar too low, which is done with so-called “ethical investments,” allows for practices that violate human rights. The bar is set even lower by those who follow no standard whatsoever. Similarly, in our individual practices, we may never achieve a complete measure of sustainability, but to aspire to the highest possible standard is better than relying on a relativistic model in which an unsustainable or ethically problematic practice is deemed ‘good enough’ only because it is marginally better than others. If the business practice contributes to human rights violations, then it cannot by any measure be termed “ethical.” This also describes the relativistic “ethical oil” argument, which has essentially the same structure as the best-of-sector ethic.\textsuperscript{808} The idea of asymptotic ethical attainment is that it aspires continually upward toward the best possible scenario; this contrasts with the best-of-sector approach, which settles for the “least worst” option.

4.19 The study of religion and conclusion

A recurring theme in the scholarly study of religion is that religion, as a social and historical phenomenon, cannot be considered monolithic.\textsuperscript{809} The idea here is that there is a wide variety of forms of religion within the variety of traditions, so that religions cannot be reduced to one element, such as belief in the supernatural, since there are always exceptions to the rule. Kant’s \textit{Religion}, at first glance, seems to fall within the scope of an essentialist and reductionist approach, given his dual account of religion. This is an argument advanced by Talal Asad, who uses Kant as a kind of straw man to argue against universal definitions of religion.\textsuperscript{810} However, Asad is incorrect on this point, because he seems to misunderstand the moral dimension of Kant’s definition of ‘true pure religion,’ or perhaps he understands it and cannot accept Kant’s
conclusion. Kant is using the world “religion” to refer to ML, not to historical religions, but for Asad nothing exists outside historical forces, on the basis of which he disputes universal theories of religion. Specifically, universal theories of religion, and in particular the idea of “Natural Religion,” arose within a European Enlightenment context. Identifying the historical roots of the expression of these ideas is a valuable exercise, but it doesn’t disprove Kant’s argument for the ahistorical origins of morality (i.e., that it originates in pure practical reason a priori).

Asad’s own implicitly moral stance against colonialism --which he conflates, to some extent, with the idea that European Enlightenment values were imposed on colonized peoples who had their own values and to whom they were not necessarily applicable-- begs the question: if morality is relative to cultures, and a universal ethical system (such as human rights) is questionable, due to its past association with colonialism, then on what basis is a moral judgement of colonialism valid? It should be added that Kant was a strong advocate of human freedom, and against slavery and colonialism, which should serve to demonstrate the point that it would be incorrect to conflate his moral theory with the misuse of Enlightenment ideas to justify violations of FH in that historical period. More importantly, whatever Kant may have thought about particular issues, the principle of FH has its own authority, which supersedes that of any individual, including Kant himself. If he is morally wrong regarding a certain issue, which some have contended, it does not invalidate the principle to which he gave formal expression.

Kant adds to the study of religion an ethical analysis that is normally missing from the social sciences (which strives for the appearance of moral neutrality). Marx was critical of Feuerbach for engaging in scholarship that had no practical social or political value. Kant is certainly not guilty of that, but unlike Marx, who locates the problems of society and their solutions in material-historical forces, Kant locates these problems and solutions at the deeper
level: in the power of choice and the determining ground of morality. This and the theory of shared representations of supersensible cognition unlock an understanding of social and political forces on a grand scale. What is needed is a widespread recognition of the moral imperative to preserve as much of the natural world as possible, to stabilize the climate, to bring an end to the mass extinction of species – both for the sake of future generations, and in recognition of the inherent worth of non-human nature and animals – and as noted earlier, religions can play a vital role in that bringing about that awareness.

There is an attempt by the inheritors of intellectual Marxism and the postmodernists to apply the Marxist framework to issues demanding of moral attention, such as climate change, or the plight of animals or victims of various types of discrimination – and this is successful to a point, because Marxism contains within it the kernel of an ethical argument. However, the effort cannot be adequately sustained, because it reduces ethics to an agonistic model (oppressor and oppressed), and is not sufficiently self-reflective. Marxism has given rise to political movements that increase unthinking heteronomy, through collectivism, and punish autonomy of the will through purges (like Goya’s image of “Saturn devouring his son”). For these reasons, a collectivist worldview is ethically insufficient as an inheritor of the social and political structures of a post-carbon world. So also are systems that advance traditional religious heteronomy through theocratic despotism. What both collectivism and despotism have in common is the elevation of falsehoods to the status of unassailable truth-claims, to create a totalizing ideology predicated on what Kant termed “schematisms of object-determination” (essentially, constitute interpretations), which can be used to keep human beings in a state of moral minority. Global corporate hegemony, in which the world’s citizens are held in check by the market manipulation of their propensities and predispositions, succumbing to incentives through consumerism, may
be better than despotism, but from an ethical standpoint it is not ideal, nor is it sustainable. Perhaps an environmentally sustainable no-growth economy, or ‘green capitalism,’ or ‘democratic socialism,’ is better, provided it retains essential Enlightenment ideals (e.g., equality before the law, civil liberties and freedoms, observance of human rights, separation of church and state), and strives always for ever greater adherence to these ideals.

By standing outside of any single religious tradition, and developing his own system of universal ethics (one that he believes truly reflects and provides insight into the human capacity for moral decision making), Kant developed a critical philosophy which can be used to ethically assess all traditions and political ideologies impartially, according to the degree to which they conform to or deviate from the ideals that reason generates for this purpose. Kant’s philosophy of religion may be of value for those trying to understand how religions and ideologies that employ supersensible objects play a role in the unfolding of historical events. It helps identify the underlying forces behind the various wrong turns that humanity has taken (and will likely continue to take), so as to better avoid them. At the same time, it illustrates the necessity of an ethical community through which we may be able to better negotiate a rapidly changing world.
Appendix: Additional Kantian principles and concepts

The purpose of this Appendix is to further define the principles and concepts referred to in previous chapters.

A.1 Universal ethical principles

CI, FH, and RE are interrelated expressions of the same underlying principle. A shorthand version for them, in this thesis, is ML or CI. These are formal, rational expressions of the foundational ethical principle, which according to Kant, is the “supreme law” given to us via pure practical reason. It is an expression of a law that reason gives to itself, a universal capacity of all rational beings, which for Kant means all human beings. These principles are radically egalitarian, in contrast to hierarchical worldviews, such as those used to justify discrimination against or dehumanization of groups or classes based on arbitrary and morally irrelevant criteria such as ethnicity, class or nationality. This means that anyone of any ethnicity or any gender or ability must take moral responsibility for his or her actions, as a rational being, and cannot be exempt on the basis of external economic or social factors.

These expressions of ML are formulated within an historical context (the European Enlightenment), but refer to trans-historical transcultural principles because they are generated \textit{a priori} by pure practical reason. What ML refers to is not socially or historically constructed and is not restricted to or originating within any particular time or culture. As such it is understood to apply equally to all human beings as a capacity we all share. In theory, it would be applicable to nonhuman rational beings as well (if it can be demonstrated that such beings exist).

CI says “\textit{act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law}” (GR 4:421). This principle is premised on the idea that all
rational beings create “maxims” for themselves in daily life, which are rules they use to make moral decisions and negotiate complex situations.

Another version of CI, termed the Formula of the Universal Law, is “I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law.”\textsuperscript{820} Allen Wood says that “A ‘maxim’ is a subjectively adopted normative rule or policy on which the person acts, a ‘subjective principle of volition’. . .”\textsuperscript{821} and that “laws are based on objective grounds – reasons valid equally for every rational being as such. Hence, they are universally and unconditionally valid rational constraints on action.”\textsuperscript{822} For example, the principle to not inflict violence on others around us, even when we feel like, is a universalizable principle, because we would wish it to be a universal law – that is, a law that would apply to everyone, including ourselves. We can immediately see how this particular maxim provides the basis for a social contract by virtue of which the project of human civilization is made possible. It is a universal law also in the sense that every rational being has the capacity to generate this law from within reason and to give himself this law as normative. Whether or not people actually do universalize in this manner (and many do not), the potential nonetheless exists.

Maxims of actions are guides or rules that reason gives to us, to aid in the process of moral decision making. “A maxim is the subjective principle of volition; the objective principle (i.e., that which would also serve subjectively as the practical principle for all rational beings if reason had complete control over the faculty of desire) is the practical law.” (GR 4:402). Kant distinguishes between maxims and practical laws, framed as subjective and objective principles of volition. A non-universalizable maxim of action is one that could not become a practical (universal) law – which is to say that it could not be a maxim of action that everyone could adopt because it would contravene the interests of some parties. It could not be a practical principle for
all rational beings. Non-universalizable maxims occur because (as noted above) we are not purely rational beings; we are also subject to inclinations and self-love, which if given priority generate maxims that can result in evil. The classic examples of this contravention, given by Kant, are lying and stealing: these are the result of non-universalizable maxims of actions because they ignore or violate the interests of those who are lied to or stolen from. To say that the interests of others is ignored does just mean that their material interests are ignored, though it could include that; it is really to say that they are not treated with respect or dignity; they are treated as less than equals. DiCenso notes that “immoral acts violating the autonomy and dignity of myself and others cannot be universalized because they always involve some form of privileged, inequitable, or discriminatory judgement.”

It is important to understand that CI, like human rights, refers to something universal and inalienable, something shared by all rational beings, by virtue of their capacity to reason, and not something conferred by or taken away by others. This philosophy provides one of the foundations for the idea of negative human rights. Such rights are universal and inalienable, but they can be violated; to violate them involves the moral decision to disregard the command of reason given to us by ML. All rational beings have the capacity to exercise ML, as it exists a priori, and is activated by experience – though not all choose to do so regularly, and no one does so absolutely in all circumstances. The failure of human beings to achieve their potential as moral beings is acknowledged by Kant, as is their ongoing potential to choose good over evil. Human beings have, at any time, the freedom to choose good or evil maxims of actions. CI represents the formal expression of the good maxim of action. CI can be conveyed through ‘shared representations’ via historical religious traditions. Autonomy of the will is the condition
of one who perfectly abides by CI, but this state is never fully realizable. Instead, it represents an ideal toward which we must strive, individually and collectively.

The phrase *universal ethical principles* can also be referred to as *rational ethical principles*. This phrase is short-hand for CI, FH, RE, FUL, and ML. There are other secular universal ethical principles (e.g. utilitarianism, the land ethic, virtue ethics, and the feminist ethics of care), but this phrase applies to deontological principles, and in particular Kantian ethics. The way this principle applies to climate change is primarily with regard to intergenerational ethics. Carol J. Adams refers to “the invisible subject” to describe persons or beings who are moral subjects but whose well-being is normally overlooked. Gustavo Gutierrez refers to them as “non-persons,” – such as the poor who have been marginalized, displaced, or otherwise de-humanized, and who exist at the margins of society. A good example of this, both in Kant’s day, and our own, is human slavery. FH refers to the instrumental use of others: using others as means to an end. This is one form of de-humanization, but it can also occur when moral subjects are not considered at all, especially when making decisions that could greatly affect them.

The principle of universalizability may, on the surface, appear to be similar to altruism, but it is not, because altruism describes an instinct or an emotion. This is not to say that altruism cannot be framed as a principle or a doctrine: C. D. Broad defines altruism as “the doctrine that each of us has a special obligation to benefit others.” However, it is also the case that biologists have classed altruism as an instinctually driven emotion occurring among animals – including human beings – and may be motivated by “kin selection.” It is distinct from rational principles, as such.
A.2 The ethical community

The ethical community is an idea (or ideal) that, according to DiCenso, “embodies laws of freedom, in which every member is an end in themselves.” Kant uses the term to describe a society united by a commitment to the highest good: the task of the ethical community is “the promotion of the highest good as a good common to all” (R, 6:97). Just as the visible church is an embodiment of the ideal, derived from practical reason, of the invisible church, the ethical community could be said to be the embodiment of RE: ‘By a realm [einem Reiche] I understand a systemic union of various rational beings through common laws . . . in accordance with the above principles” (GR, 4:433). The ethical community, then, is an embodiment of RE, as is the ethico-political society, with which the ethical community is synonymous. Kant’s definition is as follows: “An association of human beings merely under the laws of virtue, ruled by this idea, can be called an ethical and, so far as these laws are public, an ethico-civil (in contrast to juridico-civil) society, or an ethical community” (R, 6:94). The ethico-civil society “institutes [ethical] laws of virtue on a public level. Moral laws are distinguished from the rule of external law in the juridico-civil society, which requires coercion or incentives not based on freely chosen duty.”

The ideal society is one in which external laws are not necessary, but in practice, this is not possible; therefore, the imposition of the least coercive laws and laws that best reflect ML represent a movement towards the ideal society, even though they fall short of it. This issue of laws also speaks to the value of religious traditions, as instruments for moral education, practically necessary for creating the social and cultural foundation for laws that reflect ethical principles.
A.3 Representations (Vorstellungen)

Representations of supersensible objects are necessary because humans are so constituted that they require something to convey otherwise abstract and intangible ideas to themselves and to one another. For human beings the intangible needs to be represented in terms of the sensible to be understood and conveyed to others in the form of shared representations. The intangible that Kant is most concerned with is morality: Kant’s “concern is with representational guidelines for ethical activity.”832 If we misunderstand representations (which is easy to do, and is done often), this potentially can contribute to the danger of “misconstruction” or “religious delusion” (R, 6:171). Correct understanding requires the cultivation of the autonomous use of reason, and moral judgement, to discern the ethical meaning of representations of supersensible objects. Given that humanity is in a state of ethical “minority” the masses need certain forms of historical faith to understand and grasp moral faith (ML). At the same time, ML is needed to interpret and ethically assess historical faiths. This ideal Kant understands not as a goal that will ever be entirely achieved; rather, it is a goal towards which to aspire and strive. The progress of societies depends on the degree to which its citizens both individually and collectively (through the church universal and ethical community) strive towards the realization of these ideals. Historical faith is no more than an instrument for collective action and communication for this ethical purpose. It provides a system of shared symbols and ideals through which aspirants can convey supersensible ideals, generated by practical reason, for the purpose of formulating the social and political structures necessary to achieve a more just and equitable society. This can be related to climate crisis by showing how ideals, such as economic prosperity, sustainability, justice, Creation (and other such ideas and ideals) are guiding us – or misguiding us, as the case may be. Another example is the idea of Mother Earth (Pachamama in Peruvian mythology), which has
turned out to be powerful instrument for advancing a moral argument because it is intuitive and emotionally appealing. Like the postulate of God, it can be understood as a representation that has ethical value, one that has been used to argue for climate justice, by invoking the legacy of aboriginal peoples.\(^{833}\) Shared representations of the abstract conceptions of moral faith are necessary because of a “natural need” of human beings to grasp onto abstractions through the senses: to give us “something the senses can hold on to” \(\text{(R, 6:109)}\). These are symbolic representations of the dynamics of a human being’s inner self as he struggles in daily life to make the right decision in complex situations, using moral judgement which can easily be corrupted by multiple incentives or heteronomously influenced by those given over to parochial interests. *Vorstellungen* are similar to Tillich’s understanding of symbols: they can point to something more than themselves or they can be misunderstood more literally and dogmatically, which contributes to idolatry.\(^{834}\)

### A.4 Good life conduct and the good principle

Kant says that “a human being is called to good life conduct through the moral law” \(\text{(R, 6:144)}\). This phrase, *good life conduct*, refers to the mode of being of a person who aspires to autonomy of the will, and who therefore engages in the process of moral striving, in accordance with the command of practical reason. Kant uses the phrase as a shorthand way of referring to the objective of conformity with ML for the individual. For example, in defining “the moral principle of religion, Kant says that “*apart from a good life-conduct, anything which the human being supposes that he can do to become well-pleasing to God is mere religious delusion and counterfeit service to God*” \(\text{(R, 6:170)}\). Kant italicizes this entire sentence, to stress its centrality to his philosophy of religion. Good life-conduct, then, is the standard we can use for an ethical assessment of historical religions. Also, it refers not only to actions, but more particularly to the
moral intention in the formation of maxims of actions, which in *Groundwork* is described as the good will. To be “well-pleasing to God” is to act in conformity with ML, but if one is motivated by the self-interested incentive to curry favour with an externalized conception of God, this could be said to be “the delusion of religion.”

In describing the degree to which “maxims of service” may be thought of as “purely moral” Kant also uses the phrase “well-pleasing to God.” Persons of faith may believe their actions are pleasing to God, if they engage in some form of service to their conception of God, but the true test of the worth of an action lies in the moral purity of the maxims of action that inform it. A religious ritual may be “presumed” to be of itself pleasing to God” and yet may not be “purely moral” if the action is only a mechanical form of service (Kant gives the example of Tibetan prayer wheels). It is then mere statutory service and counterfeit service, and “in worth (or rather worthlessness)” the same as any other action that has no moral worth (R, 6:173). The use of the phrase *well-pleasing to God* is very representative of Kant’s overall strategy of using religious language and concepts to convey his dual theory of religion.

The *good principle* refers to the ideal of moral perfection, attainable through conformity to ML. It is also to be understood as the principle for uniting individuals into a visible church, and ultimately an ethical community. It is raised in two contexts in *Religion*. First, Kant mentions the good principle to help explain the “prototype” of the *Urbild*, the “Son of God.” Jesus Christ is a personification of this principle, which exemplifies the “universal moral duty to *elevate* ourselves to this ideal of moral perfection” and which is “presented to us by reason for emulation” (R, 6:61). The prototype of Christ represents, for Kant, the idea of moral perfection personified, the sole purpose of which representation is to serve as a prototype that we can try to emulate. This is not the same as a literal belief that Jesus is the Son of God, to be worshipped as
such. Rather, it is like the idea of God as a postulate of reason, represented as a personified being to convey universal ethical principles, but with the key understanding that that is the only purpose of that representation, which should not serve as an object of counterfeit faith.

The second, more overtly political, context in which the principle is used is in relation to the idea of the ethical community: the good principle unites individuals into an ethical community directed towards actualization of goodness in the world: “Human beings . . . mutually corrupt one another’s moral predisposition, and even with the good will of the individual, because of the lack of a principle which unites them, they deviate through their dissensions from the common goal of goodness, as though they were instruments for evil” (R, 6:97). The good principle is that which unites individuals in service to the ideal of a good society. This comes up again in the use of the phrase: “The victory of the good principle over the evil principle and the founding of the Kingdom [or Realm] of God on Earth” (R, 6:93). Here Kant is describing the conflict between the predisposition to good in human nature and the propensity to evil in human nature (expressed as “the dominion of evil”), but is doing so through the appropriation of religious language, to give the “naked” ethical concepts the “clothing” of representation. Freedom, complete autonomy of the will, is the possibility of the resolution of that conflict within the individual, and the highest good (the realization of a good society) is the possibility of a final resolution of the conflict at a societal level, towards which rational hope is directed.

The good principle (the ideal of moral perfection) is one side of what is figuratively portrayed as a cosmic struggle, one that clearly has social and political ramifications. This conflict, if not understood regulatively, can easily go over a line which transgresses ML. Mark Juergensmeyer notes that religious terrorists view their actions as part of a “cosmic war” between
good and evil, requiring them to purify the world of evil, by means of violence. Religion becomes a legitimization and justification for political battles, seen by participants as “an immanent and almost eschatological confrontation between the forces of good and evil arrayed on the battlefield of politics.” Juergensmeyer gives the example of an abortion clinic bomber, but notes that the same pattern is applicable to most other acts of religious terrorism. Such religious actors demonize those who, for them, represent evil, and seek their annihilation, which in Kantian terms violates ML. R. Scott Appleby notes that nonviolent militants also see their actions as a cosmic struggle between good and evil, except that they eschew violence as a means for attaining their final end, because for them violence is itself representative of the evil they wish to defeat. For these militants, tolerance, pluralism, and inclusivity are overriding concerns. The violent religious militant is characterized by intolerance, adherence to an orthodox religiosity, and religious exclusivism, predicated on a constitutive, literalist reading of scriptures, which seeks to make the world conform to that interpretation by means of force. For Kant, the cosmic struggle between good and evil corresponds more to that of the religious nonviolent activist (sans theological heteronomy and ritualized nonviolent civil disobedience), because he views it as an internal spiritual conflict, but one that is manifest in social and political struggles. For the nonviolent actor and for Kant there is a recognition of the internal conflict between propensities to good and evil in the human soul, by virtue of which all persons must be treated as ends in themselves, regardless of their views or actions. Thus, there is no desire to destroy those who may be on the opposite side of the political conflict as much as to awaken the good will in others (e.g. Gandhi’s emphasis on “transformation” of the oppressor). Scriptures, from this point of view, should be interpreted regulatively, which requires the use of moral judgement guided by the good principle.
A.5 Priestcraft / fetish-faith / counterfeit service / religious delusion

Counterfeit service is defined as a reversal of the “moral order” of means and ends: “what is mere means is unconditionally commanded (as an end)” (R, 6:165). The symbols and rituals and identity of historical religions, which at best are “mere means” for the advancement of ML, are given priority over moral concerns, especially when historical faith is used to advance what DiCenso terms parochial interests. This same reversal is at the root of the propensity to evil. Kant tends to take a dim view of religious authorities, insofar as they tend abuse their power, for their own ends, to advance their own interests. Priestcraft refers to the abuse of religious authority, leading to religious “despotism” (R, 6:176; R, 6:180). Arguing that all historical religions fall into the same sort of error, Kant makes a comparison between the statutory observance of an aboriginal shaman and a Puritan: they both “place their service of God in something (faith in certain statutory articles, or the observance of certain arbitrary practices) which cannot by itself constitute a better human being” – meaning that it does not advance good life-conduct (R, 6:176). Furthermore, they all seek to “steer to their advantage the invisible power which presides over human destiny . . .” (R, 6:176) Some direct or undertake observances meant to gain favour with the divine (e.g. religious rituals), but do not engage in any conduct which has moral value or which further good life-conduct, and are thus “under the delusion of possessing an art of achieving supernatural effect through entirely natural means” – which Kant calls fetishism or fetish faith and servile faith and counterfeit service (R, 6:178-9). Priestcraft also describes a church where “fetish-service [e.g. statutory commands] is the rule (R, 6:179). The problem with fetish-faith is that because of it “the masses are ruled and robbed of their moral freedom through obedience to a church (not to [rational] religion)” (R, 6:180). Although the term priestcraft seems to imply a criticism of the Roman Catholic Church, Kant stresses that he is not against any one
particular group of clergy while excusing another, because as he notes, they are all equally to blame when “they mistake the form of the representation of this idea [the Kingdom of God] for the thing itself” (R, 6:176). This is a clear reference to the fundamental error of reason within all historical religions: the constitutive interpretation of supersensible objects, as though they are objectively real, which leads practitioners to engage in statutory observances to win divine favour. These observances are worthless if they don’t further morality. Kant is not against giving “sensible representation” to these objects, per se – because doing so is practically necessary for “poor mortals” (R, 6:176).

Much of Religion is dedicated to making the argument for this practical use of historical religion, but in the section on priestcraft, Kant focuses his attention on that type of religion which dispenses with reason and is morally regressive. He is critical of what DiCenso terms “counterfeit service that prioritizes parochial cultic activity, and which staunchly resists any efforts at amelioration based on just principles . . .”840 These “spurious cultic activities are either disengaged from or in opposition to the principles of the moral law.”841 This has been borne out, in modern history, among some religious leaders, by their indifference to, and in some cases hostility towards, the task of arguing for climate change mitigation as a moral duty that religions should undertake.

Religious delusion is a phrase is used to describe a broad spectrum of types of heteronomous faith, including fetish faith, superstition, enthusiasm, etc. The key definition of religious delusion (italicized by Kant, for emphasis) is as follows: “Apart from a good life-conduct, anything which the human being supposes that he can do to become well-pleasing to God is mere religious delusion and counterfeit service to God” (R, 6:170-1). Thus “mere observances” of faith, directed at currying favour with God (or any supernatural being or force
imagined by human beings, in any religious tradition), is delusional and worthless, except in the case of those elements of historical faiths which may serve to awaken the formation of autonomous ethical principles in us. The only part of religions that are “well pleasing to God” are those that promote good life-conduct, but religious rituals and beliefs that fail to do this. They instead imagine God as an external personified being whose will we can glean from revealed religion and whom we must please. Such delusions can even be “dangerous” when the church compels people to profess a revealed mystery (either internally or externally) as true, in order to gain God’s favour (R, 6:171).

A.6 Regulative and constitutive principles / interpretation

A regulative (rule-giving) interpretation of scriptures is a figurative interpretation that puts emphasis on the ethical meaning of the text, based on the idea that the interpretation is open-ended, or never-ending. This stands against the idea of fixing the meaning, which is done with biblical literalism.

a regulative principle of reason, which serves as a rule or regulation, telling us how to behave when working back through a series of conditions. Specifically, it tells us to continue and extend our experience as far as we can, never accepting that we have reached an absolute empirical limit. [The link between ‘rule’ and ‘regulative’, via the Latin regula = ‘rule’, is even clearer in German where the words are Regel and regulativ.] (B537)

a constitutive principle of reason—i.e., one that tells us what is the case—enabling us to extend our concept of the sensible world beyond all possible experience (B537).

Maxims of actions can be defined as rules we give ourselves in order to help guide decision making, and in this sense they are regulative. In Kant’s practical philosophy, regulative interpretation refers to reading a text in order to glean a meaning from it that can further our good life conduct. A constitutive interpretation would adopt the stance that the Bible (or Qu’ran or other text or revelatory account) is literally true, an historical account of actual events, as
“what is the case.” This is a problem insofar as it extends “the concept of the sensible world beyond all possible experience.” It sees the supersensible as sensible, which is incredulous.

In the first Critique Kant introduces the concepts of regulative and constitutive principles (cited above) to further our understanding of the limits of knowledge of supersensible objects. These principles also appear in the second and third Critiques and Religion, where they take on practical (which is to say ethical) significance. God, for example, cannot be established as possessing constitutive reality, but if we conceive of God as a postulate of practical reason, this is a figurative (or more specifically) regulative interpretation with ethical import.

The regulative principle does not accept that the appearance of a thing is the thing in itself, and thus could be said to foster an open-ended understanding of the world. In contrast, a constitutive principle mistakes the appearance for phenomenal reality, the representation for the thing in itself, lending itself to the error of reason that views supersensible objects as real. The error of reason here is in “ascribing objective reality to an idea that serves merely as a rule” (A509/B537).

There is a connection between the epistemological use and ethical use of the concepts of regulative and constitutive principles: by setting the limits of what can be known, we can avoid errors of reason that contribute to ethical failure. The example of the Inquisitor illustrates an error of reason based on a constitutive understanding of God’s will. A regulative interpretation of the concept of God would not make this error, because it begins with the understanding that we cannot know God’s will, or that even if God exists, as such. Furthermore, it cannot be God’s will that others should be killed, because to do so is to violate ML. The “task” of pure reason, to arrive at a correct understanding of the cosmological principle of totality, referred to in the first Critique, employs the regulative principle. A cosmological construction (an understanding of
totality) that rests on belief in the objective reality of Supreme Being represents an error of reason because it mistakes a mere representation of the infinite for constitutive reality. It is impossible to dispense with cosmological constructs, since human beings are predisposed to them by virtue of the Categories of Understanding, as a means for navigating the world, so we are left with the task of making ethical use of them by means of the regulative principle. This also applies to supersensible objects, in the practical philosophy. In both epistemological and ethical realms, the regulative principle places emphasis on never-ending progress, requiring an effort, in contrast to resting on a constitutive understanding, which requires no intellectual or moral effort. It lends itself to a closed, totalizing understanding of the world, and to totalitarian ideologies that restrict autonomous thought and conduct. In contrast, a regulative understanding lends itself to an open-ended, provisional understanding of the world.

A.7 Revelation / revealed religion

Revelation is essentially the same as statutory faith and ecclesiastical faith. The moral and political authority of historical religious traditions rests on revealed truth from allegedly divine sources. Kant believes that this contributes to heteronomy of the will insofar as persons who defer to ecclesiastical authorities, whose authority rests on revelation, are robbed of their ability to become enlightened (to think for themselves) by using reason to arrive at their own determination of moral and ontological truth. Kant dismisses revelation as something constructed by men for their own advantage. Revelation according to Kant “is incapable of a transmission that commands conviction universally” (R, 6:109). As an element of historical religions, its only value lies in its regulative interpretation and use. Revealed religion (historical religion based on revelation, which describes the three Abrahamic traditions) is contrasted, by Kant, with rational religion. In The Conflict of the Faculties, Kant outlines the way in which revealed religion can
serve as a vehicle for ML: “The canon of religion can be called pure religious faith (which has no statutes and is based on mere reason); its vehicle can be called ecclesiastical faith, which is based entirely on statutes that need to be revealed in order to hold as sacred doctrines and precepts for conduct” (CF, 7:37). However, in Religion, he is more clear regarding the potential of revelation to contribute to heteronomy of the will, through the example of the Inquisitor: “the revelation reached the inquisitor only through the intermediary of human beings and their interpretation, and even if it were to appear to him to have come from God himself . . . yet it is at least possible that on this point error has prevailed” (R, 6:187). The problem with revelation is that it can so easily serve as a vehicle for parochial interests, rather than ML, which is violated by delusory religion, based on constitutive interpretations of revelation.

A.8 Pure practical reason a priori

This core idea from the second Critique and Groundwork is crucial for an understanding of Religion. Kant states that “Practical reason is in fact saying only this much: We can conclude that we are human beings pleasing to God, or not, only the basis of the conduct of the life we have led so far; and since this conduct ends with our life, so does the reckoning, the balance of which alone must yield whether we may regard ourselves as justified or not” (R, 6:71). In this passage, the phrase “pleasing to God” in fact means “good life conduct” in accordance with ML, and God is a postulate of reason. The idea of pure practical reason provides the conceptual foundation for Kant’s account of morality. Practical reason may be thought of as synonymous to the idea of ethical principles; it is “concerned with the determining ground of the will” (CPrR, 5:15). It is associated with the idea of freedom, which means that the will is not empirically conditioned, not determined by contingent factors, but is free and autonomous: “All moral concepts have their seat and origin completely a priori in reason . . . they cannot be abstracted
from any empirical and therefore contingent conditions . . .” (G, 4:411). If this were not so, then morality (moral decision-making) would be entirely contingent on social and historical factors. The idea of moral responsibility for one’s actions would be effectively negated, if determined by any number of *a posteriori* external factors (e.g. emotion, genetics, society, cultural identity, psychology, revelation, divine will, history). Kant’s universal theory of morality, as such, stands against moral and cultural relativism, also referred to as “morality as a cultural product.” Kant states that “pure reason is practical of itself alone and gives (to the human being) a universal law which we call the moral law” (CPrR, 5:31). Reason generates practical laws and principles, comprising rational religion (the “true faith”), which historical religion either help or hinder, depending on how they interpreted and understood.

Maxims are the rules that we give ourselves in the course of moral decision making, which Kant describes as “subjective principles of volition” (GR 4:402). Maxims can be universalizable, reflecting the predisposition to good in human nature, or non-universalizable, reflecting the propensity to evil in human nature. These are rules that we ourselves make up in order to guide us in our own conduct. They are necessary principles for the navigation of daily life. Practical reason, according to this theory, gives us rules (maxims) that we use to navigate the endless decisions of life. Examples of maxims are provided by Allen Wood: “When the Dow-Jones average reaches the next thousand, I will sell all my stocks”; “I will buy a clockwork train, but never sell one.” Maxims denote an intention. Wood writes that “adopting a maxim means subjecting one’s actions to self-given norms. This includes such things as setting and end, choosing means to it, and selecting actions of a certain description to be performed under various circumstances . . . A categorical imperative . . . tells us to act (to adopt maxims) in conformity with *objective* principles or ‘practical laws’. Laws are based on objective grounds – reasons valid
equally for every rational being. The behaviour of a purely instinctual animal will be determined by instinct, but the being who possesses reason and free will must make moral judgements, guided by maxims. These maxims can reflect ML, or they can alternately give priority to inclinations and desires over ML. The ethical principle informing the maxim is what Kant calls a “principle of volition” in accordance with which the action is done” (G 4:399-400). Our “original predisposition” is to incorporate ML into our maxims, but the propensity to evil in human nature can incline us follow maxims of actions that are non-universalizable: “The human being is created for... the good and the original predisposition [to animality, humanity, and personality] in him is good... but he brings it about that he becomes either good or evil, according as he either incorporates or does not incorporate into his maxims the incentives contained in that predisposition (and this must be left entirely to his free choice)” (R, 6:44). The propensity to evil is thus expressed by Kant as a “grafting” of incentives onto originally good predispositions in the formation of the maxims of action. The concept of maxims, in this way, informs Kant’s theory of free will and moral judgement.

A.9 States of nature

Kant gives us several phrases that include the words “states of nature.” In Kant’s binary system, this idea of “the state of nature” is opposed to the ethical community which strives to conform to the ideal of RE. In this state of nature human beings are given over, heteronomously, to the dictates of incentives. The state of nature denotes lawlessness and surrender to inclinations (in Freudian terms, instinctual desires). It is one in which “each individual prescribes the law to himself, and there is no external law to which he, along with others, acknowledges himself to be subject... each individual is his own judge, and there is no effective public authority with power to determine legitimately, according to laws...” (R, 6:95). This can lead, in its extreme
form, to the “vices of savagery” and to “mere slaughter” (R, 6:33) – which are possibilities that could be played out in the impending climate crisis, during the course of resource conflicts. It is clear from the examples he gives – wars between aboriginal peoples – that Kant rejects any romantic notions of primitivism. He points out that some aboriginal peoples murder one another – but his statement on this is not meant to uphold modern civilization against aboriginal societies as much as to illustrate the universal human predisposition to evil, common to all societies, as summed up in the phrase “the human being is by nature evil” (R, 6:32). Kant’s account of the human predisposition to violence and self-interest is notably consistent with Freud’s, because Kant acknowledges the universality of our predisposition to savagery, which in modern civilizations is merely repressed, erupting periodically in wars (and for which reason ethical principles are of practical value).

Kant gives us two variants on the state of nature which are worth enumerating because they have important social and political implications: the state of nature (the Hobbesian concept) and the juridical state of nature. The “ethico-civil state” describes the type of society in which human beings are “united under laws without being coerced, i.e., under laws of virtue alone.” (R, 6:95). This internally focused ethical society complements the juridico-civil society, which aspires to external laws that conform to RE. The juridico-civil (political) state is defined as a “relation of human beings to each other inasmuch as they stand jointly under public juridical laws (which are all coercive laws).” (R, 6:95). This describes a type of society in which laws are adhered to out of fear of redistributive justice imposed by the state, not willingly out of allegiance to ML itself. One could very well live within a juridico-civil society and remain in “the ethical state of nature,” meaning that no internal cultivation of the moral disposition has occurred. For example, many people do not murder or steal or rape, not because have a moral
aversion to it, but because doing so would result in incarceration. In much the same way, a society might have environmental regulations that are obeyed by some people, not because of a moral predisposition to do so, but due to external coercion by the state. At various times in human history there have been periods of relative enlightenment when a particular society has briefly experienced something close to the ethico-civil state, but it can be understood asymptotically, as a spectrum of savagery at one end and enlightenment on the other, and that no human society has ever fully achieved the latter, although many have aspired to it. The principle of universalizability has never been fully reflected in the totality of all juridical laws within a given society, nor has every member of a given society conformed to RE – and nor will is it ever likely to happen, but it is nonetheless an ideal that practical reason gives to us, and says is possible, and that we might aspire to. Interestingly, there is something similar between the state of nature that can lead to savagery and the ethico-civil state. In the ethical state of nature “each individual prescribes the law to himself, and there is no external law to which he, along with others, acknowledges himself to be subject. [As in the state of nature] he is his own judge, and there is no effective public authority with power to determine legitimately, according to laws, what is in given cases the duty of each individual, and to bring about the universal execution of those laws” (R, 6:95). See 4.16 for more discussion of the states of nature.

**A.10 Noumenal and phenomenal realms**

This binary first appears in the first Critique, and serves as a “boundary concept”\(^846\) for elucidating the epistemological concepts. The *noumenal* has two possible meanings. The first is solely epistemological. It refers to the realm of “things-in-themselves” (B307), which are “necessarily unknowable.”\(^847\) *Noumena* are distinct from appearances of things (*phenomena*), and “apart from sensory and cognitive experiences of human beings,” thereby indicating that “we
have not grasped the whole of reality” and that there may be more than one way to cognize reality. It is only through the Categories of the Understanding that we understand the sensible world, and this fact means that we can never have knowledge of things-in-themselves directly. The phenomenal realm refers to our apprehension of the sensible world; “the term ‘phenomenon’ is basically synonymous with the term ‘appearance’; these describe intuited sense objects as ordered through the conditions of sensibility and the categories. The second meaning of the noumenal relates to “reified, metaphysical concepts” beyond the sensory world. In other words, this second meaning refers to non-sensible or supersensible realities, such as God. This latter meaning of the noumenal is related to the error of reason which is a primary focus in Religion: wrongly attributing sensible / objective reality to supersensible objects. We learn to refer to the noumenal through the Categories of Understanding (e.g. reality, magnitude, substance, cause, etc.), but in doing so can erroneously attribute to it the qualities of sensible constitutive reality (e.g. in anthropomorphism). In fact, the noumenal is beyond our sensory capacities or is not part of the sensible world to begin with.

From the first Critique, this epistemological theory maintains that we organize “sense-based intuitions, through judgement, by means of an array of organizing rules, in the form of categories of understanding.” These categories exist in pure reason a priori, but are activated (so to speak) via our apprehension of the sensible world. In other words, we need the categories of the understanding, which we are born with, in order to comprehend and negotiate the physical world of which we are a part. The modalities of the categories come to us through representations. DiCenso adds “The point is definitely not the solipsistic one that there is nothing real except our mental representations, but rather that external reality as we experience it and
know it is cognitively structured.853 This structuring is necessary because “we cannot know things in themselves.”854

It is Kant’s claim that these Categories are common to all embodied rational beings. By identifying them as such, Kant is in essence saying that the phenomenal world cannot be known by us except through these mediating ways of understanding it, and our understanding of it should not be confused with the thing in itself. There is a parallel argument made in the ethics and philosophy of religion vis-a-vis supersensible objects, which should not be given ontological status as objectively real, but should be understood as representations issuing from the mind. We are able to understand and negotiate the world through judgements issuing from pure reason. The world, as such, does not of itself possess the qualities we understand it to have; it is more the case that we apprehend and frame reality through these categories. This, as it turns out, has important ethical implications, because this epistemological framing provides the foundation for the construction of cosmologies, through which we determine who or what counts as a moral subject. For example, if who we count as such is only our immediate ethno-cultural group, this is not in accordance with the principle of universalizability. It is, instead, an example of giving priority to parochial interests, which may be thought of as an amplification of the propensity to evil on a social and political scale.

The ability to make any kind of judgements, including moral judgements “presupposes a set of a priori concepts . . . [which have] categorical status.”855 The Categories are necessary for the process of “transcendental deduction.” DiCenzo notes that “transcendental deduction is essential to differentiating a logically and empirically informed approach to knowledge from the self-referential paradigms of metaphysics.”856 The deductions that we are able to make, via the Categories of Understanding, help us to differentiate between sensible and supersensible
knowledge, which is important for ethics in the sense that it places limits on the degree to which we assign ontological status to supersensible objects generated in our minds, and are thus able to rationally understand the purpose of the supersensible regulatively. Kant gives us the example of the ideas of fortune and fate, which are supersensible ideas that some people believe are objectively real, but they do so only because of an error of judgement in their deductions, which are not based on experience or reason. The same could be said of the ideas of heaven, karma, divine beings, miracles, or any supersensible object or postulate of pure practical reason given ontological status. Transcendental deduction allows us to differentiate that which is apodictically real from that which is not, and practical reason allows us to formulate the ethical meaning of supersensible objects, if any.

A.11 Idolatry, miracles, and scriptural literalism

Idolatry is related to anthropomorphism, which Kant says is “making of God for ourselves” whereby “we create him in the way we believe that we can most easily win him over to our advantage,” and are thus “dispensed from the arduous and uninterrupted effort of affecting the innermost part of our moral disposition” (R, 6:168-9). It is also related to counterfeit service and fetish faith. Idolatry is described by Kant as defining God “on the basis of revelation alone, without [moral concepts] being previously laid down [as a] touchstone . . .” (R, 6:169). Also in Religion, Kant defined idolatry as putting “reverence for God” and placing human beings as subordinate to it. This idea of God is an “idol, i.e., it is thought of as a being whom we may hope to please not through morally upright conduct in this world but through adoration and ingratiation; religion is then idolatry” (R, 6:185). The true church does not contain “formalities that might lead to idolatry . . . e.g. certain forms of adoration of God personified as infinite
goodness under the name of a human being, for such sensuous portrayal of God is contrary to the
command of reason: ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images, etc.’ (R, 6:199). In
summary, idolatry is a false representation of God, which as properly understood is a postulate of
practical reason, the true purpose of which is to advance ML. The history of religious traditions
is full of instances of idolatry contributing to religious intolerance and conflicts, subordinating
human interests and human rights to statutory observances, as the example of the Inquisitor
illustrates.

Kant argues against the existence of miracles and against faith based on miracles (e.g. the
canonization of saints, in the Roman Catholic church, requires proof of miracles, which are used
to reinforce the faith of followers; there is also faith healing in some charismatic Protestant
traditions; the belief in Jesus’ miracles as literally true; the belief that the statues of Ganesh cry
milk, within Hinduism, and countless other examples). Kant distinguishes between “dogma and
observances,” on one hand, and “the heart’s disposition to observe all human duties as divine
commands” on the other (R, 6:84), and says that in order for the latter understanding of moral
religion to prevail, we must dispense with superstitious faith in miracles. Kant theorizes that
miracles are emotionally attractive to religious practitioners who seek to authenticate constitutive
belief systems (“religion of mere cult and observances”), and this is done as a reaction to the
superiority of moral religion (true faith, ML), which represents a threat to the authority of
statutory faith. The assertion by ecclesiastical authorities that miracles are objectively true is
designed to win over those who are losing faith in the cult of mere observances Kant is also
against the use of the idea of miracles by religious authorities to advance counterfeit faith, for
their own purposes (e.g. the use of healing miracles by televangelists to obtain financial wealth
for themselves). At the same time, like all forms of historical religion traditions, miracles can (at
least theoretically) be reinterpreted according to rational/ethical principles: “. . . alleged supernatural phenomena are [to be] either symbolically reinterpreted or simply dismissed according to criteria set by rational and ethical principles.”

Alongside claims of miracles, Biblical literalism is one form of constitutive interpretation of scriptures. One could as easily refer to Qu’ranic literalism as well. The problem with scriptural literalism is that it misses the regulative purpose of representations of supersensible cognition as reflected in scriptures, and can be misleading, as the example of Creationism serves to illustrate. Most importantly, it tends to attribute constitutive reality to supersensible objects, which is a fundamental error of reason in Kant’s view. Some religious authorities, such as John Hagee, are adamantly in favour of biblical literalism and denigrate figurative and more ethically oriented interpretations of biblical prophecy as “watered-down” and even idolatrous. The irony is that literalism of this kind misses the entire point of these scriptures (its potential for representing and conveying ultimate moral imperatives), and as such is itself ‘idolatrous’ in both Kant’s and Tillich’s sense of the word: literalism delimits and reduces the verse’s meaning to a totalizing worldview that occludes the limitless potentiality of the verse to speak to our inner subjective states, as well as important social and political imperatives. As DiCenso summarizes it: “by insisting on literalism, religious and public authorities create a fissure between faith and reason; they must have recourse to accounts of supernatural interventions and wonders to sustain the interpretation of all scriptural passages as literally and descriptively true. In sharp contrast with these dogmatic views, Kant argues: ‘That the revelation of such propositions was only intended, as an accommodation to our weakness, to provide a visible cloak for them . . . and that this revelation can have merely subjective truth, is not acknowledged by the censor. He demands that they be taken as objective truths.’ This explicates Kant’s firm position that the historically
transmitted teachings and narratives constituting a revelation should be interpreted as illustrative supports and guides for our rational ethical practice.”

A.12 The law

There are various types of law that Kant refers to, but the most common reference is CI, which is the same as ML (the moral law within) and practical law. This can be contrasted with statutory law. There is also the law of nature, permissive law, public law, universal law, apodictic law, and the laws of freedom. Reference to “the law” to represent CI is meant to convey an idea of unconditional duty to the dictates of practical reason, perhaps through the symbolic use of our obedience to statutory laws: “duty is the necessity of an action from respect for the law” (GR, 4:400). This sense of lawfulness also conveys the idea that ML is an end in itself, not a means to the end of some good consequence: “an action from duty has its moral worth not in the purpose to be attained by it but in the maxim in accordance with which it is decided upon . . .” (GR, 4:399). The idea of rational principles as the foundation for morality may be thought of as distinct from love, which Kant regards as an “inclination.” CI, as such, has a practical advantage over love (or any emotive foundation for morality), because “no inclination impels us to it” (GR, 4:399). Inclinations of any kind are susceptible to the influence of self-love, which if given priority over ML, leads to evil. The value of ML for determining moral choices is “we are subject to it without consulting self-love” (GR, 4:402). Elsewhere Kant notes that “we cannot derive or convey the recognition of laws . . . on the basis of any sort of feeling” (R 6:114). ML, then, issues entirely from practical reason, not from any contingent factor, such as instinct, desire, emotion, parochial interests, socialization, or historical influence – none of which can command “respect” and all of which run the risk of corrupting reason. In contrast to potentially corrupting influences, “an action from duty is to put aside entirely the influence of inclination . .
It is entirely impartial to inclination and thus incorruptible, which is important because, since practical reason is necessary for the creation of a good society, the corruption of reason can lead to the worst examples of mass violence.

Kant’s emphasis on “the representation of the law” (CI, FUL, ML, FH, RE) conveys the idea that it alone should command respect, and not any other factor such as specific consequences: “nothing other than the representation of the law in itself . . . can constitute the preeminent good we call moral, which is already present in the person himself who acts in accordance with this representation and need not wait upon the effect of his actions” (GR, 4:401). There are a great many examples from history of the use of consequentialist calculations used to justify violence (e.g. wars of imperial aggression), so Kant is correct to be wary of that method for making moral judgements. For example, in the modern industrial era, utilitarian calculations – in the form of cost-benefit analyses – are made with regard to environmental decisions, often in favour of unsustainable development.

Kant further makes the claim that “all so-called moral interest consists simply in respect for the [moral] law” (GR, 4:402). Let us take the example of racism, which most people profess to find morally objectionable. Moral arguments against it almost never make reference to “moral law” (Martin Luther King Jr. provides a rare exception, giving the phrase a theological meaning), and wrongness of racism is assumed, in most arguments, without explanation. Many anti-racist activists may lack the intellectual rigor to identify why they find racism morally objectionable, but if Kant is correct, the foundation for any moral objection to racism is that it violates ML, which implies respect for “the law.” This would apply to any number of other possible harms, not only racism. The idea of the law also figures into Kant’s theory of the Urbild (the moral archetype, e.g. Jesus). He says that respect for others issues only from “respect for the
law itself” (GR, 4:402). Of course, respect for others means all others, not just those in the group one identifies with. This is mentioned because a common misdirection for allegations of discrimination is to imagine oneself a victim, which is the result, perhaps, of a “collective victim mentality [that] develops from a progression of self-realization, social recognition, and eventual attempts to maintain victimhood status.” This attitude can lead to demonizing members of a selected group (based on race or gender) as demonic, just by virtue of membership in the group, with no regard for what they as individuals believe or do. All others have the status of lawgivers because they are rational beings; when some people exhibit a greater degree of moral goodness than others, they can personify “the law” itself and become an Urbild. There is something in human nature which needs to generate these archetypes, as personified representations of ML, to serve as examples to us. The actual persons onto whom this is projected may or may not be paragons of virtue (no one is entirely without personal failing), but it is indicative of both religious traditions and political activist movements that Urbilder are selected and venerated.

The term statutory law refers to man-made laws and codes within historical religious traditions; it is juxtaposed to ML. A statutory law, like historical religions, can reflect and advance ML, but it can also deviate from it, and violate it, similar to other elements of historical religious traditions. When it deviates from ML, and serves only parochial interests – which is to say that it serves the interests of the powerful, at the expense of basic principles of justice and morality – this can be described through the concept of legal positivism, or positive law. The rightness of the positive law is thought to issue from the fact that it is enshrined as a law, not from its conformity to the principle of natural justice. An historical example is the laws passed by Nazi Germany, which violated ML. The Nuremberg trials of the Nazi leaders raised this issue, condemning a judiciary which enforced unjust laws, and establishing an international law that
placed observance of human rights above the necessity to obey military commands or state laws that could lead to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The idea of following orders could not be used as a justification at Nuremberg: “men who commit crimes cannot plead as a defense that they commit them in uniform . . . military men are not a race apart, above and beyond the legal and moral requirements that apply to others, incapable of exercising moral judgement on their own.”

The Nuremberg Laws reflect ML, in this sense: they say that soldiers are beholden to duty to conscience above and beyond duty to orders that may be unjust. In practice, however, most soldiers will follow orders, because the disincentive for not doing is severe: punishment can even include execution in times of war, which is precisely when war crimes occur and conscientious objection to them is most needed. As a result of this conflict between “the moral law within” – which every rational being can generate as law for him or herself – and obedience to unjust orders, some soldiers the trauma of a “moral injury,” or experience what Robert Jay Lifton termed “psychological doubling.”

A moral injury results “when combatants commit acts that transgress their deeply held moral beliefs or witness others doing so, they experience moral conflict. Cognitive dissonance is created between reality, moral values, and beliefs about personal goodness (Drescher et al., 2011).” This may also occur on a larger scale when the prevailing laws and practices of a society do not reflect principles of natural justice. One could argue that “moral conflict” is happening on a mass scale, in relation to climate change, and some psychologists have done the work of addressing the inner conflicts that this represents.

Interesting, moral injury can be healed through strong moral beliefs, and this is where religion may also play a therapeutic role for some.
A.13 Superstition / superstitious delusion

This is an important concept for understanding Kant’s theory of delusion through religious faith, including counterfeit faith, fetish faith, heteronomy of the will, anthropomorphism and enthusiasm. Superstition and enthusiasm are identified by Hume as “corruptions of true religion.” Kant elaborates on both; he defines superstition as “the delusion that through religious acts of cult we can achieve anything in the way of justification before God” and enthusiasm as “the delusion of wanting to bring this about by striving for a supposed contact with God . . .” (R, 6:174). Superstition thus includes the false belief that through ritualized actions (e.g. prayers, liturgical rituals, magical spells) one can win God’s favour – which is a belief that errs by resting on a constitutive understanding of God as an external power. Superstition also errs in the belief that through observance of morally empty “statutory” forms of religion (e.g. sacrificial rituals, aestheticism, martyrdom) one can become “well-pleasing to God . . . without even needing to be a good human being” (R, 6:175). If we understand God as a postulate of pure practical reason, and that to be “well-pleasing to God” in fact means good moral conduct (becoming a good human being), then the actions undertaken to win God’s favour – if they do not aspire to a moral end – are meaningless, or worse than meaningless if they lead people astray from moral ends. Kant juxtaposes superstition and enlightenment in a way that suggests they may be considered corollaries to heteronomy and autonomy of the will. He writes that “liberation from superstition is enlightenment” (CJ, 5:294). A shorthand definition of enlightenment, in the context of religion, is thinking for oneself and autonomy from coercion by ecclesiastical authorities – which Kant extends to all institutional authorities” (E, 8:36). Superstition contributes to heteronomy of the will because it is a prejudice and “the blindness to
which superstition leads, which indeed it even demands as an obligation, is what makes most evident the need to be led by others, hence the condition of a passive reason.” (CJ, 5:294).

In the second Critique Kant, in describing pure practical reason, discusses the way in which reason can generate regulative principles that do not need to assume objected beyond experience (supersensible objects) as constitutively real. There is a danger, though, that such objects can become constitutive in our interpretations and ways of thinking. He refers to the way in which a regulative understanding of such objects can help to ward off anthropomorphism, which is a cause of superstition. (CPrR, 5:136). Anthropomorphism exists because “we always need a certain analogy with natural being, in order to make supersensible characteristics comprehensible to us” (R, 6:65). It seems as though human beings are predisposed to think in these ways, for which reason Kant advocates their utilization for practical purposes, which would over time have the effect of helping to wean humanity away from such thinking.

A.14 Anthropomorphism

This concept relates to schematisms of analogy (schema), personification, representations, and Urbilder. It relates to schema because anthropomorphism is a type of analogy (R, 6:65), and it is also a type of representation. The Urbilder are representations of the highest ideals in human form, whereas anthropomorphism refers to the representation of the supersensible as having a human form. For Kant, anthropomorphism is considered a heteronomous, harmful practice, common to popular religion, and serves to impede the progress of moral faith. Anthropomorphism, for Kant, denotes viewing God as objectively real and as having human-like personality traits. In common usage the word refers to attributing human characteristics to an inanimate object or nonhuman entity, but in the specialized sense that Kant uses it, anthropomorphism means attributing a human persona to a supersensible object (God)
that should rightly be understood as a representation of the highest good, ML. Kant is critical of this practice; he says that it is “harmful” and “injurious”: “To transform ... into a schematism of object-determination (as means for expanding our cognition) constitutes anthropomorphism, and from the moral point of view (in religion) this has most injurious consequences.” (R, 6:65). The “harm” and “injury” that anthropomorphism can have is detailed in Kant’s account of counterfeit faith – namely, deference to religious authorities that claim to speak on behalf of God, through revelation, and who misuse this authority to advance parochial interests.

Interestingly, Kant argues that because the practice of personification of conceptions of the divine as deities is universal, this is evidence for the idea that world governance “lies in human reason universally” (R, 6:141). This is not necessarily a good thing, however, since as Kant notes, deities throughout the world are used for social control, through the use of fear of punishment (R, 6:141). As with many other elements in Kant’s philosophy of religion we see how religious ideas have a dual potentiality, at a social and political level, to lead humanity astray through fear and wishful thinking, but also to act as representations of the highest moral ideal, towards the creation of a good society, and to serve as ethical guides in that process. This latter application, however, requires the critical understanding that they are mere representations of principles of pure practical reason, and that they are not objectively real. This is why Kant repeatedly stresses the point, throughout his writings, that God must not be thought of as apodictically real. For example, he warns against “the danger of degenerating into an anthropomorphic service faith, because of the human propensity to think of the Divinity as a human authority ...” (R, 6:141), and that “all of our cognition of God is merely symbolic ...” and to not grasp this essential point can result in lapsing into anthropomorphism (CJ, 5:353). DiCenso notes that for Kant “symbols must be distinguished from schemata to deter the narrow
literalism and anthropomorphism that are endemic to much popular religious thought and belief."

A.15 Happiness

Kant takes issue with the notion that happiness is the highest good. As T. H. Irwin puts it, Kant argues “against attempts to treat happiness as a basis for moral principles” on the basis that its focus is on the “faculty of desire as the determining ground of the will.” The proper basis for the highest good is ML (identified with freedom and autonomy of the will) and the society that is founded on those principles. The reason that universal ethical principles (“universal law”, i.e., ML), and not happiness, is the highest good, is that “if one wanted to give the maxim [of the pursuit of happiness] the universality of a law, the most extreme opposite of harmony would follow, the worst conflict, and the complete annihilation of the maxim itself and its purpose” because everyone would pursue his own interests at the expense of everyone else (CPrR, 5:28). However, this does not mean that happiness is to be dispensed with: “pure practical reason does not require that one should renounce claims to happiness but only that as soon as duty is in question one should take no account of them” (CPrR, 5:93). Kant also explicitly rejects the denial of happiness embraced by ascetics, represented by the Stoics: they “mistook their enemy, who is not to be sought in the natural inclinations . . . [because] Considered in themselves natural inclinations are good” (R, 6:57-8). This is why one of the original predispositions to good is that of animality, according to Kant. The “battle” is not with inclinations themselves (e.g., lust, hunger), or their external objects, but with the principle of evil (the propensity to evil) itself, when it is incorporated into our maxims of actions. Kant takes exception to the practice of projecting evil onto an external spirit, a supersensible object that cannot be objectively real, rather than recognizing it as a propensity against which reason is the best remedy. The pursuit of
happiness, while not the *summum bonum*, is not to be denied, provided that that pursuit does not conflict with the command of reason (ML): “To be happy is necessarily the demand of every rational but finite being . . .” (CPrR, 5:25). Kant advocates “laws that permit *the freedom of each to exist together with that of others* (not the one providing for the greatest happiness, since that would follow of itself ) . . .” (A316/B373). This necessarily requires setting limits for ourselves, out a sense of moral responsibility to others, and if done in concert with others, we can build a society in which everyone acts in accordance with universal ethical principles and is also at the same time happy, because the two are not mutually exclusive. “The greatest happiness” would “follow of itself” if we live according to ML. Moreover, the kind of happiness that is the result of allowing the propensity to evil to determine our maxims of action, is a lesser sort of happiness in the end. The greater sort of happiness is that which comes from obeying the command of reason, but that is not the reason to do so: moral decision-making based on any incentive other than respect for rational principles themselves is heteronomous.

A.16 Teleology, purposiveness and counter-purposiveness

Kant believes that rational beings have a purpose, an end, by virtue of which they are said to be “ends in themselves.” This purpose relates to the use of practical reason. Our overriding moral duty and purpose in life is to act in conformity with CI. In describing the good will Kant states: “In the natural constitution of an organized being, that is, one constituted purposively for life, we assume as a principle that there will be found in it no instrument for some end other than what is also most appropriate to that end and best adapted for it” (GR, 4:394). He goes on to argue (contra Aristotle and utilitarianism) that happiness cannot be the final end or highest good for a rational being, because of the presence of reason in such beings. This indicates that morality (which has its origin in pure practical reason) is the highest good. If we possess reason, which
allows for moral decision-making, that must be our telos, not merely survival or happiness. If self-love were the final end, we would then be better off as purely instinctual creatures, and nature would have made us this way, without reason or conscience. As it is, we live in the sensible world and have inclinations and desires, but also the freedom to choose to give priority to self-love or ML. Kant argues that the use of reason to maximize “enjoyment of life” and “happiness” is a misuse of reason. The fact that we have the use of moral judgement at all points to “the idea of another and far worthier purpose of one’s existence [for which] reason is properly destined” (GR, 4:396). This worthier purpose is good moral conduct, at both the individual and societal level. He adds that “the true vocation of reason must be to produce the will that is good, not perhaps as a means to other purposes, but a good in itself, for which reason was absolutely necessary” (ibid). The good will, as we learn in the *Groundwork*, is a good in and of itself, not for some further ends, such as happiness – although acting in accordance with the good will can result in happiness, but that is not its object.

Related to the concept of teleology is the idea of teleological judgement. In the third *Critique* Kant refers to teleological judgement as the “judgement about the purposiveness in things in nature” (CJ, 20:232). The capacity for this form of judgement exists as a “system” through which we understand the world. Existing in us *a priori*, teleological judgement is catalyzed (so to speak) by experience, and is given to us by nature so that we can assess and navigate the world we are in. We may believe that our ordering of the world, as such, reflects the world as it is, and the history of the construction of cosmologies is indicative of this tendency, but Kant is careful to point out that such judgement exists for practical purposes, and should be understood regulatively.
Kant writes that “... *a priori* principles are given in the necessary idea of an experience, as a system, which contain the concept of a formal purposiveness of nature for our power of judgement. . . . Nature is necessarily harmonious not merely with our understanding, in regards to transcendental laws, but also, in its empirical laws, with the power of judgement and its capacity for exhibiting those laws in an empirical apprehension of its form through the imagination . . .” (CJ, 20:233). What he seems to be saying here is that *a priori* principles (regulative principles, from pure practical reason), of necessity, adopt the form of a system through which we understand the world, in order to navigate it, and to be able to make moral judgements within it. The system does not necessarily exist in any objective sense; it is more the case that it issues from practical reason. The principles are expressed through a teleology which is purposive, in the sense that it orders reality into means and ends. The system (what could alternatively be termed a cosmology) represents the sensible world for us in a way that conveys a practical purpose. We “apprehend” the form of laws (or principles) in nature, by virtue of which nature appears to be harmonious. Perhaps Kant’s concept of the purposiveness of nature to which we are privy borrows from the theology of Intelligent Design, except that Kant does not acknowledge the existence of an objectively real Creator. Instead, his concept of nature is one in which the human is an “end in himself,” by virtue of reason. This allows us to conceive of the “highest good” (ML, represented by the postulate of God). It seems that Kant makes heuristic use of the idea of a Creator and a divinely ordained natural order (Creation) – as he does with other religious ideas – only in order to convey regulative principles, and certainly not to suggest that such ideas by themselves have objectively real status.

Counter-purposiveness seems, for Kant, to indicate something wrong on a systemic level, as that which does not have a proper end, and therefore runs contrary to morality. It describes
something that seems “destructive” and which runs contrary to a “universal plan” (M, 8:266). If purposiveness may be thought of as the harmonious ordering of reality into a system of means and ends, understood by us in terms of laws (or principles) of nature, then counter-purposiveness stands as its opposite: disorder, purposelessness. Kant gives the example of the “disproportion between crimes and penalties in the world” (M, 8:256). Along the same lines we might also think of the enormous gulf that exists between our desire that there be some form of justice in the world, and the ongoing injustice of the world as it is. The process of enlightenment is certain to awaken thoughtful people to disturbing examples of counter-purposiveness that exist both in nature, and as a result of our moral decision making. Kant identifies the moral type of counter-purposiveness as that which “cannot be condoned or desired either as means or ends” (ibid). We may think of the effects of the propensity to evil that cannot even be justified by the ends it seeks, even through a utilitarian calculus. There is also “the conditionally counterpurposive,” which can “never co-exist with the wisdom of a will as end, yet can do so as means” (ibid). There are more examples of evil actions that fit this type, because such actions are typically committed with an end in mind.

A.17 Inclinations (and their role in radical evil)

Inclinations are desires, usually of a physical nature, associated with the predisposition to animality, common to all embodied beings, rational and non-rational. Our embodiment, our physical/sensible nature, locks us into a life full of inclinations and desires, which are not evil in themselves (just as the pursuit of happiness is not evil in itself), but knowingly choosing to give priority to self-love (served by the satisfaction of inclinations) over ML is itself evil. This choice describes the status quo of a consumer society. DiCenso comments that “because we are beings capable of exercising free choice, but . . . do so under conditions in which our judgement and
priorities may be shaped by strong somatically based drives and by our receptivity to social influences . . .”

Inclinations could fall under the predisposition to sociality, describing our social natures, our need to be accepted by others. Again, this is not an evil in itself, but it can be corrupted by the free choice to give it priority over ML. Kant writes that “the ground of evil cannot lie in any object determining the power of choice through inclination, not in any natural impulses, but only in the rule that the power of choice itself produces for the exercise of its freedom, i.e., in a maxim” (R, 6:21). A notable example is sexual desire: the inclination or impulse itself is not evil, nor the object of desire (e.g. a woman), contrary to the ancient traditions of the monastic asceticism which have tended to demonize both. Evil, as Kant defines it, lies in the choice of the individual to give priority to an inclination of this kind over moral considerations (e.g. to commit rape, which like lying, is clearly not universalizable).

A.18 The predisposition to personality

The predisposition to personality is “susceptibility to respect for the moral law as of itself a sufficient incentive to the power of choice” (R, 6:27). Unlike the predispositions to animality and humanity, it cannot be corrupted, because for the power of free choice to exist, “there must be present in our nature a predisposition onto which nothing evil can be grafted” (R, 6:28). It is thus like die Wille, the pure part of the will, which allows us the possibility of autonomy of the will in any situation, and at any time, despite the onslaught of heteronomous forces. Wood defines the predisposition to personality as “the rational capacity to respect the moral law and to act having duty or the moral law as a sole sufficient motive of the will.”

DiCenso adds that “the predisposition to personality is not so much the moral law given to us from within, but rather our subjective capacity to freely incorporate the rational moral law into the maxim of rule governing our actual choice.”
A.19  **The highest good** *(summum bonum)*

The phrase *highest good*, in Kant’s lexicon, refers to the fruition of the highest moral ideals (ML, RE) in the sensible world. It is “the final end, through which we complete the system of moral ends and simultaneously the system of natural ends . . . (KU 5:451). In other words, it describes the realization of the ideal of the perfect society – although this too should be understood as an ideal, never fully realized. The highest good is “the goodness of a possible world” or “the final end for creation.” It also results in the greatest happiness, though that is not its objective. Kant rejects happiness as the highest good; instead, he says it is the actualization of ML in the world, through the perfectly good society, implying unconditional and voluntary moral duty to CI by all its members. This also would bring happiness, but happiness cannot be the incentive. It is essentially a conception of the best possible society, one that is the result of complete conformity to the command of reason: “The production of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law. But in such a will the complete conformity of dispositions with the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good” (CPrR, 5:122). It is ML that established the highest good, not a heteronomous source. The following passage gives us further insight into its meaning: ML “transfers us, in idea, into a nature in which pure reason, if it were accompanied with suitable physical power, would produce the highest good, and it determines our will to confer on the sensible world the form of a whole of rational beings” (CPrR, 5:43). The highest good, then, refers to the ideal of what can be achieved in the world through absolute adherence to CI. Additionally, the highest good also refers to “the Realm of God [which] alone satisfies the strictest demands of practical reason” (CPrR, 5:127). The Realm of God (*des Reich Gottes*, sometimes translated as Kingdom of God) and RE can be understood as equivalent. It is also used as a synonym for God as a postulate of
pure practical reason, in which God is a representation of absolute moral goodness without limit. This representation has practical value only insofar as it inspires us strive towards good life conduct.

**A.20 Holiness**

Kant appropriates this religious concept to convey the idea of moral purity, i.e., conformity to the principle of CI in the formation of one’s maxims of actions. The status of the moral law as unconditional is expressed in the second *Critique’s* reference to “the majesty of this holy law [*das heilige Gesetz*]” (CPrR, 5:77-78). In a related comment, Kant likewise describes how “the Gospel presents the moral disposition in its complete perfection … as an ideal of holiness” (CPrR, 5:83). In particular, the concept of holiness is used to describe the dynamic whereby the degree to which good actions are done for the sake of goodness itself (expressed as conformity to ethical principles) is distinct from the good action motivated by heteronomous incentives. Kant expresses this point as follows: “the original good is *holiness of maxims* in compliance to one’s duty, hence merely out of duty, whereby a human being, who incorporates this purity into his maxims, though on this account still not holy as such (for between maxim and deed there is still a wide gap), is nonetheless on the road of endless progress toward holiness” (R, 6:46-7). This passage conveys the importance of correct *intention* in the formation of one’s maxims of actions (also conveyed in *Groundwork* by the idea of the good will), as distinct from maxims motivated by incentives (such as wishing to appear to be a good person in the eyes of others). In another passage in *Religion*, Kant refers to “precepts of holiness, which we ought to strive after” (R, 6:161), to describe Jesus’ ethical teachings. These teachings are interpreted regulatively by Kant. Interestingly, Thomas Jefferson’s own views on religion were much in alignment with Kant’s: like Kant, Jefferson believed that Jesus ethical teachings had great value,
but that the rest of Christianity was superstitious and misleading, and could be dispensed with. He wrote to John Adams that “the day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as his father in the womb of a virgin will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter. But may we hope that the dawn of reason and freedom of thought in these United States will do away with this artificial scaffolding, and restore to us the primitive and genuine doctrines of this most venerated reformer of human errors.” Like Kant, Jefferson used religious language pragmatically and regulatively, to convey ethical ideas within a society in which that language had some political purchase, but without investing them with constitutive meaning. ‘Holiness’ is one of many religious words that Kant appropriates to convey ethical meaning; it means moral purity, not to any conception of the divine (granting the objective existence of which could be thought to transgress the limits of reason).
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Endnotes


3 Lucht, 2007; Rentmeester, 2010.


11 Shue, 200.

12 Religion was published as a whole in 1793. Climate change emerged as a scientific issue with political implications, emerged in the 1970s, roughly 180 years later, although it did not gain wide attention until the 1990s, which is the decade in which the first major international talks were held to address the issue, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was formed. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Accessed April 3, 2017. www.ipcc.ch.

13 The distinction between ethical holism and ethical individualism is often understood in terms of
the debate in environmental ethics between rights ethicist Tom Regan and environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott. Aldo Leopold, whose “land ethic” Callicott adopts and expands on, says that the highest good is that which contributes to the integrity and beauty of the land: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.” Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1966). Regan objects to this maxim because it is used to justify culling of animals by wildlife managers and hunters to reduce alleged animal overpopulation. Regan, in response to Leopold and Callicott, disagrees with what he sees as their disregard of the rights of the individual. Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 262.

14 DiCenso, 2011, 220.
17 To say that religions have failed thus, is of course, a very broad generalization, and does not take into account their limited power, or the great efforts made by a few individuals and groups, including Pope Francis and Bishop Luc Bouchard and the World Council of Churches, to name a few.
19 Although Kant did not anticipate climate change, it should be acknowledged that he did anticipate many other things that are part of the modern world, including “something akin to the United Nations with his idea of a ‘League of Nations’ . . . Moreover, he was one of the first philosophers to lament the ecological destruction that he witnessed happening around him. In his *Critique of [of the Power of] Judgement*, Kant bemoans the destruction of the pine forests near his hometown of Königsberg.” Rentmeester, 77.
20 Rentmeester, 78.
21 Rentmeester, 80.
22 Adelman, 177.
25 Rentmeester, 83.
27 “One of the goals that Kant puts forth in conjunction with the League of Nations is that humans begin to see themselves as not only citizens of their particular locality, but as citizens of the world as well.” Rentmeester, 83.
28 Berry, 81.
   The original article by Hardin was published in 1968: Garret Hardin, “The tragedy of the commons: The population problem has no technical solutions; it requires a fundamental extension of morality,” *Science* 162 (December 15, 1968): 1243-8.
30 Northcott, 83.


“Liberals and Democrats are more likely to report beliefs consistent with the scientific consensus and express personal concern about global warming than are conservatives and Republicans . . . significant ideological and partisan polarization has occurred on the issue of climate change over the past decade.” Aaron M. McCright and Riley E. Dunlap, “The Politicization of Climate Change and Polarization in the American Public’s Views of Global Warming, 2001–2010.” *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 52, Issue 2 (Dec 2011): 155-194.

Cornwall Alliance.

DiCenso, 2011, 111.

Ibid.

All references to *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* refer to the 1996 Cambridge edition, hereafter referred to as *Religion*.


The phrase “sustainable sufficiency” is defined by Lawrence E. Schmidt as the following: “sufficiency is concerned with the present demands of justice, specifically, distributive justice. It is ‘the timely supply to all persons of basic material necessities defined as the resources needed for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, health care and some margin above subsistence . . . This emphasis on basics implies a reduction in consumption by those consuming in excess of basics and an increase in consumption by those who find themselves short of basics.’ [Stivers, Hunger, *Technology and Limits to Growth*, 129] Sustainability ("the long-range capacity of the earth to supply resources for basic needs at a reasonable cost to society and the environment.") is concerned with the future and is based on our ‘duties to future generations’ or our concern for the environment.” Lawrence Schmidt. “Nuclear Power: and the End of Sustainable Sufficiency” in L. E. Schmidt and Scott Marratto, *The End of Ethics in a Technological Society*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008), 193.

Rentmeester, 80.


Ibid.

Scharper, 2006, 38.

Christian eco-theologians, or theologians whose work has contributed to environmental theology, include John B. Cobb, Jr., Jürgen Moltmann, John F. Haught, Andrew Linzey, Michael Dowd, Jay McDaniel, Wendell Berry, and Leonardo Boff. The list of Christian eco-theologians is much longer than this; this bibliography provides more names: Ernst M. Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology* (Sun Press, 2006). Christian eco-feminist theologians include Rosemary Radford Ruether, Catherine Keller, and Sallie McFague. Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Buber influenced Jewish environmental thought; more recent Jewish theologians addressing this theme include Daniel Cohn-Sherbok and David Mevorach Seidenberg. Seyyid Hossein Nasr stands out as a pioneer of Islamic eco-theology. Within the range of eastern religious traditions, M. K. Gandhi has been influential, and more recently Vandanna Shiva, O. P. Dwivedi, L. M. Singhi, Satish Kuma, and many others. There are numerous thinkers who adopt an explicity spiritual or mystical worldview, including Will Tuttle, Silesh Rao, Thomas Berry, Matthew Fox, Elisabeth Sahtouris, and Annie Dillard. See Christopher Key Chapple, "Jainism Introduction" in Christopher Key Chapple, ed., *Jainism and Ecology Volume, Religions of the World and Ecology Series*, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2002, and Christopher Key Chapple, "Hinduism Introduction" in Mary Evelyn Tucker and Christopher Key Chapple, eds., *Hinduism and Ecology Volume, Religions of the World and Ecology Series*, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2000. This list above is limited and is meant only to give an indication of the scope of thought within these traditions to environmental concern. For a list of additional thinkers along these lines, refer to all the Introductions to World and Ecology Series for each world religion, which can be found here: http://fore.yale.edu/publications/books/cswr/.

The way that climate change deniers get around this problem is by denying the validity of the peer-reviewed empirical science. Scientific theories are falsifiable, which is to say that they can be demonstrated to be wrong, but the fact of anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change has been demonstrably proved by peer-reviewed science, conducted by members of the IPCC, “Combining Evidence of Anthropogenic Climate Change” *IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007: Working Group I: The Physical Science Basis*. Accessed April 3, 2017. www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/ch9s9-7.html.

There are an estimated 27 to 45.8 million human slaves in the world, today (depending on how one defines slavery). *The Global Slavery Index*. Accessed April 9, 2017. www.globalslaveryindex.org.


DiCenso 2012, 41.


Ibid.

"It is conventional to distinguish between positive and negative rights, where positive rights require others to perform certain actions and where negative rights require others simply to abstain from certain actions. To illustrate the difference, one might affirm that there is a negative right to bot be tortured. This generates duties on all [persons] to not perform this kind of action. Alternately, one might affirm a positive right, say, to education. This requires not simply that others do not deprive persons of education, but also that others perform positive actions to ensure that all have access to education.” Simone Caney, “Climate Change, Human Rights, and Moral Thresholds,” in Stephen Gardiner, Simon Caney, Dale Jamieson, Henry Shue, eds. *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Jun 22, 2011),165.

Negative and positive human rights and duties are concepts employed by the United Nations Principles Reporting Framework: “the baseline expectation [is to] avoid infringing on the human rights of others [and to] address adverse human rights impacts . . .” (UN Guiding Principle 11). The Framework also notes that “a negative human rights impact occurs when an action removes or reduces the ability of an individual to enjoy his or her human rights.” According to Aeon J. Skoble, “a positive rights require others to provide you with either a good or service. A negative right, on the other hand, only requires others to abstain from interfering with your actions. If we are free and equal by nature, and if we believe in negative rights, any positive rights would have to be grounded in consensual arrangements.” Aeon J. Skoble, “Positive versus Negative Rights,” *Learn Liberty*. June 29, 2011. Accessed April 9, 2017. www.learnliberty.org/videos/positive-rights-vs-negative-rights/.


Ibid.

Garvey, 66-7.

Adelman, 178.
2013.

“Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.” Attributed to Hermann Goering at the Nuremberg Trials. G. M. Gilbert, *The Psychology of Dictatorship: Based on an Examination of the Leaders of Nazi Germany*, (Greenwood Press, 1979), 117.


DiCenso, 2011, 3.


Theodore W. De Bary comments that “the rhetoric of nationalism and of China’s resistance to Western imperialism comes powerfully into play . . . in the form of allegations that Western culture-bound concepts of human rights are being imposed on China. To deflect and discredit charges that individual human rights are being violated in China, sweeping counter-accusations are made that ‘rampant individualism’ in the United States and the West has produced a pattern of gross self-indulgence and social decay that Asian nations cannot afford . . . Although spokesmen for authoritarian regimes like to define the human rights problem as one of the ‘individualist West’ versus ‘communitarian Asia,’ this formulation only obscures the issue . . . It is less a question of Asian versus Western values than a problem of how the forces of runaway economic and technological modernization are eroding traditional values in both Asia and the West.” William T. De Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights: A Confucian Communitarian Perspective*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 8.

Dictator Robert Mugabe blamed European colonialism for the problems that occur in Africa, and said that G. W. Bush was a hypocrite for referring to human rights abused in Zimbabwe, which prompted Kofi Annan (of the United Nations) to refute him. A paraphrase of Annan’s response is as follows: “Africa’s biggest undoing [is] the habit of blaming the continent’s colonial past for the problems many nations face today [and it is] time Africa looked beyond the continent’s colonial past.” Everson Mushava, “Mugabe a dictator – Annan,” *NewsDay*. Nov. 21, 2012. Accessed May 9, 2012. [www.newsday.co.zw/2012/11/21/mugabe-a-dictator-annan/](http://www.newsday.co.zw/2012/11/21/mugabe-a-dictator-annan/).


Follesdal and Maliks, 2.

“To the nation’s [Canada’s] great credit, racism, sexism and homophobia have become rare in Canadian public life. And so HRCs increasingly have become the domain of cranks with fringe complaints.” Jonathan Kay, “Human rights commissions have had their day,” *National Post*, March 6, 2013.
{Accessed May 10, 2017. news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/jonathan-kay-human-rights-commissions-have-had-their-day.}

94 Adelman, 177.
97 Firestone and Jacobs, in chapter one of In Defense of Kant’s Religion, trace this divergence of thinking on Religion, and themselves take the more theological approach. Chris L. Firestone and Nathan Jacobs, In defense of Kant's Religion (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
99 Israel, 109.
100 Israel, 208.
101 Firestone and Jacobs (2008) may be considered representative of the theological interpretation and DiCenso (2011, 2012) representative of the non-theological interpretation. Frederick Rauscher provides a comment on this debate within scholarship on Religion, in favour of the non-theological view: “In the past dozen years, a plethora of work on Kant’s philosophy of religion has appeared, generally stressing an interpretation that takes Kant to be religious and his philosophy to require adherence to Christian doctrine. In general, I think that this interpretation overemphasizes the extent to which some of Kant’s positions require religion. My chapter [on the Postulate of God, chapter 5] will provide an example of the kind of language that Kant uses in his philosophy that weakens their claim. Further, Manfred Kuehn has shown convincingly that Kant had no strong personal religious beliefs (Kuehn 2001). For a philosophical defense of a Kantian atheism, see (Denis 2003).” Rauscher, Frederick, Naturalism and Realism in Kant's Ethics (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 149 cf.
104 Aldeman, 172.
107 Follesdal and Maliks, 2.
109 Christian Baatz argues that individuals “have a Kantian imperfect duty to reduce their emissions as far as can reasonably be demanded of them. In addition, they should press governments to introduce proper regulation.” Christian Baatz, “Climate Change and Individual Duties to Reduce GHG Emissions” Ethics, Policy and Environment 17 (1) (2014): 1-19.
110 Rentmeester, 83.
111 Adger, et al.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.

116 A typical fiduciary law requires the investor to make decisions that will bring a profit. An example is a law that required "investing the assets on behalf of a person to whom the investing person owed a fiduciary duty to make investments without undue risk of loss, and with a reasonable expectation of a return on the investments." (from British Columbia’s new Pension Benefits Standards Act), Murray Gold and Adrian Scotchmer, "Climate Change and the Fiduciary Duties of Pension Fund Trustees in Canada," Koskie Minsky LLP, Sept. 1, 2015, 10. Accessed May 10, 2017. www.turnbackthetide.ca/tools-and-resources/whatsnew/2015/KoskieMinsky LLP.pdf

117 A legal case (Cowan v. Scargill), in which "non-financial benefits" and the benefit of "future generations" were discussed, prompted Murray Gold and Adrian Scotchmer to conclude that climate change should be a factor in making investments, because "institutional investors, and especially large institutions, must attend to "systemic factors." Practically speaking, this could mean divestment from fossil fuels. Gold and Scotchmer, 11.


121 A good example of both Christian and aboriginal ethical arguments against uranium is presented in the film Magnus Isaasson, “Uranium.” National Film Board, 1990. www.nfb.ca/film/uranium/

122 The reference to Mother Earth increased in the context of communication with Europeans regarding land or land use. Sam D. Gill, Mother Earth: An American Story (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 145


124 Livestock’s long shadow.

125 Rachels.


128 Taylor, 13.

129 Taylor, 14.

130 Brychcan Carey and Geoffrey Plank, Quakers and Abolition. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2014).

131 DiCenso, 2011, 220.


135 “Taken as a guide for human culture, the land ethic -- despite the best intentions of its supporters -- would lead toward classical fascism, the submergence of the individual person in the glorification of the collectivity, race, tribe or nation.” Frederick Ferre (1996a, 18) as quoted in J. Baird Callicot, Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy, (Albany, New York: SUNY Press. 1999), 70.

Ursula Franklin’s criteria for assessing technology include the questions: Does it promote social and economic justice? Does it restore reciprocity or consolidate power in the hands of a minority? Does it confer benefits which can be divided among the many or monopolized by the few? Does if favour people over machines? Does it maximize economic gain at the expense of social and environmental costs? Does it favour conservation or waste? Does if favour the reversible over the irreversible, so if problems occur after the technology is adopted steps can be taken to reverse the impact? Ursula Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*, (Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press Incorporated, 1999).


The term “intermediate technology” was coined by E. F. Schumacher, to describe an alternative to large-scale centralized, and complex technologies. It is “based on the needs and skills possessed by the people of developing countries . . . as relatively small, simple, capital-saving, labour-intensive, and environmentally less-damaging technologies, suitable for local, small-scale application.” E. F. Schumacher, *Manifesto*. Accessed April 3, 2017. steps-centre.org/anewmanifesto/timeline/concept-of-intermediate-technology-introduced/. The meaning of “cultural Marxism” have evolved over time. The German compound noun *Kulturbolschewismus*, or “cultural Bolshevism”, allegedly used in the early twentieth century, is similar to the English idiom “cultural Marxism,” which was coined by sociologist Trent Schroyer in *The Critique of Domination* (1973) to describe the idea that culture is a main driving force for inequality in the Western world. It was a reference to the idea of the “culture industry” from the Frankfurt School of critical theory. Its meaning has since been expanded to refer to organized efforts by Leftists to undermine traditional Western values such individualism and personal liberty. Richard Weiner’s *Cultural Marxism and Political Sociology* (1981) and Michael Minnicino’s *New Dark Age: Frankfurt School and ‘Political Correctness’* (1992). More specifically, it now refers to the transposition of Marxist categories of class onto race and gender-based “identity politics.” Christine Hoff Sommers, for example, says that “it’s almost as though they took Marx and crossed out class and put in gender.” “Christina Hoff Sommers on how Feminism went awry” *Conversation with Bill Kristol*. Accessed May 25, 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJfeu2IG0M. According to Pascal Bruckner, “Anti-colonialism serves as a substitute for Marxism for a whole segment of the Left that no longer knows how to understand the world.” Pascal Bruckner, *The Tyranny of Guilt: An Essay on Western Masochism*, trans. Steven Rendall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Societies for animal welfare had existed in the nineteenth century, largely in England (Leela Gandhi, *Affective communities: anticolonial thought, fin-de-siècle radicalism, and the politics of friendship*. 144
Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), but the modern animal rights movement is said to have begun with the publication of Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* in 1975.


146 Ibid.


149 IPCC AR5 report.

150 Ibid.


155 Renmeester, 78.


It should be noted that this argument has been contested: the “focus on environmental factors is a distraction from the more serious political motivations behind violence, which may be unrelated to resource scarcity and competition and more to do with economic, ethnic or historical factors. However, UNEP does make clear that where environmental and natural resource issues are important to conflict they are generally

This material has been funded by UKAid from the Department for International Development; however, the views expressed do not officially reflect the Department’s policies. Case Study 14, 2012. www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/LHcasestudy14-Sudan.pdf.


160 The skepticism over the effectiveness of behavioural mitigation efforts by proponents of structural (or systemic) change is based on the idea that voluntary individual behavioural change can never be sufficient. For example, Rentmeester comments that “people will likely continue to engage in unsustainable practices rather than change their way of living, regardless of whether they know the consequences of their actions . . . With this in mind, our response to global climate change has to be brought about on a communal, political level as well as an individual level.” Rentmeester, 82.

161 Rentmeester, 82.


165 Schmidt argues against the use of nuclear energy by referring to the long-term effects of the radioactive waste that it produces. He refers to thinkers such as Zygmunt Bauman, who describe technology on this scale and complexity as a type of gamble in which what is at risk is so serious as to not warrant the risk: “as science piles risk upon risk, and encourages us to gamble with the future of the earth, scientist, like those in the nuclear industry, claim to be indispensable in solving the problems that industry has produced . . . Ethics has been reduced to risk management.” Schmidt and Maratto, 78.

166 Orr, 24.


168 Schmidt and Maratto refer to "low probability, high consequence risk" to describe nuclear energy. Schmidt and Maratto, 59.


170 Climate scientist Simone Tilmes conducted a study that finds that one form of geoengineering – sulphur particles deposited in the upper atmosphere – could reduce the Earth’s ozone layer, which protects the biosphere from solar radiation. This is one indication of the possible risk that this use of technology represents. University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, “Stratospheric injections to counter global warming could damage ozone layer,” April 24, 2008, NCAR AtmosNews. Accessed May 6, 2017. www2.ucar.edu/atmosnews/news/942/stratospheric-injections-counter-global-warming-could-damage-ozone-layer.


171 Ibid.


Garvey adds that “It is hard to escape the conclusion that selfishness is at the bottom of arguments against action. The arguments can seem appealing only if you operate with the premise that our lives matter more than the lives of certain others.” Garvey, 108.

Another point worth considering, from Northcott, is that western countries are in fact indirectly responsible for Chinese emissions, due to the fact that western countries are major consumers of Chinese goods, produced with coal energy in Chinese factories. Ergo, if we consume less, Chinese emissions will reduce. Northcott, 35.


Pro-growth economics is challenged by no-growth (or steady-state) economists, who argue that income above a certain threshold does not increase happiness and is not necessary; they argue for regulations that would ensure a strong middle-class, and essentially eliminate poverty as well as excessive wealth. Happiness, they contend, cannot be reduced to economic wealth, although there is a correlation within a certain range of wealth. A well managed steady-state economy would have positive social and environmental results, these economists contend, but at the cost of high taxation. Tim Jackson, *Prosperity Without Growth: The Transition to a Sustainable Economy* (UK: Sustainable Development Commission, 2009); Peter Victor, *Managing Without Growth: Slower by Design, not Disaster* (Toronto: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008).


A.D. Basiago.

Danny Harvey, Thesis comments.

Adelman, 162.


“Pricing carbon emissions through a carbon tax is one of the most powerful incentives that governments have to encourage companies and households to pollute less by investing in cleaner technologies and adopting greener practices. A carbon tax is a fee placed on greenhouse gas pollution mainly from burning fossil fuels. This can be done by placing a surcharge on carbon-based fuels and other sources of pollution such as industrial processes.” David Suzuki. “Carbon Tax or Cap and Trade?” DavidSuzuki.org Accessed April 4, 2017. www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/science/climate-solutions/carbon-tax-or-cap-and-trade/


Loy, 281.

Northcott, 78.

Tillich, 1957, 12.


209 The following ethical systems or explanations for morality all dispense with the primacy of reason: (i) the feminist ethics of care; and (ii) emotive, behaviourist, evolutionary, psychological, biological, and neurobiological explanations for morality.


211 This is a paraphrase of a comment on a legal case by Judge Robert Rolf in the case of Winterbottom v Wright in 1842: “This is one of those unfortunate cases...in which, it is, no doubt, a hardship upon the plaintiff to be without a remedy but by that consideration we ought not to be influenced. Hard cases, it has frequently been observed, are apt to introduce bad law.” *On Line Opinion*. Accessed April 9, 2017. [www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=13506](http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=13506).

212 Tillich, 1957, 39.

213 Tillich, 1957, 16.


215 Veldman et al, 3.


217 Veldman et al

218 “One site of resilience and adaptive capacity is the many churches that operate in villages across Solomon Islands...[they] illustrate some of the ways in which religious bodies can be involved in all levels of climate change resilience and adaptive capacity...” Andrea Reale, “Churches building resiliency to climate change” in Veldman et al, 95.

219 Garvey, 76.


223 DiCenso 2012, 134.


225 The timeline of the political victory for those advocating the legality of same-sex marriage is an indication of the speed with which societies can change. The first legal effort along these lines was in 1970. In 1980, Denmark was the first country to legally recognize same-sex unions. There were numerous political and legislative changes after that, spanning 1989 to the present. Given the degree that this idea challenged prevailing and widely accepted gender norms, established over millennia, the speed of this change is remarkable. “Timeline of Same-Sex Marriage,” *Wikipedia*. Accessed April 4, 2017. [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_same-sex_marriage](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_same-sex_marriage).

226 The anthropologist Margaret Mead took note of this dynamic when she said “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, organized citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Nancy C. Lutkehaus, *Margaret Mead: The Making of an American Icon*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 261.

227 Casanova, 165.

228 Appleby, 13-14.

229 Appleby, 121-2.
Erica Chenoweth and Kurt Schock of Rutgers University use comparative data to study the limited use of violence. They found that violent flanks may achieve some short-term process goals such as media attention, the perception of self-defense, the diffusion of an oppositional culture that builds the commitment of more radical members, or catharsis around the ability to “blow off steam.” But violent flanks typically undermine longer-term strategic goals such as maintaining an increasingly large and diverse participation base, expanding support among third parties and eliciting loyalty shifts among security forces. They find evidence that violent flanks are typically associated with smaller participation rates and more homogenous participation, undermining the main advantage of using nonviolent resistance in the first place. Another study similarly finds that violent flanks tend to increase repression by the state, which tends to be associated with lower participation rates. Thus, on average, violent flanks definitely do not help nonviolent campaigns succeed.” Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, “How the world is proving Martin Luther King right about nonviolence,” The Washington Post, January 18, 2016. Accessed May 7, 2017.


Casanova uses the binary terms of “agonic” and “discoursive.” Casanova, 165.


“KAIROS unites Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to ‘do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8). KAIROS is a joint venture ecumenical program administered by the United Church of Canada. Ten participating member denominations and religious organizations are involved in the development and delivery of our shared work.” KAIROS www.kairoscanada.org/.

Appleby, 34.

Veldman et al, 7.

Waldau uses this example in order to suggest that disregard for animals by modern environmentalists is similar to nineteenth century disregard for women among socialists. There are other examples of a similar disregard as noted in the documentary film Andersen, Kip, and Keegan Kuhn, Cowspiracy: the Sustainability Secret, 2015. www.imdb.com/title/tt3302820/ Paul Waldau, “Pushing Environmental Justice to a Natural Limit” in Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton, eds., A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), 629-642.


For example, Charles Selengut comments that “religious traditions certainly acknowledge the religious justification for religious wars but redefine them as situational events limited to divine directive” and that Christianity “may well rediscover its own holy war theology as an ideological and religious justification for religious conflict.” Charles Selengut, Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 16-22.


According to Dyer, a report from the Pentagon on climate change contingencies is in fact selling “a mission” to other military officials: “The next mission of the U.S. Armed Forces is going to be the long struggle to maintain stability as climate change continually undermines it. The "war on terror" has more or less had its day, and besides, climate change is a real, full-spectrum challenge that may require everything from special forces to aircraft carriers. So it's time to jolt the rank and file of the officer corps out of their
complacency, re-orient them towards the new threat, and get them moving.” Dyer, Gwynne, *Climate Wars: the fight for survival as the world overheats*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).


242 Juergensmeyer, 12.


244 Scharper, 2006, 39.

245 Hathaway and Boff.


247 “Postmodernism continues to have a detrimental influence on social work, questioning the Enlightenment, criticizing established research methods, and challenging scientific authority . . . The philosophical orientation of postmodernism in our judgement undermines achievements of the Enlightenment, disparages modern professions such as social work, and rejects empirical research methods . . . It is often associated with such epistemological tenets as relative or subjective versus foundational, universal, or objective truth claims as representative of reality.” Richard Caputo, William Epstein, David Stoesz, and Bruce Thyer, “Postmodernism: A Dead End in Social Work Epistemology,” *Journal of Social Work Education*. Volume 51, Issue 4, (Oct. 2015).


249 Smith and Leiserowitz, 2013.


251 Nancy Tatom Ammerman theorizes that fundamentalism exists in dynamic relation to modernity, and could not exist without modernity: fundamentalism “arose as a movement when an old consensual orthodoxy encountered the challenges of critical scholarship and cultural pluralism . . . today fundamentalism is most likely to be found at the points where tradition is meeting modernity . . . Only where traditional orthodoxy must defend itself against modernity does fundamentalism truly emerge.” Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

“The conception that fundamentalism is anti-modern can be seen in works by Bruce Lawrence, Martin Marty, and R. Scott Appleby. Lawrence’s *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalists Revolt Against the Modern Age*, and Marty and Appleby’s *The Fundamentalism Project*, are central texts in the scholarly understanding of fundamentalism. These three scholars have similar sentiments regarding the relationship
of fundamentalism and modernity; fundamentalism is dependent on and appropriates utilitarian aspects of modernity, while “fighting back” against it. Marty, Appleby, and Lawrence see fundamentalisms as reactions to the effects of the Enlightenment, which manifests itself as modernism and modernist thinking. Fundamentalists are in “opposition to all those individuals or institutions that advocate Enlightenment values and wave the banner of secularism or modernism.” Andrew Charles Hoffmeister, “Fundamentalism and Modernity: A Critique of the ‘Anti-Modern’ Conception of Fundamentalism.” (PhDiss, Georgia State University, 2006), 2. Accessed April 4, 2017. www.scholarworks.gsu.edu/rs_theses/3; and Bruce Lawrence, Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 6.

John A. Saliba provides a social psychology to help explain the rise eastern spirituality in the West, and in particular cults, speculating that it arises as a result of a identity crisis among those who feels alienated from self and society. The Westernized versions of the eastern religions promise security and stability, and they require submission to authority: “young adults attracted to new religious movements are characterized by dissatisfaction with their status quo . . .” Furthermore, they are vulnerable to abuse by tyrannical religious leaders who have “over-inflated egos.” John A. Saliba, Understanding New Religious Movements, (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman Altamira, 2003), 85-88.


255 Rennester says that “Kant’s philosophy is uniquely important because he offers us a straightforward test to determine the universalizability of an action.” Rennester, 79.

256 DiCenso 2011, 3.

257 Ehrman, 2015.


259 Kate Bowler, writing on the history of the prosperity gospel in the United States, says that “The gospel of wealth continued to ride the wave of prosperity through the 1920s. As American transitioned from the World War I wartime economy to a peacetime order, a flood of new wealth rewarded big business and avid consumerism . . . Americans Christians' valorization of manly virtue, epitomized by the muscular Christianity of evangelist Billy Sunday, took on a decidedly corporate cast. Jesus himself possessed business acumen . . . As the church modeled big business, lay people turned to a gospel that explained how wealth, capitalism, and devotion coincided.” Kate Bowler, Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 37.


262 Juergensmeyer, 182.

Kant “discredits a possible misreading of the transcendental ideal along any traditional onto-theological line: ‘... reason does not presuppose the existence of a being conforming to the ideal, but only the idea of such a being’ (A577-78/B605-06),” as quoted in DiCenso, 2011, 145.


Dyer, Gwynne, Climate Wars: the fight for survival as the world overheats, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).


The pre-industrial measurement is 287 ppm carbon dioxide. The minimum “safe” level according to climate scientist James Hansen is 350 ppm, which has now been surpassed. We are now past 400 ppm. There is a high degree of probability that we will go past the 2 degree Celsius “tipping point” in a few years. Brian Kahn, “The World Passes 400 PPM Threshold permanently,” Climate Central. Sept. 21, 2016. Accessed April 6, 2017. www.climatecentral.org/news/world-passes-400-ppm-threshold-permanently-20738.

Danny Harvey, “Is it too late for global warming?”

“A strong case can be made that the world is not currently on an emissions reduction pathway needed to prevent dangerous climate change.” Donald Brown, “Ethical Issues Raised By Carbon Trading.” Rock Ethics Institute, University of Pennsylvania. Accessed April 6, 2017. rockethics.psu.edu/everyday-ethics/ethical-issues-raised-by-carbon-trading.


In addition to non-binding agreements, two big emitters, aviation and shipping, which together account for more than 5 per cent of global emissions, are exempt from the Paris Agreement. No mechanisms were set to determine national carbon prices let alone a global one, and the goal to transfer $100-billion (U.S.) a year from the wealthy word to developing countries to help them cope with climate change remains just that – a goal, not a binding commitment. Eric Reguly, “Paris climate talks were a noble failure,” Globe & Mail. Dec. 18, 2015. Accessed April 6, 2017. www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/paris-climate-talks-were-a-noble-failure/article27859263/.


Ibid.

Veldman et al, 7.

Veldman et al, 6.


Veldman et al., 6.

Bjørn Lomborg argues that investment in climate change mitigation represents a “trade-off” with other priorities, such as the eradication of disease, and that the latter should take precedence. Bjørn Lomborg, *The Skeptical Environmentalist: Measuring the Real State of the World*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).


Lomberg.


Dyer.

Danny Harvey, University of Toronto, “Is it too late for global warming?”


Veldman et al., 7.

Berry, 21.


Northcott, 33.

Veldman et al., 7.


Ibid.

Examples of scriptures understood to affirm heterosexuality or forbid homosexuality include Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, Genesis 2:18-24; 1:26-28; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1–40; Ephesians 5:22–33, and Qu’ran, Surah 26 (165-166) (trans. Sahih International). In Islamic theocracies, sharia law is interpreted as sanctioning the death penalty for homosexuality. The manner of execution prescribed in the Hadith is throwing the person off a roof and stoning the body upon landing. This practice, which continues to this day (in Pakistan, for example) has been condemned by Amnesty International. See B. E. Whitley, Jr. “Religiosity and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: A meta-analysis.” *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 19 (2000): 21-38.


This quality of invisibility or transparency of the nomos is important of its perpetuation and efficacy. To accomplish this religions and conceptions of natural law sacralize socially constructed worldviews, in order to prevent them from being questioned (for to do so would be blasphemous, and would threaten the social order): “religion legitimates social institutions by bestowing upon them an ultimately valid ontological status, that is, by locating them within a sacred and cosmic frame of reference” (Berger, 33). This is important for understanding the connection between world-construction and morality, as Berger reveals in this statement: “when the socially defined reality has come to be identified with the ultimate reality of the universe, then its denial takes on the quality of evil . . .” (Berger, 39). The demonization of those who question the worldview, or in some way represent a threat to it, can clearly lead to religious violence.

Janice Fiamengo, *Fiamengo Files*, unpublished manuscript.

Berger, 20.

The use of language to dehumanize is ancient, but the Nazis, perhaps more than any other group, exemplify this practice, through their designation of Jews as “parasites” and “vermin,” implying the need to exterminate them. “The incessant official demonization of the Jew gradually modified the consciousness even of naturally humane people,” so that the populace became indifferent to Jewish suffering, “not because it occurred in wartime and under conditions of secrecy, but because Jews were astronomically remote and not real people.” Richard Grunberger, *Twelve-Year Reich: A Social History of Nazi Germany*, (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971).


Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, p. xii.


Ibid.

Regan, 234.


Ibid.

White Jr., 1206.

Franklin, 23.


“Between 1965 and 1998, the average world citizen’s income practically doubled, from $2,497 to $4,839, adjusted for purchasing power and inflation. . . World consumption today is more than twice what it was in 1960. Thanks to material developments in the past half century, the world has over three billion more people living above the poverty line. That is historically unique.” Johan Norberg, “In Defense of Global Capitalism.” *Academic Foundation*, Nov 1, 2005, 37.


It may be the case that human beings, prior to the formation of civilization, regarded themselves as equals to other ‘charismatic megafauna’ as is indicated by the existence of the Chauvet cave paintings that show reverence for animals, from about 30,000 years ago. Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, “On the *Dynamis* of Animals, or How *Animalium* became *Anthropos,*” Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton, eds., in *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 439-460.

G. E. Moore sums up the ‘appeal to nature’ fallacy as follows: “A thing is good *because* it is ‘natural’, or bad *because* it is ‘unnatural!’” G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (New York, NY: Barnes and Noble Publishing, Inc., 2005), 47.

Tom Regan’s phrase for the ‘appeal to nature’ fallacy is ‘the naturalistic fallacy.’ Regan, 247.

Regan builds sentience into a larger set of traits by virtue of which certain animals (including human beings) are said to be “subjects of a life.” Regan, 81, 245.

Deep ecology is an environmental philosophy that promotes the inherent worth of all living beings, and rejects their instrumental use. It reject anthropocentrism, and embraces biocentrism. It also argues for a restructuring of human societies in accordance with such ideas. Næss, Arne, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement,” *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95-100.

DiCenso, 2011, 155.

A692/B720, as cited in DiCenso, 2011, 155.

Sue McGregor comments that “whereas direct violence and war are very visible, structural violence is almost invisible, embedded in ubiquitous social structures, normalized by stable institutions, and regular experience. Because they are longstanding, structural inequities usually seem ordinary, the way things are and always have been done.” Sue McGregor, “Consumerism as a Source of Structural Violence.”


Veldman et al, 6.


In a lecture titled “Duties to Animals and Spirits” Kant say, “[So] far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as the means to an end. That end is man . . . Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity.” Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*. trans. Louis White Beck, (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1963), 239.


As noted above, the designation of who counts as a moral subject – as an end – is affected by one’s worldview; for Kant, it is only rational beings who count as ends. However, his argument for indirect rights for animals takes on new importance in the context of climate change in two ways: (i) harming animals desensitizes us to harming other human beings, making it easier to be indifferent to the suffering of others who may be harmed by our actions, and conversely, exercising compassion for animals should theoretically increase compassion for humanity (though in practice it does not always do so); and (ii) expanding the scope of moral consideration to nonhuman animals, if it results in decreased consumption of animals, indirectly benefits humanity because animal agriculture is a leading cause of GHG emissions.


It could be argued that the cognitive dissonance experienced by slaughterhouse workers is similar to that experienced by those who worked to murder human beings in an institutional setting: J. Robert Lifton, in *The Nazi Doctors*, refers to the phenomenon of ‘psychological doubling’ to describe the way in which physicians who worked in death camps were able to split their personalities, allowing them to torture and murder human beings whom they regarded as sub-human, then return to their families and play the role of a loving husband and father. Lifton, Robert Jay, *The Nazi Doctors: medical killing and the psychology of genocide*, (New York: Basic Books, 1986). Serial killers and slaughterhouse workers, both of whom harm animals, learn to become hardened to suffering.
There are several types of ‘green capitalism’ according to Kyla Tienhaara: “each suggests a different role for the state in regulating the market and the financial sector (i.e., they suggest different models of capitalism). The proposals can also be distinguished by the positions taken on ecological modernization (i.e., they put forward different models of ‘greenness’). Recognition that there are varieties of green capitalism . . . increases the opportunities for more targeted critiques of each model and enables a more constructive debate about the options for creating sustainable economies in the developed world.” Kyla Tienhaara, “Varieties of green capitalism: economy and environment in the wake of the global financial crisis,” *Environmental Politics.* Volume 23, 2014- Issue 2 (2014): 187-204.

“There are numerous criticisms of cap-and-trade (carbon trading) programs. One major type of criticism is that it does not work. This is an example: if the caps set by a cap-and-trade program are not adequately stringent, these programs may not be environmentally effective even when the caps are met. This article shows that caps in major existing cap-and-trade programs have been "overallocated," with caps often set at levels that require few if any reductions from business-as-usual emissions.” Lesley K. McAllister, “The Overallocation Problem in Cap-and-Trade: Moving Toward Stringency,” *Columbia Journal of Environmental Law,* Vol. 43, 2009. U of Michigan Public Law Working Paper No. 117.


David Hume, *Dialogues concerning natural religion.* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947), 146.

Robert K. Whalen, “Premillennialism” in *The Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements,* Ed. Richard A. Landes (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 331. Chiliasm is Latinized form of Greek *khiliasmos,* from *khilia,* from *khilioi* “a thousand, the number 1,000.” Chiliasm is the doctrine that Christ will reign in bodily presence on earth for one thousand years.

Tillich, 1957, 41-3.

Berry, 131.

Bruce Lincoln notes that after the Cold War, religious activists sought to “reassert religion’s dominating position in culture against the preferences of the postcolonial elites and the secular states they inhabit. Lincoln, Bruce. *Holy terrors: thinking about religion after September 11*. (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2003), xii.


The United States on both a national and per capita basis has been in the top tier of GHG emitters, historically. The U.S. is currently number 2 on a national basis, and number 12 on a per capita basis. Quatar is number 1 on a per capita basis. Currently (as of 2017), China is number 1 on a national basis (between 23 and 39 per cent of global GHG emissions), and number 55 on a per capita basis. “United Nations Millennium Development Goals Indicators.” Accessed April 9, 2017. [mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx](mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx). Even though the United States is now number 2 on the national scale, and 12 on the per capita scale, that country has come to symbolize climate injustice.


Rentmeester, 80.


Berry, 115.


George Monbiot describes a city council in Texas whose members voted to endorse the position that climate change is in fact the result of divine intervention, as prophesied by “end-time doctrine” (dispensationalist theology). George Monbiot, *Bring on the Apocalypse: Essays on Self-Destruction*, (Toronto, ON: Anchor Canada, 2008), 32-63.


What’s notable about both examples above is that dispensationalists used government bodies to lend this position legitimacy, which is indicative of the merger of Dominion and dispensationalist theologies. An example of the application of dispensationalist theology to environmental issues is the influential preaching of pastor John Hagee, who condemns efforts to mitigate global warming by appealing to Biblical literalism. In particular, Hagee refers to a literal reading of Genesis 1:27-28, which emphasizes man’s “dominion” over Creation, as ordained by God. Glenn Beck, “Honest Questions with John Hagee,” CNN. Accessed April 10, 2017. transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0710/12/gb.01.html; and Bill Berkowitz, “Pastor John Hagee Spearheads Christians United for Israel” *Dissident Voice*, April 18, 2006. Accessed April 10, 2017. www.dissidentvoice.org/Apr06/Berkowitz18.htm.

The “pre-millennial [view] is defined as Jesus Christ returning (Second Coming) before his millennial kingdom ensues on earth. The pre-tribulation view is referring to the rapture of the Church (not
the Second Coming) prior to the start of the tribulation period. These views are the most literal approach to prophecy, and are sometimes called the futurist view, which claims there will be a literal future 7-year tribulation period followed by a 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ on earth,” Sound Christian. Accessed April 10, 2017. www.soundchristian.com/prophecy/who/.

383 Ibid.


385 Climate scientists, in 2013, published a study that suggesting that Katrina’s impact on the Gulf Coast was worse as a result of climate change. Climate change resulted, they say, in “significantly more flood damage” in 2005 “than would have occurred if seal level and climate condition had been like those” in 1900. This not to say that anthropogenic climate change caused the hurricane, but rather that it played a role in increasing its impact. Jennifer L. Irish, Alison Sleath, Mary A. Cialone, Thomas R. Knutson, and Robert E. Jenson, “Simulations of Hurricane Katrina (2005) under sea level and climate conditions for 1900,” Climatic Change, Volume 122, Issue 4 (February 2014): 635–649. Accessed April 10, 2017. doi:10.1007/s10584-013-1011-1.


Similarly, Bishop John Shelby Spong, author of Saving The Bible from Fundamentalism, is critical of the dispensationalist attribution of Katrina to God’s wrath for human sin. Froese and Bader, 126-27.

387 According to Donald DeMarco and Benjamin Walker, “Comte's new religion replaced the 'slaves of God' with the 'servants of Humanity'. He considered the former to be 'genuine slaves, subject to the whims of an inscrutable power', and the latter, through the beneficence of positivism, to be rendered 'systematically free.'” Donald DeMarco and Benjamin Wiker, Architects of the Culture of Death, (San Francisco, California: Ignatius Press, 2006).

The authors appear to have paraphrased Comte, who distinguishes between religious persons who see God as having limited power and those who see God as having absolute power. Speaking of religious persons who “worship an absolute Being, whose power is boundless.” Comte writes that “if they were really consistent, they would have to regard themselves as genuine slaves, subject to the whims of an inscrutable power. Positivism alone can make us systematically free, that is to say, subject to known and immutable laws that enfranchise us from personal domination.” In another document Comte refers to “Catholics, Protestants, and deists . . . all the various slaves of God . . . as being both backward and disturbing elements.” Auguste Comte, System of Positive Polity, vol. 4, Longman, Greens, and Company, (1877): 533-4, as cited in Henri de Lubac, The Drama of Atheist Humanism, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1995), 173.


389 Currently (as of 2017), President Donald Trump’s position appears to be one of climate change denial: “Though it’s difficult to pin down exactly what Trump thinks about climate change, he has a well-established track record of skepticism and denial. He has called global warming a “hoax,” insisted while campaigning for the Republican nomination that he’s “not a big believer in man-made climate change,” and recently suggested that “nobody really knows” if climate change exists. Trump also plans to nominate Republicans to lead the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Department who have expressed skepticism toward the scientific agreement on human-caused global warming.” Lucas Jackson, “Donald Trump and the Triumph of Climate-Change Denial” The Atlantic, Dec. 25, 2016. Accessed April 10, 2017. www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/donald-trump-climate-change-skeptic-denial/510359/.
This is a position supported by several U.S. Christian evangelical leaders. The tendency of evangelicals to take this position, and for their position on climate change to affect public policy, is not new. According to an article by Glen Sherer, James Watt, the Secretary of the Interior under former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, said that “we don’t have to protect the environment ... the Second Coming is at hand.” Sherer notes that “the Apocalypse is a powerful driving force in modern American politics.” He cites the figure of “roughly 50 million right-wing fundamentalist Christians in the United States believe in some form of End-Time theology.” As of 2004, “the 231 U.S. legislators who received an average 80 percent approval rating or higher from the leading religious-right organizations made up more than 40 percent of the U.S. Congress. A 2002Time/CNN poll found that 59 percent of Americans believe that the prophecies found in the Book of Revelation are going to come true.” Glen Sherer, “Christian-right views are swaying politicians and threatening the environment,” The Grist, Oct. 2004. Accessed April 10, 2017. grist.org/article/scherer-christian/

395 Neo-Marxist ideology of this kind serves to divide humanity into classes of oppressor and oppressed and envisages a utopian society of “equality” requiring coercive measure to accomplish..Jordan Peterson, “The Marxist Origins of Postmodernism,” Bite-sized Philosophy. Youtube. 2006. Accessed June 3, 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFk4335S2Bs. This is an excerpt of a longer lecture: Jordan Peterson, “Pt 2: Freedom Of Speech/Political Correctness: Part 2 of a 3-part posting from The Speakers Action Group, Sunday, January 22, 2017. Accessed June 3, 2017. www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDRgMUoEvcg. Peterson’s argument is supported by Janice Fiamengo, who cites the academic work of Sandra Lee Bartky, who made use of Foucault’s poststructuralism to argue that women in the late twentieth century west are technically free but still constrained in a variety of ways, through gendered self-regulation. See Sandra Lee Bartky, Sympathy and Solidarity and Other Essays (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) 47. This is a social constructivist view of gender, which Fiamengo says is incorrect because it never considers that there may be biological dimensions of behaviour. Nonetheless, this view has led (she claims) to a “deliberate institutionally enforced reversal of sex roles” through enforcement mechanism and a “steady erosion of autonomy and freedom” for some men in liberal societies. Fiamengo also refers to Frankfurt school thinker Herbert Marcuse, whose essay “Repressive Tolerance” (1965) advocates pathologizing one’s opponent, rather than debating with him or her. Janice Fiamengo, Fiamengo Files, unpublished manuscript.

Gerald L. Atkinson traces the history of cultural Marxism and postmodernism to the Frankfurt school: “Gertrude Himmelfarb has observed that it [postmodernism] slipped past traditional academics almost unobserved until it was too late. It occurred so “quietly” that when they “looked up”, postmodernism was upon them with a vengeance. ‘They were surrounded by such a tidal wave of faddish multicultural subjects such as radical feminism, deconstructed relativism as history and other courses’ which undermine the perpetuation of Western civilization [Gertrude Himmelfarb, Panel on “Academic Reform: Internal Sources,” National Association of Scholars, Sixth General Conference, May 3-5, 1996.] Indeed, this tidal wave slipped by just as Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School had envisioned – a quiet revolution that could not be resisted by force. The Frankfurt School had devised the concept of designating the opponents of the Marxist cultural revolution as ‘authoritarian characters’ ... . Richard Bernstein has written [that] ‘the

communs.wikimania.org/images/William_S_Lind_-_Political_Correctness_A_Short_History_of_an_Ideology_-_Part_V.pdf.

Fiamengo terms this type of thinking “soft totalitarianism” and says that it is implemented by modern day Jacobins under the guise of political correctness. Janice Fiamengo. *Fiamengo Files*, unpublished manuscript.


Gleick.

Reinhold Niebuhr, in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1931), expressed the view that Gandhi’s pacifism was only pragmatic, and that force is warranted in certain situations. Lloyd I. Rudolph, “Gandhi in the Mind of America” in Richard L. Johnson, ed. *Gandhi’s Experiments with Truth: Essential Writings by and about Mahatma Gandhi* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 274. See also Juergensmeyer, 25-6.


One of the scenarios Dyer gives us in *Climate Wars* is Northern India 2036: “India and Pakistan have shared glacier fed rivers for their water supply for decades although otherwise having a periodically hostile relationship. Droughts worsened by climate change, growing populations and increasing consumption have tempted governments to blame the hardships of their peoples on externalities - the neighbours - and forced Pakistan to ration food. After years of fragile peace, a military coup and an attack on a dam escalates into an exchange of nuclear warheads. The result is hundreds of millions of casualties and two devastated countries still ruled by the same governments.”

Gates argues for increased funding to research and development (R & D) to find technological solutions: he “thinks . . . that our best chance to vault over natural gas to a globally applicable, carbon-free source of energy is to drive innovation [i.e., technological solutions] ‘at an unnaturally high pace.’ He supports massive investment in R & D by both the private sector and governments. His analysis is not necessarily incorrect, but it does tend to de-emphasize the role of behavioural change as instrumental in mitigation. Gates says that “The only reason I’m optimistic about this problem is because of innovation.” James Bennet, “We Need an Energy Miracle.”

Stephen Gardiner defines geoengineering as “the intentional manipulation of the environment on a global scale.” He records that in “2006 the climate scientist Paul Crutzen, a Nobel Laureate, reignited the debate by arguing that so far our response to climate change has been so dismal that we should start preparing for the nightmare scenario where we are forced to choose between attempting geoengineering and allowing a catastrophe to occur. In such a scenario, Crutzen claims, geoengineering should be chosen as ‘the lesser evil.’” Gardiner believes we ought to be cautious and examine Crutzen’s presuppositions carefully, including the consideration that his argument for intervention “obscures much of what is at stake . . . including what it means to call something an ‘evil.’” Stephen Gardiner, “Is ‘Arming the Future’ with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil? Some Doubts About the Ethics of Intentionally Manipulating the Climate System” in *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, (New York, NY: Oxford, 2010).

A good example of uncritical faith in the market is the statement by former U.S. president George W. Bush during a time of economic crisis. He stated that while capitalism was "not perfect", it


408 Anthony Giddens says, “There is no overall teleology of history . . . one should disavow evolutionism even where the evolutionary mechanisms identified are non-teleological.” Anthony Giddens, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, Volume 1 (Stanford University Press, 1995), ix.


411 Mike Hulme, Why We Disagree about Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity (Cambridge University Press, 2009).


Berry borrows from the anthropic principle, a theory from the cosmological branch of physics that hypothesizes that the universe is constrained in such a way (e.g. the existence of the cosmological constant), as to allow for the eventual evolution of human existence. According to Wayne Teasdale, “Berry's [version of the] anthropic principle asserts that the universe is arranged for the human reality to emerge ... Berry maintains: 'Creation ... must now be experienced as the emergence of the universe as a psychic-spiritual as well as a material-physical-reality from the beginning. We need to see ourselves as integral with this emergent process, as that being in whom the universe reflects on and celebrates itself.' The anthropic principle places the human reality at the creation, as the goal of the universe itself. The cosmos aims at human self-consciousness.” Wayne Teasdale, The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions, (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2010),197.

413 Against the determinism of these complementary theories (the anthropic principle and anthropocentric evolutionism) is the idea that humanity’s existence is the result of random events, which if true would seem to negate anthropocentrism. Stephen Jay Gould is critical of de Chardin’s interpretation of evolutionary theory for this reason: “Gould spoke strongly against the evolutionary progressivism that is so crucial to the Teilhardian picture” Michael Ruse, Darwinism as Religion: What Literature Tells Us about Evolution, (New York, NY: University of Oxford Press, 2006).

414 Paul Waldau. “Seeing the Terrain We Walk: Features of the Contemporary Landscape of 'Religion and Animals’” in Waldau and Patton, A Communion of Subjects, 40.


416 Franklin, 23.


420 Northcott, 65.


Marc Bekoff. Wild Justice, 1-12.

Franklin, 23.

The argument from marginal cases, also known as the argument from species overlap, argues that if human infants, senile persons, comatose, and cognitively disabled persons have moral status, then nonhuman animals must also have moral status. The point is that intelligence should not be a relevant criterion for establishing moral status. “The Argument from Species Overlap,” Animal Ethics. Accessed April 8, 2017. www.animal-ethics.org/argument-species-overlap/.

Rachels, 53.

Paul Waldau, “Pushing Environmental Justice to a Natural Limit” in A Communion of Subjects, 629-642.

Livestock’s Long Shadow.

Ibid.

Franklin argues that FH should be amended to the effect that sentience, rather than reason, is the proper criterion for establishing moral consideration for individuals as ends. He supports this through the ‘Argument from Marginal Cases.’ Julian Franklin. Animal Rights and Moral Philosophy (New York: Columbia University, 2005), 23.

The dysfunctional cosmology that is currently the operative norm has caused a mass extinction event (the Holocene extinction), which endangers most life forms, including humanity; this mass extinction, unlike the five previous such events on Earth, is a moral issue because it is caused by human beings who choose to create these conditions, motivated by the incentive of self-love above moral considerations.


An example of a philosophical argument against the idea of human rights is from John O. Nelson. In “Against Human Rights” he suggests that human rights discourse is imposed by one culture on another, that it is based on a certain conception of man as a rational being, which is not universal, and that to impose this idea can be genocidal. John O. Nelson, “Against Human Rights” Philosophy, Vol. 65, No. 253 (Jul., 1990): 341-348. Accessed April 9, 2017. www.jstor.org/stable/3751430.

Wesley V. Jamison et al.


Wood, 1999, 111.


It should be noted, as an aside, that many nonhuman animals possess some degree of altruism and a sense of fair play, as documented by a branch of behavioural biology, called animal ethology. Marc Bekoff, Wild Justice, 1-12.
Bekoff argues morality is an evolved trait that human beings share with other social mammals, but it is far from certain that they are rational beings in the sense that we are; it may be the case that some nonhuman animals are sentient beings in whom altruism derives from the instinct of ‘kin selection’ (the instinct to protect an individual’s genetic inheritance). If so, this begs the question of whether morality in human beings derives from kin selection as well; Kant’s answer would be emphatically no, because for him moral decision making originates in reason a priori, in contrast to evolutionary gene selection and instinct, which originates a posteriori. It may also be the case that some in nonhuman animals – such as mammals, marsupials, and birds – some rudimentary form of practical reason exists, but it is not as highly developed as in human beings, due to our more developed cognitive abilities.


Additionally, “The United States Supreme Court, the authors point out, has adopted a ‘functional’ definition of religion: The Court has recognized that in order to determine whether a set of beliefs constitutes a religion, the appropriate focus is not the substance of a person’s belief system (i.e., whether a person believes in a personal God of the Jewish, Christian or Muslim traditions), but rather, what function or role the belief systems play in the person’s life.” Wesley V. Jamison et al.


“More and more firms are engaging in greenwashing, misleading consumers about their environmental performance or the environmental benefits of a product or service. The skyrocketing incidence of greenwashing can have profound negative effects on consumer and investor confidence in green products. Mitigating greenwashing is particularly challenging in a context of limited and uncertain regulation.” Magali A. Delmas and Vanessa Cuerel Burbano, “The Drivers of Greenwashing,” California Management Review, Vol. 54 No. 1 (Fall 2011): 64-87. Accessed June 3, 2017. doi:10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64.


‘Artificial demand’ (or what economist John Kenneth Galbraith calls “the manufacturing of demand for the product”) is a concept from microeconomic theory describing the practice of creating consumer demand for a product that otherwise would not exist. Galbraith was an advocate of the theory that private goods are typically overprovided due to the process of advertising creating artificial demand above


Schmidt and Marrato, 13-14.

Ibid.

The social scientific measurement of happiness plays an important role in steady-state economics, which seems to employ a utilitarian ethic. Tim Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth - The transition to a sustainable economy*, (United Kingdom: Sustainable Consumption & Production, Economics, 2009), 16.

Ibid.

Popper, 224.

Popper, 225.

According to *The Economist*, “The threat to free speech on Western campuses is very different from that faced by atheists in Afghanistan or democrats in China. But when progressive thinkers agree that offensive words should be censored, it helps authoritarian regimes to justify their own much harsher restrictions and intolerant religious groups their violence . . . Free speech is the best defense against bad government.” “Under attack: Curbs on free speech are growing tighter. It is time to speak out.” *The Economist*. June 4, 2016. Accessed June 7, 2017. www.economist.com/news/leaders/21699909-curbs-free-speech-are-growing-tighter-it-time-speak-out-under-attack.


“The U.S. sets a high bar for incitement to violence. In what is known as the “Brandenburg Test” (after the supreme court case of Brandenburg v Ohio) the violence must be intended, likely and imminent. Other mature liberal democracies set the bar lower, criminalizing both more generalized threats of violence and kinds of expression that incite to hatred or hostility. Like everything else to do with free expression, so much depends on context and tone.” Timothy Garton Ash, "No Violence" Free Speech Debate No. 6. *International Debate Education Association*. Accessed on May 4, 2017. freespeechdebate.idebate.org/principle/principle-6/no-violence.


Ibid.

“PC authoritarians are conscientious and likes rules; and has low verbal and cognitive ability. The PC egalitarian, on the other hand, is high in motherly compassion and verbal ability. The PC authoritarian favors censorship and punishment for breaking the rules. The PC egalitarian has high verbal ability and responds positively to the PC authoritarian’s claims of being assaulted by unwelcome speech. She then comes up with post hoc justifications for why the PC-authoritarian’s demands are legitimate.” Richard Cock, “Jordan Peterson’s distinction between PC Egalitarian and PC authoritarian,” *The Orthosphere*, Nov. 5, 2016. Accessed May 30, 2017. orthosphere.wordpress.com/2016/11/05/jordan-petersons-distinction-between-pc-egalitarian-and-pc-authoritarian/. Scott Barry Kaufman. “The Personality of Political Correctness. The idea of political correctness is central to the culture wars of American politics.” *Scientific American*. November 20, 2016. blogs.scientificamerican.com/beautiful-minds/the-personality-of-political-correctness.


Janice Fiamengo, *The Fiamengo Files*, unpublished manuscript.

435
David Pepper also makes the point that social and environmental justice movements can be utopian in character. David Pepper, “Utopianism and Environmentalism,” Environmental Politics, Volume 14, 2005 - Issue 1 (Sept. 8, 2010): 3-22.

468 “In my study of communist societies, I came to the conclusion that the purpose of communist propaganda was not to persuade or convince, not to inform, but to humiliate; and therefore, the less it corresponded to reality the better. When people are forced to remain silent when they are being told the most obvious lies, or even worse when they are forced to repeat the lies themselves, they lose once and for all their sense of probity. To assent to obvious lies is…in some small way to become evil oneself. One’s standing to resist anything is thus eroded, and even destroyed. A society of emasculated liars is easy to control. I think if you examine political correctness, it has the same effect and is intended to.” Jamie Glazov. “Our Culture, What’s Left Of It: Interview with Theodore Dalrymple,” FrontPageMagazine.com August 31, 2005. archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=7445.


470 Popper, 224.


473 Popper, 226.


475 Phyllis Chesler, emerita professor of psychology and women's studies at the Richmond College of the City University of New York, New York, writes that “Islamic gender apartheid is a human rights violation and cannot be justified in the name of cultural relativism, tolerance, anti-racism, diversity, or political correctness. As long as Islamist groups continue to deny, minimize, or obfuscate the problem, and government and police officials accept their inaccurate versions of reality, women will continue to be killed for honor in the West. The battle for women's rights is central to the battle for Europe and for Western values. It is a necessary part of true democracy, along with freedom of religion, tolerance for homosexuals, and freedom of dissent.” Phyllis Chesler, “Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings,” Middle East Quarterly (Spring 2010) 3-11. Accessed May 7, 2017. www.meforum.org/2646/worldwide-trends-in-honor-killings#_ftnref16.

The Canadian government produced a publication titled “Discover Canada” in which the following remark was made: “Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, ‘honour killings,’ female genital mutilation or other gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada's criminal laws.” Prime Minister Trudeau, under duress from critics, subsequently apologized for the term “barbaric cultural practice.”


477 An example of so-called “moderate Muslims” attempting to quell Islamist terrorism is the fatwa (Islamic legal ruling) issued against honour killings, in response to a highly publicized honour killing: The Canadian Press, “Honour killings 'un-Islamic,' fatwa declares in wake of Shafia trial,” The Globe & Mail,
theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw to articulate the theory of intersectionality, which is now widely

According to Andrew Rowell, “third-wave environmentalism is where conflict between the environmental movement and industry is replaced by compromise and co-option. Mark Dowie, in his criticism of the modern-day American environmentalist movement, has also taken issue with this third wave of environmentalism, labelling it ‘essentially anti-democratic’ and the ‘institutionalization of compromise.'” Dowie also alleges that environmental NGOs have alienated the grassroots movements. Andrew Rowell, Green Backlash: Global Subversion of the Environmental Movement (Psychology Press, 1996), 24.

DiCenso, 2012, 158.

KpV 108g 112e, as cited in Wood, 1970, 91.

Catherine M. Bell, Ritual theory, ritual practice, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 91, 102, 123.


An example of a violent protest is the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty protest of 2000, in Toronto. Many Black Lives Matter and anti-globalization protests have turned violent as well, resulting in clashes with police.


Historically, the “climate justice movement diverged according to two separate discourses - one around ‘climate debt’ and another around anti-capitalist critique” - Bertie Thomas Russell "Interrogating the Post-Political: The Case of Radical Climate and Climate Justice Movements" 2012 University of Leeds, UKSchlembach 2011: 197, 212). Russell, 2-4.


Angela Davis, of the Black Panthers, advocated violent revolution, against capitalism, based on a Marxist model which incorporated race and gender politics, seeing them all as connected. This inspired theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw to articulate the theory of intersectionality, which is now widely

497 The ‘radical climate movement’ was not therefore a straightforward environmental movement against climate change; rather, the participants were arguably ‘united in a feeling of’ belonging to a broader, and global, anti-capitalist social movement (Schlembach 2011: 197). Russell, 2.

www.democracynow.org/2009/12/14/indigenous_leaders_at_the_frontline_of

499 Klein’s book and film This Changes Everything (2014, 2015) both call for militant blockades. 350.org, like Greenpeace, regularly engages in civil disobedience actions. The distinction between nonviolent and potentially violent resistance movements is blurred unless principles of nonviolence are strictly adhered to, which requires an ethical framework that neo-Marxist groups typically lack. The reason that the early civil rights movement in the U.S. was able to consistently maintain a nonviolent strategy, it can be argued, is due to the conscious adoption of Gandhian and Christian social gospel values. Both Gandhian and social gospel philosophies have a transcendent element borrowed from traditional religions. This is lacking in the neo-Marxist worldview. The closest that Klein and McKibben come to deliberate adoption of a spiritual worldview is through their alliance with indigenous activists and the use of Mother Earth imagery, but the latter is also strongly influenced by neo-Marxism, as reflected in the language of revolutionary resistance against capitalism and colonialism.

500 Klein draws parallels between Marx’s thought and feminism. Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate (Simone & Schuster, 2014), 177.


503 Loy, 283.


505 The history of the connection between Marxism and intersectionality theory can be traced back to Franz Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth (196_), which brings together anticolonial, gender, race, and anticapitalist, explicitly Marxism theory. Black Panther member Angela Davis also brought these ideas together to argue for violent revolution to overthrow what she regarded as a patriarchal racist capitalist culture. “She believed that power relationships which placed Black people at the bottom stemmed from the use of racism as a tool of the economically ascendant class — the capitalists.” 505 Black feminist and Marxist academic Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, inspired by Davis, coined the term “intersectionality,” to describe “to describe overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.” See Patricia H. Collins, “Intersectionality’s Definitional Dilemmas” Annual Review of Sociology 41 (2015): 1–20. Intersectionality is now become widely adopted by the climate justice movement and other social justice protest movements as an ethical framework (ibid).

506 350.org, Canadian Youth Climate Coalition, Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network.

507 The idea that confessions of guilt, based on race or gender, within social justice movements can be considered similar to religious self-flagellation and confessions of sin has been explored in numerous articles. These include, for example, Stephen D’Arcy, “Self-exoneration via Self-flagellation: The structure of neoliberal guilt,” Public Autonomy, Nov. 27, 2015, publicautonomy.org/2015/11/27/neoliberal-guilt; and Angela Nagle, “The Scourge of Self-flagellating Politics,” Current Affairs, Jan. 26, 2017, 
For a deeper insight into phenomenon, Robert Jay Lifton, in *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, explores the psychology of ritual confessions within Communist China. He says that this book is meant "to provide principles of a general kind, criteria for evaluating any environment in relationship to ideological totalism. Such patterns are all too readily embraced by a great variety of groups, large and small, as a means of manipulating human beings, always in the name of a higher purpose." Theoretically, then, this pattern is applicable to the phenomenon of ritualized confessions of white or male guilt in social activist settings. Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of 'brainwashing' in China* (UNC Press Books, 2012), viii.

Lifton says that ritual confessions are part of a larger patter of "ideological totalism" and "thought reform" that "appeal to inner enthusiasm through evangelistic exhortation." (13) He says that "what we see as a set of coercive measures, the Chinese Communists view as a morally uplifting, harmonizing, and scientifically therapeutic experience." (15) The two basic elements of this pattern are (i) confession, and (ii) re-education (5). In addition to Communism, Lifton also notes the thought reform efforts in Nazi Germany, as well as the rise of religious fundamentalism and "end-times" theology. He describes ritual confessions during McCarthyism in terms of "a ruthless exploitation of ostracism and shame; a cult of confession and repentance; a stress upon self-betrayal and a bond of betrayal between accusers and accused; the creation of a mythological doctrine . . . and the demand that victims take on a new identity in accordance with this myth." (47) He refers to McCarthyism as "the search for heresy" characteristic of a "political religion." (ibid). There is a similar pattern within law enforcement in the form of the false confession, explored by Douglas L. Keene and Rita R. Handrich in "Only the Guilty Would Confess to Crimes": *Understanding the Mystery of False Confessions,* The Jury Expert, 2012, www.thejuryexpert.com/2012/11/only-the-guilty-would-confess-to-crimes%E2%80%80-understanding-the-mystery-of-false-confessions/.

For social justice activists, most thought reform and ritual confessions occur within the context of public speaking at anti-oppression training workshops, but this process is considered so important that guidelines for self-directed thought reform within a social justice context have been posted online as well. They can be found here: "Organizing for Power": /organizingforpower.org/anti-oppression-resources-exercises/.


509 Lalich.


512 An example of a campaign to shut down other activists was the effort of anti-racist activists against a group of the animal rights movement. Wayne Hsiung, one of the founders of that movement, defended it against allegations of racism, and wrote the following piece, comparing his ordeal to that of victims of the Red Guard during the Chinese Cultural Revolution: Wayne Hsiung, "How the Red Guards Destroyed my Family." *Direct Action Everywhere*. Accessed May 7, 2017. www.directactioneverywhere.com/theliberationist/2015/12/27/how-the-red-guards-destroyed-my-family.

513 Probabilism: "the principle that the mere opinion that an action may well be right [as] sufficient for undertaking it" (R, 6:185).

514 Groupthink is a term coined by psychologist Irving Janis (1972), and used by psychologists to describe the way in which a group of people seek social conformity from similar thought processes. “It occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because group pressures lead to a deterioration of ‘mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgement.’ Groups affected by groupthink ignore alternatives and tend to take irrational actions that dehumanize other groups. A group is especially vulnerable to groupthink when its members are similar in background, when the group is insulated from outside opinions, and when there are no clear rules for decision making.” Janis, Irving L, *Victims of Groupthink,* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, and Janis, 1972); L. Irving, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes.* Second Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 9.
Groupthink is an influential idea in social psychology. Decision making groups are most likely to experience groupthink when they are highly cohesive, insulated from experts, perform limited search and appraisal of information, and operate under directed leadership. Groupthink minimizes conflict, but at the expense of critical evaluation of alternative viewpoints, either suppressing dissenting viewpoints or by socializing isolating those who have them. This requires individuals to avoid raising controversial issues or alternative solutions. The group dynamics of the ‘ingroup’ produces an “illusion of invulnerability” (an inflated certainty that the right decision has been made). Thus the ‘ingroup’ significantly overrates its own abilities in decision-making and significantly underrates the abilities of its opponents (the ‘outgroup’). Furthermore, groupthink can produce dehumanizing actions against the ‘outgroup.’


Janice Fiamengo, *Fiamengo Files*, unpublished manuscript.


Juergensmeyer, 153.


Hook.


NB - Militant political groups in Canada that could be described as cultural Marxists include Black Lives Matter, No One Is Illegal, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), and International Socialists. Additionally there are a number of unions and non-profit organizations that profit from this militancy, to feed their political base with impassioned young people, and to use the militancy of these groups as a political tool to make themselves appear moderate, which allows them to gain greater funding and political concessions: Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Forest Ethics, and 350.org are among the environmental NGOs that follow this pattern.


For example, 350.org, which is the largest and most well-funded climate justice activist movement in the world, has implicitly adopted an anti-oppression “intersectional” framework, patterned after agonistic cultural Marxism, “in solidarity” with “oppressed” groups. 350.org embraces intersectionality ideology: Majandra Rodriguez, “Facing climate change through justice and intersectionality.” 350.org. Accessed June 5, 2017. www.350.org/facing-climate-change-through-justice-and-intersectionality/. In practice, this could be interpreted to mean the adoption of a collective identity, based on groupthink, and rejecting apostates in the movement, i.e. those deemed to stand outside the group ideologically, even if they accept the same climate mitigation goals. May Boeve of 350.org writes that “We’ve incorporated stronger intersectional analysis into our training curriculum, action and campaign plans” in May Boeve, “350.org Endorses the Movement for Black Lives Platform,” 350.org Accessed June 5, 2017. 350.org/350-org-endorse-the-movement-for-black-lives-platform/.

There are also more explicitly socialist groups advocating for climate justice through violent revolutionary means, and which include intersectional ideology as part of that. Michael Ware, “Toward an anticapitalist climate justice movement.” International Socialist Review. Accessed June 5, 2017. isreview.org/issue/94/toward-anticapitalist-climate-justice-movement. There are also efforts by scholars to marry intersectional ideology and the ideal of climate justice, e.g. Anna Kaijser and Annica Kronsell, “Climate change through the lens of intersectionality,” Environmental Politics. Volume 23, 2014 - Issue 3 (Oct. 2013): 417-433.

Clare Saunders, Environmental Networks and Social Movement Theory (A&C Black, 2013).

Lyman Tower Sargent argues that anti-utopians believe that utopians will often resort to violent force: “When a convinced utopian tries to build utopia, conflict will arise because, failing to achieve utopia, he or she will use force . . . because people question the desirability of the utopia or because there is disharmony between the perfect blueprint and the imperfect people. Utopians will not, and cannot, give up the vision . . .” Sargent refers to Karl Popper as the best known exponent of this view. Lyman Tower Sargent, “Authority & Utopia: Utopianism in Political Thought,” Polity. Vol. 14, No. 4 (Summer, 1982): 565-584.

Juergensmeyer, 183.

David J. Garrow documents the way in which King’s actions led to legislative reform, and that he was opposed to the violent militancy of the Black Power movement. David J. Garrow. Bearing the Cross, (Chicago, Ill: Open Road Media, 2015).


Juergensmeyer, 12, 228.


“. . . we can predict the effects of climate change on migration by exploring the effects of environmental problems on migration in recent decades . . . People living in lesser developed countries may be more likely to leave affected areas, which may cause conflict in receiving areas.” Rafael Reuveny, “Climate change-induced migration and violent conflict” Political Geography. Volume 26, Issue 6 (August 2007): 656–673. Accessed April 10, 2017. www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629807000601.


The “invisible subject” is a phrase similar to another phrase that Carol Adams is well-known for: the “absent referent.” Carol J. Adams, “A Very Rare and Difficult Thing” in Waldau and Patton, A Communion of Subjects, 591-603.


Adorno and Horkheimer, 68.

E, 8:36, as quoted in DiCenso, 2011, 51.


DiCenso, 2011. 20.


Zero-sum humanism anthropocentrism” is a form of anthropocentrism in which there are no limits set on the use of the nonhuman world as a means to an end. Paul Shepard, Coming Home to the Pleistocene, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1996).


DiCenso, 2011, 49.

DiCenso, 2011, 50.


The documentary film Cowspiracy (2014) addresses this issue directly. The narrator of the film says, ‘I went to the nation's largest environmental organizations' websites: 350.org, Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Climate Reality, Rainforest Action Network, Amazon Watch – and was shocked to see they had virtually nothing on animal agriculture. What was going on? Why would they not have this information on there?” Script of Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret, Accessed May 3, 2017. www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=cowspiracy-the-sustainability-secret.


Ahmed’s thesis is that in secular societies, discontent is no longer given a spiritual framework (as it once was in religious societies), and is instead understood psychologically. The form this takes is that “we are increasingly likely to see psychological harm and project that harm onto the outside world.” This tendency, he argues, may account for the rise of “resentment-based political movements, including Islamic extremism and radical feminism. They all have a basis of truth but the personal failures and resentments [of individuals] start getting projected outwardly.” A result is that our society increasingly frames people not as resilient but as vulnerable, and minority groups in particular become “the new sacred, and speaking out against them is the new blasphemy.” This new worldview has had the effect of infringing on personal freedoms (namely freedom of speech), and “has given rise to movements based on the primacy of feelings and personal testimony over objective reason.” Tanveer Ahmed, Fragile Nation: Vulnerability, Resilience and Victimhood (Connor Court Pub, 2016).


Popper, 265.


“The Zeitgeist Movement is a global sustainability activist movement presenting the case for the needed transition out of our current unsustainable economic model and into a new sustainable socioeconomic paradigm based on using the best that science and technology have to offer to maximize human, animal and environmental well-being in accordance with the natural world.” thezeitgeistmovement.com/


DiCenso, 2011, 134.

A534/B562, as quoted in DiCenso, 2011, 134.


Ibid.


Ibid.


For example, Elie Wiesel in *Night* (p. 41), about the Holocaust, says “Don’t lose hope… Have faith in life… Help each other. That is the only way to survive.”

“It is precisely in the case of horrendous ideas that the right of free expression must be most vigorously defended; it is easy enough to defend free expression for those who require no such defense.”

443


584 Appleby, 57.

585 Appleby, 121.


589 Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, Merchants of doubt: how a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming, (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).

According to James Hansen, Exxon Mobil executives told him that ‘we have to give customers what they will buy, and they want higher performance and larger vehicles.’ That evening I noticed several television advertisements showing huge vehicles parked atop mountain peaks . . . This led me to question how much of the desire for size and performance really originated with the customers.” James Hansen, Storms of My Grandchildren. (London UK: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2009), 23. NB - Hansen’s observation reveals the fact that demand is manufactured, which could be thought of as another form of heteronomy.


591 A good example of “blaming the rich” is Herve Kempf, How The Rich Are Destroying the Earth, (UK: Green Books, 2008).


593 Chenoweth and Stephan.


596 GR 4:436, 438, as quoted in Wood, 1999, 166.

597 Gwynne Dyer, Climate Wars: the fight for survival as the world overheats, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010).


‘Asymptoticality’ is a mathematics term that describes the state of a variable as it approaches a limit, usually infinity, and is said to become increasingly exact in its approach. One can speak of growing towards certainty. The term is used in quantum physics, and is also adopted by philosophers; Robert W. Batterman provides an explanation of the latter use. Robert W. Batterman, *The Devil in the Details: Asymptotic Reasoning in Explanation, Reduction and Emergence*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001).


Ibid.


Extraction industries (e.g. minerals, forestry, fossil fuels) tend to last for the duration of one generation of workers in a specific area, then leave, because the natural resource in that area is exhausted. Workers lose employment at this point, and the local ecology is damaged by acid mine waste, oil spills, deforestation, water pollution, loss of arable land, or other side-effects of the extraction process. This pattern has been documented by Mining Watch Canada in its publications (miningwatch.ca/publications). For example, in some African mining projects, after the gold has been extracted, the company leaves, and is under no legal obligation to remediate mine tailings. “The Cost of Gold: Environmental, Health, and Human Rights Consequences of Gold Mining in South Africa's West and Central Rand,” International Human Rights Clinic, Harvard Law School. Oct. 2016, 82. Accessed May, 2017. hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-Cost-of-Gold-Full-Report-Final.pdf


DiCenso, 2011, 142.


While the definitions of *moksha* and *Nibbana* vary, due to the enormous diversity of forms of Hinduism and Buddhism, they have been defined in one instance as “that perfect happiness comes when one's evil desires have been extinguished” and in another as “the highest state.” Willard G. Oxtoby, ed.,
The lives of great figures are often sorted into categories of ‘public’ and ‘private’ . . . The Martin Luther King, Jr. captured in myth has little or no resemblance to the real person who walked this earth, who had human needs, and who made human choices.” Lewis V. Baldwin, *Behind the Public Veil: The Humanness of Martin Luther King Jr.* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2016), 6. David J. Garrow also mentions this phenomenon in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* (Chicago, Ill: Open Road Media, 2015).

DiCenso, 2011, 245.

David J. Garrow also mentions this phenomenon in David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* (Chicago, Ill: Open Road Media, 2015).

Kant’s understanding of perfection, it should be added, is more positive: it is using to describe approximation to obligation and the goodness of the good will itself. See Wood, 1999, 161.


The controversy over this issue (migrants and open borders) arose because of fears that migrants (particular Muslim migrants) would eventually displace white Europeans and their culture, whose rate of reproduction is relatively low compared to that of migrants. The recent German experiment in mass migration is testing the degree to which Europeans can tolerate mass migration from Africa and the Middle East, and this is true also of other nations such as England, Denmark, France, and Sweden – largely due to the fact that the newcomers bring with them a radically different set of values and have no compulsion to assimilate. This has led to the rise of cultural relativism in these nations in response to criticism of alleged human rights violations. See Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017). For a further discussion on these issues see Section 3.2 of this thesis.

Variations on the slogan are “what would Jesus drive?” and “what would Jesus eat?” The implication is that Jesus, acting in accordance with his own ethical teachings, would not condone an unethical way of life. In terms of food, theologian Andrew Linzey, say that Jesus would not eat animal-based foods, because a plant-based diet is most consistent with environmental sustainability. However, this type of argument is susceptible to heteronomy: one can as easily say that if Jesus ate fish, it is ethically permissible to do so.


Tillich, 1957, 41.
S. J. Gould, in *The Mismeasure of Man*, documents the rise of racism in science, providing an insight into how hierarchical and inegalitarian worldviews can be grafted or superimposed onto empirical science, thereby turning it into a vehicle for the advancement of parochial interests. Stephen Jay Gould. *The Mismeasure of Man* (W.W. Norton & Company 1996).


Ibid.

Ibid.

Juergensmeyer, 169.

Juergensmeyer, 153.

Juergensmeyer discusses the Christian identity movement, which includes elements of white supremacy. The practitioners see the United Nations and United States as demonic, the Antichrist. It is a grand religious vision, justifying a response to what is seen as a vast pattern or repression by secular and satanic forces. America and the world hangs in the balance, and the practitioners cast themselves in the heroic role of those doing God's work, to defeat evil. This cosmic war is something to which they commit their entire being, and what might seem like random or unimportant historical events are interpreted as ominous signs and portents (e.g. climate change, events in the Middle East). Importantly, in terms of ethical implications, those who are the side of evil are viewed as themselves wholly evil, and their annihilation desirable. A militant violent example is abortion clinic terrorist Paul Hill, who murdered two people, and was himself eventually executed by the state. Juergensmeyer, 23.

Juergensmeyer, 167.

Juergensmeyer, 164.

Omar Safi, in *Progressive Muslims*, writes, “We [i.e. progressive Muslims] hold that some interpretations of Islam in both the past and the present have been part of the problem. We also assert that ongoing interpretations and implementations of Islamic ethics guided by justice and pluralism can be part of the solution. To introduce an Islamic term, one might state that the progressive Muslim project represents an ongoing attempt at Islamic jihad, or committed critical thinking based on disciplined but independent reasoning, to come up with solutions to new problems. This progressive jihad is our jihad.” This can be contrasted with jihad as ‘holy war’ against external forces, militarily, and jihad as ‘the inner struggle against one’s own selfish tendencies.’” Omar Safi, *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism*. Oneworld Publications, 2003. Also see Stewart Bell. “Wage jihad against jihadism: ‘Progressive’ Muslims eager to reach out to radicalized youth in Canada.” *National Post*. November 23, 2014. Accessed May, 2017. news.nationalpost.com/news/wage-jihad-against-jihadism-progressives-earng-eager-to-reach-out-to-radicalized-youth-in-canada.


Ibid.

Gould, 142.

“Social scientists and biologists are learning that there is more to cooperation and generosity in both human and nonhuman group-living animals than an investment in one’s own nepotistic patch of DNA. Research in a great diversity of scientific disciplines is revealing that there are many biological and behavioral mechanisms that humans and nonhuman primates use to reinforce pro-social or cooperative behavior. For example, there are specific neurobiological and hormonal mechanisms that support social behavior. There are also psychological, psychiatric, and cultural mechanisms.” Robert W. Sussman and C. Robert Cloninger, eds. *Origins of Altruism and Cooperation*. (Berlin, Germany: Springer. 2011), vii.

Tillich, 1957, 23.


Wood, 1999, 324.


Wood, 1999, 140.

John L. Brook, Climate Change and the Course of Global History: A Rough Journey (Cambridge University Press, 2014).


Girard.

DiCenso, 2012, 70.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

The ‘healthy-minded’ mindset is a “way of feeling happy about things immediately. In its systematical variety, it is an abstract way of conceiving things as good. Every abstract way of conceiving things selects some one aspect of them as their essence for the time being, and disregards the other aspects.” James, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience A Study in Human Nature, (Lanham: Dancing Unicorn Books, 2017). Accessed April 10, 2017.


www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2008/mar/01/scienceofclimatechange.climatechange.

The decreasing effectiveness of climate mitigation efforts, if delayed, is sometimes summarized in terms of cost for mitigation efforts: “An analysis of research on the cost of delay for hitting a specified climate target (typically, a given concentration of greenhouse gases) suggests that net mitigation costs increase, on average, by approximately 40 percent for each decade of delay. These costs are higher for more aggressive climate goals: each year of delay means more CO2 emissions, so it becomes increasingly difficult, or even infeasible, to hit a climate target that is likely to yield only moderate temperature increases.” “The cost of delaying action to stem climate change,” Executive Office of the President of the United States, July 2014. Accessed April 10, 2017.


The Stern Report also concludes that mitigation delays increase cost. Yet another report that says the same is this one: “The expected cost of delaying optimal policy in the face of tipping . . . is comparable to the annual output of several large nations . . . delaying optimal policy in the face of irreversible tipping points is very costly.” Derek Lemoinea and Christian P. Traegerb, “Playing the Climate Dominoes: Tipping
www.berkeley.edu/~traeger/pdf/Lemoine%20Traeger_Tipping%20Domino.pdf


674 Juergensmeyer, 188.


676 Adelman, 178.

677 DiCenso, 2011, 36.


679 DiCenso, 2011, 255.


682 “It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. . . . The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, 22-25. Accessed May 24, 2017.


684 Huntington, 26.


686 The American founding fathers, primarily Enlightenment thinkers and deists, rejected traditional religious dogma, and embraced rational religion. For example, The Treaty of Tripoli states that “The government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.” Thomas Jefferson edited out any supernatural elements from the Synoptic Gospels, retaining only those elements that has ethical value, which resulted in the Jefferson Bible. Jefferson said “In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own” (letter to Horatio G. Spafford, March 17, 1814). Lester J. Cappon, ed, The Adams-Jefferson Letters, Vol. 2, (The University of North Carolina Press, 1959).


Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was a moderate reformer, but his interpretation of jihad, which is strictly limited to the self-defense of the Muslim community against military aggression, has been interpreted in the modern era as the necessity for armed conflict. “Contemporary extremists like Osama bin Laden do not have their origins in Wahhabism . . . the militant stance of contemporary jihadism lies in adherence to the writings of the medieval scholar, Ibn Taymiyya, and the 20th century Egyptian radical, Sayyid Qutb.” Natana J. Delong-Bas, Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 384.


People with atheist and agnostic beliefs find a supportive community in our congregations. We are pro-science, pro-reason, and pro-Evolution. We know there is no ‘one right answer’ when it comes to belief, and we don't let that stop us from taking action for a better world.” “Atheist and Agnostic Unitarian Universalists” Unitarian Universalist Association. Accessed May 24, 2017. www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/beliefs/atheist-agnostic.

Edward Burtynsky's film Manufactured Landscapes, “has the power to make us look beyond the beauty of his images and see the big picture of the issues at stake: the impact of mass production and mass consumption in which we all take part. The film also forces us to think about the role of the artist in society as either aesthete or truth teller.” Gerda Cammaer, “Edward Burtynsky's Manufactured Landscapes: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Creating Moving Still Images and Stilling Moving Images of Ecological Disasters,” Environmental Communication, Volume 3, Issue 1 (March 11, 2009): 121-130.
Berry, 107.


An example of environmentally focused misanthropy is this statement: “If you haven’t given voluntary human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But, if you give it a chance, I think you might agree that the extinction of Homo Sapiens would mean survival for millions, if not billions, of Earth-dwelling species . . . Phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social and environmental.” Les U. Knight (a pseudonym), “Voluntary Human Extinction,” Wild Earth, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1991), 72. And another example of such a statement is from Ingrid Newkirk, founder of the non-profit, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), who allegedly said “Humans have grown like a cancer. We’re the biggest blight on the face of the earth.” She stopped short of advocating voluntary human extinction. (Washingtonian Magazine, February 1, 1990). In another example, a charge of misanthropy was made against the environmental journal Earth First! in response to an article by someone using the nom de plume ‘Mis Ann Thropy’ writing in 1987 in support of human extinction. Douglas Lloyd Bevington, “Strategic Experimentation and Stigmatization in Earth First!” in Erich Good, D. Angus Vail, eds., Extreme Deviance, (Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008). 191. The term social ecology is often associated with author Murray Bookchin, who argues for “a reconstructive, ecological, communitarian, and ethical approach to society.” Murray Bookchin, The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy, (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 85-7; Botzler and Armstrong, 410. Martin Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays (Harper & Row (1977).

According to the online article “The Influence of Teilhard” (author unknown), “Berry appreciated the significant contribution of Teilhard’s ‘consciousness of vision.’ He affirmed Teilhard’s re-orientation of human consciousness within evolution rather than seeing consciousness as an aberrant development located within humans alone. Moreover, he took from Teilhard the powerful insight that the history of the human is the history of the cosmos, and that history is not finished in some past creation story, but has continued as cosmogenesis, an ongoing creative process.” “The Influence of Teilhard,” Thomasberry.org. Accessed May 6, 2017. thomasberry.org/life-and-thought/about-thomas-berry/the-influence-of-teilhard.

Ibid.


Tillich, 12; Berger, 87.

Wood, 1999, 118.

DiCenzo, 2012, 47.

Garvey, 81.

“Virtue signaling is the conspicuous expression of moral values by an individual done primarily with the intent of enhancing that person's standing within a social group. The term was first used in signaling theory, to describe any behavior that could be used to signal virtue – especially piety among the political or religious faithful.” Becky Pemberton, “What is virtue signaling?” The Sun, January 25, 2017. Accessed June 8, 2017. www.thesun.co.uk/living/2701968/virtue-signalling-meaning-origin-examples/.


Economic freedom is “freedom to produce, trade and consume any goods and services acquired without the use of force, fraud or theft. This is embodied in the rule of law, property rights and freedom of contract, and characterized by external and internal openness of the markets, the protection of property rights and freedom of economic initiative.” Martin Bronfenbrenner, “Two Concepts of Economic Freedom” *Ethics* 65 (3) (1955): 157–70. Accessed May 7, 2017. doi:10.1086/290998.


The National Academy of Sciences published a study that concludes: “Growing consumption can cause major environmental damage. This is becoming specially significant through the emergence of over 1 billion new consumers, people in 17 developing and three transition countries with an aggregate spending capacity, in purchasing power parity terms, to match that of the U.S. Two of their consumption activities have sizeable environmental impacts. First is a diet based strongly on meat, which, because it is increasingly raised in part on grain, puts pressure on limited irrigation water and international grain supplies. Second, these new consumers possess over one-fifth of the world’s cars, a proportion that is rising rapidly.” Norman Myers and Jennifer Kent, “New consumers: The influence of affluence on the environment,” *National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 100 No. 8, Dec. 31, 2002: 4963–4968. Accessed May 9, 2017. doi: 10.1073/pnas.0438061100.


The area of sports studies includes theories of social formation that liken sports subcultures to the same types of social formations that occur within religious groups. Brian Gerard Miltion, *Sport as a Functional Equivalent of Religion.* (Wisconsin, MI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1972).

There is also the approach that defined religion through ritual theory, which gives credence to the theory that raves and sports could be thought of as types of religious or spiritual experience. Graham St. John, *Rave Culture and Religion,* (London, UK: Routledge, 2004).

Rene Girard argues that “there is a common denominator that determines the efficacy of all sacrifices . . . internal violence-- all the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric. Everything else derives from that. If once we take this fundamental approach to the sacrifice . . . we can see that there is no aspect of human existence foreign to the subject, not even material prosperity.” Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred.* Translated by Patrick Gregory. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).


David Hume, as quoted in DiCenzo, 41.


Corrigan, 7-9.


Ibid.


“The existence of an institution where unorthodox ideas, alternative modes of thinking and living, and radical prescriptions for social ills can be debated contributes immensely to social and political change and the advancement of human rights both inside and outside the University. Often this debate may generate controversy and disputes among members of the University and of the wider community. In such cases, the University's primary obligation is to protect the free speech of all involved. The University must allow the fullest range of debate. It should not limit that debate by preordaining conclusions, or punishing or inhibiting the reasonable exercise of free speech.” “Statement on Freedom of Speech” University of Toronto Governing Council, May 28, 1992. Accessed May 24, 2017. www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/frspeech.htm.


Grant argues that computers lock the user into a way of thinking that is bound up with a wider political and economic agenda. Computers tend to hide the fact that “their very capabilities entail that the ways they can be used are never neutral.” George Grant, “The Computer Does Not Impose On Us The Ways It Should Be Used,” in Abraham Rotstein, ed., Beyond Industrial Growth (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 117-31.


Wood, 1999, 156.

Frederick Rauscher, Naturalism and Realism in Kant's Ethics (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 152.

Rauscher, 155.

Rauscher, 152.

Ibid.

Scharper, Redeeming the Time, 92.

Rauscher, 149.

Rauscher, 151.

Rauscher, 150.

Ibid.

Hans Vaihinger, Die Philosophie des Als-Ob (1911 reprint), 2, as quoted in Rauscher, 150.

It seems highly probable that the first religious experiences were in relation to the natural world. A numinous experience of nature as sublime does not denote the existence of the supernatural. What it does
indicate is a certain cognitive and emotive trait. Morality is another trait that we share, one that may in all likelihood has evolutionary origins. Other mammals demonstrate altruism and a capacity for kinship and sociality. Human beings, as members of the Animal Kingdom, share these traits, but in our use of reason, and in the particular the way it can be amplified through supersensible cognition and implemented by technology, we seem to be unique, as least on this planet.

779 Rauscher, 151. Kant’s late understanding of God as being created by men could be explained as follows: the infinity of space and time stimulate in us a conception of God as Creator, but this is really only a concept used to represent the natural world, which is infinite in scope and thus difficult to comprehend without the use of such concepts. It is easy to mistake this concept for something supernatural.

780 DiCenso, 2011, 16.
784 A633/B661, as cited in DiCenso, 2011, 130.
785 Ibid.
786 DiCenso, 2011, 131.
787 The study of “neurotheology” is the neurological study of religious and spiritual experiences, pioneered, among others, by Andrew Newberg, who says “the brain has two primary functions that can be considered from either a biological or evolutionary perspective. These two functions are self-maintenance and self-transcendence. The brain performs both these functions throughout our lives. It turns out that religion also performs these two same functions. So, from the brain's perspective, religion is a wonderful tool because religion helps the brain perform its primary functions. Unless the human brain undergoes some fundamental change in its function, religion and God will be here for a very long time.” Andrew B. Newberg, Principles of Neurotheology (London, UK: Routledge, 2016).
790 The concept of "the state of nature" was used by several Enlightenment philosophers, including Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. Hobbes called it "the natural condition of mankind." Because human beings are roughly equally in ability, this puts humanity into a state of competition, or "war" for self-preservation, rendering the life of primitives "poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan. 1651. Edwin Curley, Ed., (Hackett Publishing, 1994).
792 There are several eco-socialists who have written against behavioural change (including ethical consumerism and veganism) as solutions for the climate crisis, arguing that behavioral change is ineffective and that it may be regarded as distinct from structural or systemic change, which they believe can only happen as a result of the fall of capitalism. An example is Ian Angus, “Film Review: Are cows destroying the climate?” Climate & Capitalism, Dec. 12, 2015. Accessed June 8, 2017.
793 Maia Szalavitz, in Time Magazine, writes that “although Hurricane Katrina brought awful (and frequently false) rumors of horrific crimes, the experience for most people during the immediate crisis was one of coming together.” She cites a 2008 study which concludes: “While there were well-documented instances of brutal hijacking, rioting, and looting in New Orleans after the deep flooding caused by the

The study in question says that it is a myth to say that “Disasters bring out the worst in people (e.g., looting, rioting)” and states, as a corrective the “fact” that “while there are isolated cases of antisocial behavior, which tend to be highlighted by the media, most people respond positively and generously . . .” Binu Jacob, Anthony R. Mawson, Marinelle Payton, and John C. Guignard, “Disaster Mythology and Fact: Hurricane Katrina and Social Attachment,” *Public Health Report*, 123(5), PMCID: PMC2496928, (September-October, 2008): 555–566. Accessed May 6, 2017.  

Northcott, 63. 

794 Northcott, 63. 

795 Northcott, 63. 

796 DiCenso, 2011, 22. 

797 Wood, as quoted in DiCenso, 2011, 174-5. 


800 DiCenso, 2011, 175. 


802 “Lived reality” is a term borrow from women's studies that carries with it an implicit moral judgement regarding worldviews that ignore “lived reality.” 


807 If an oil company has marginally more sustainable practices than all others, it can be deemed an “ethical investment” company, through the “best-of-sector” approach, even if oil, as a product, can never be considered sustainable. Guy Dixon of the *Globe & Mail* comments on this type of ethic: “Is this best-of-sector analysis good enough? Will some investors instead see it as picking ‘the least worst,’ and not a path to halting poor environmental or social behaviour? The best-of-sector approach is acceptable only ‘if there’s a zero target after X number of years,’ said Cedric Dawkins, associate professor and a specialist in business
ethics at Dalhousie University’s Rowe School of Business. There should be a clear goal of stopping the transgression in a specified period of time, he says, ‘otherwise, you’re just being co-opted into waiting,’ and not eliminating the problem, he said.” Guy Dixon. “‘Ethical’ investors embrace a new yardstick,” Globe & Mail, March 6, 2015. Accessed May 6, 2017. www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/ethical-investors-embrace-a-new-yardstick/article23333848/.


809 Monolithic conceptions of religion can be traced to colonial-era religious scholars, who classified the world religion. Sharada Sugirtharajah, Imagining Hinduism: A Postcolonial Perspective, (Routledge, 2004) xi.

810 Asad, 42.

811 Asad, 48.

812 Asad, 42.

813 This is not to say that morality did not originate within an historical context, perhaps as an evolutionary response that better ensured individual or group survival (e.g., kin selection), or that moral norms are not shaped by historical forces (since clearly they are); rather, it is an assertion of Kant’s ahistorical conception of the will. See 4.0 of this thesis.

814 Asad, 17.

815 There are numerous essays that take issue with Kant’s position on a number of issues, including colonialism. The following text explores “the notable tendency to focus moral disapprobation on Kant, who is made to stand in for the shortcoming of Enlightenment rationalism, universalism, imperialism …” Katrin Flikschuh and Lea Ypi, Kant and Colonialism, Historical and Critical Perspectives, (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 2.


817 Danton during his trial, after the French Revolution (1789), is reputed to have said “the revolution, like Saturn, devours its own children.” Francisco Goya’s painting “Saturn devouring his son” (1819-23), illustrates this. Micheline Ishay, The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era, (Univ. of California Press, 2008), 106.

818 There are other expressions of CI than FH, RE, and ML, as noted by Allen Wood, in Kant’s Ethical Thought (e.g. FUL, FLN), but they are just variants of the same principle: “the three formulae are claimed to be reciprocally equivalent and to represent one and the same principle from different sides.” GR 4:436-7, as cited in Wood, 1999, 18.

819 Currently there is a legal effort underway to designate other great apes as legal persons on this basis. “The Nonhuman Rights Project.” Accessed April 9, 2017. www.nonhumanrights.org/litigation/. Theoretically, there many other species of rational beings beyond this world, to whom universal ethical principles apply.

820 Wood, 1999, 17, as cited in DiCenso, 184.


823 DiCenso, 2011, 185.

The “invisible subject” is a phrase similar to another phrase that Carol Adams is well-known for: the “absent referent.” Carol J. Adams’ “A Very Rare and Difficult Thing” in A Communion of Subjects, 591-604.

“We referred to the poor as non-persons, but not in philosophical sense, because it is obvious that each human being is a person, rather in a sociological sense; the poor, that is, are not accepted as persons in our society. They are invisible and have not rights, their dignity is not recognized” - Gustavo Gutierrez as quoted by Andrea Gagliarducci, “Fr Gustavo Gutierrez: the poor are the starting point of liberation theology,” Catholic News Agency. Accessed June 5, 2017. www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/fr-gustavo-gutierrez-the-poor-are-the-starting-point-of-liberation-theology-90963/.


Tillich, 1957, 41.
Ibid.
Juergensmeyer, 23.
Juergensmeyer, 153.
Ibid.
Appleby, 13-4.
DiCenso 2012, 201.
Ibid.

The id is the part of the psyche that “detects with extraordinary acuteness certain changes in its interior, especially oscillations in the tension of its instinctual needs, and these changes become conscious as feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series . . . it is an established fact that . . . feelings of pleasure-unpleasure—govern the passage of events in the id with despotic force. The id obeys the inexorable pleasure principle.” Sigmund Freud, “An Outline of Psycho-Analysis” (S.E. 23, 198) in Walter A. Stewart, ed., Psychoanalysis (RLE: Freud): The First Ten Years 1888-1898, (Routledge, Oct 8, 2013),146.

This concept is arguably comparable to Kant’s theory of the predisposition to animality and to the idea of inclinations.
Ibid.
Ibid.
852 DiCenso, 2011, 90.
853 DiCenso, 2011, 72.
854 DiCenso, 2011, 73
855 Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, 128, as quoted in DiCenso, 2011, 90.
856 DiCenso, 2011, 91.
857 A84-85/B117, as quoted in DiCenso, 2011, 91.
861 Martin Luther King, Jr., in “A Letter from a Birmingham Jail” justifies nonviolent civil disobedience by referring to “two kinds of laws: just laws ... and unjust laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws,” King said, “but conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. Furthermore, a just law “squares with the moral law of the law of God. An unjust law ... is out of harmony with the moral law.” Martin Luther King Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” *Africa Studies Center*, University of Pennsylvania. 2012. Accessed May 3, 2017. www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html.
867 Jinkerson.
868 DiCenso, 2011, 41.
872 Wood, 1999, 118.