

**Notes**

- 1 *ZeF*, 8: 366. I use the following abbreviations for Kant's works: *ZeF* = *Zum Ewigen Frieden*; *MdS* = *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*; *RGV* = *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. The numbers refer to volume and page in the Prussian Academy edition. Translations are from Kant (1996, 2001).
- 2 I am grateful to Yoon Choi, Kate Moran, Pablo Muchnik and Mike Nance for very helpful comments on a draft of this review.

**References**

- Cohen, Joshua (2010) *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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Christopher Insole, *Kant and the Creation of Freedom: A Theological Problem*  
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The guiding 'problem' for *Kant and the Creation of Freedom: A Theological Problem* is 'how we can be said to be free, given that we are created by God' (p. 58). As Insole explains, Kant's mature conception of freedom includes the capacity to do otherwise (AP – alternate possibility thesis) and that we are ultimately responsible for our deeds (UR). Insole also characterizes Kant's view of divine freedom as one which excludes (AP). The 'problem' arises insofar as God, as our creator and the creator of our natures, is an 'alien cause' and 'external principle' to our wills, and yet is still within the causal chain behind all our deeds. This (potentially) compromises (UR) as it militates against our 'ultimate responsibility for beginning the chain of causation' (p. 72). (AP) is threatened as well, for Insole regards (UR) as implicit in (AP) given that a loss of responsibility suggests a loss of control.

The main body of *Kant and the Creation of Freedom* begins with a sophisticated study of divine creation, divine freedom and the relationship between the divine will and intellect. Insole there brings Kant into conversation with some of the key issues of late medieval scholasticism, and does so through a metaphysically friendly reading of Kant, one built upon the recent works of Andrew Chignell, Patrick Kain and Desmond Hogan. By the end of chapter 3, Insole sets up the problematic for the remainder of the book, having argued (1)

that according to Kant, divine freedom does not require (AP); (2) that even as early as the 1760s Kant comes to view divine agency as 'external' to our wills; and (3) if we lose (UR) because of God's causal role in our creation, we also lose (AP). Insole's reasoning for the last of these, however, may be challenged: one could still hold that even if God has, through His creation of our wills, imposed upon us a particular structure that limits what and how we will, it does not follow from this that we fully lose the power to do otherwise. While the scope of possibilities may be limited, within that scope (AP) remains.

Insole then moves forward to a chapter entitled 'The Problem', where he suggests (1) that Kant came to affirm (AP) and (UR) through his study of Rousseau during the 1760s; and (2) that his pursuit of a solution to 'The Problem' is part of what led Kant to his Copernican Revolution. Thus Insole considers the solution to be found, somehow, in transcendental idealism. Unfortunately, however, the chapter entitled 'The Solution' does not directly explain how this is the case. While we do find therein Insole's metaphysically friendly interpretation of transcendental idealism, including an affirmation of noumenal affection as well as noumenal substance, these two commitments do more to outline the nature of freedom, and thus the contours of 'the problem'. Consider, for example, that even if freedom were understood as a 'first cause', it is still because of how God made us, as beings having other than Holy Wills, that we can choose evil – and according to *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, universally as a species do so.<sup>1</sup>

Insole next turns to a set of further difficulties pertinent to our freedom: timeless agency and how the noumenal self can possibly choose otherwise than in accordance with reason. That is, one might assume that a noumenal agent, absent the inclinations spawned by sensibility, would only choose in accordance with pure practical reason. Insole here follows a certain camp of interpreters (such as Gordon Michalson) who regard part one of *Religion* as effectively conceding that radical evil is 'inexplicable' (p. 131) and ultimately 'mysterious' (p. 134).

One of the most important chapters of Insole's book, one whose relevance might not be clear to most readers, is chapter 7. In it, Insole shifts away from his metaphysical inquiries to a discussion of Kant's understanding of belief/faith (*Glaube*). Readers may find themselves perplexed by the function of this chapter, and may possibly dismiss it as more a digression than something vital to 'the problem' and its 'solution'. However, we discover within it, first of all, an important presupposition to *Kant and the Creation of Freedom*, namely, that if Kant did not genuinely *believe* that God exists and that our wills are free, there would have been no 'problem' for him. Second, as will be discussed at the end of this review, this chapter may ultimately be the most important for Insole's 'solution'.

So while the location of this chapter may seem awkward, readers should nevertheless be aware of its importance. Insole there paints Kant as genuinely committed to God's existence, reading faith as a legitimate mode of holding-to-be-true (*Fürwahrhalten*), rather than just some sort of heuristic entertaining of ideas. Absent this understanding of *Glaube*, and thus absent Kant's genuine assent to God and freedom, not only would we not have 'the problem', but also, if Insole is correct about its role within Kant's philosophical development, we would not have one of the key drivers of the Copernican Revolution.

Insole should be commended for pressing this issue. Despite how common it is to paint Kant as hostile to religion and an enemy of faith, *Kant and the Creation of Freedom* helps to reveal a *religious* Kant. This is the Kant who inspired the young Fichte's work on revelation, the Liberal Christian movement of the nineteenth century, as well as the theological treatises of Neo-Kantians Cohen and Bauch. This is the Kant who sought out the limits to knowledge 'in order to make room for faith' (Bxxx), and who, following his Lutheran heritage, sought to wrest religion from 'the monopoly of the schools' and set it on a footing suitable to 'the common human understanding' (Bxxxii). This Kant, however, has been lost to most of the Anglophone world since the time of P. F. Strawson and his rendering of transcendental idealism through the 'Principle of Significance'.

After his chapter on belief, Insole returns to his metaphysical concerns, arguing that insofar as appearances are products of our faculties, the determinism entailed by the Second Analogy does not threaten our transcendental freedom. Our wills do not act 'downstream' from the causality of nature, but rather its order still comes from us (p. 192). This offers Insole the segue to the issue that dominates the remainder of the book: Kant's (apparent) denial of 'concurrency'. After a deft study of the medieval debates regarding whether or not God is a partial cause for every event, Insole wonders whether Kant's understanding of grace forces him into being, at least in some regard, a concurrentist.

Many interpreters maintain that despite Kant's otherwise steadfast commitment to *ought implies can*, in *Religion* he grants the need for a 'Divine supplement' in order for us to undergo a moral conversion (a 'change of heart'). Thus Kant allegedly 'wobbles' here, making an exception to *ought implies can*, perhaps to avoid the Pelagian heresy and remain within the Augustinian thesis that our natures are so corrupted by the propensity to evil that without God's help we cannot liberate ourselves from sin (i.e. undergo a 'change of heart'). Insole, however, suggests that we regard this divine supplement as secondary to a first and essential step, a choice on our part that then makes us eligible for sanctifying grace. Hence according to Insole (and many others), while Kant does allow for the possibility of divine aid in our moral struggles, the onus remains on us to ask for it.

This, however, brings to the fore ‘the problem’ – since divine aid is necessary (though not sufficient) for our moral transformation, if we cannot fully own our ‘change of heart’ we may very well lose (UR). Moreover, given that God created us to have a propensity to evil, it now seems that God is likewise responsible for the moral condition that, according to Kant, all of humanity necessarily bears. That is, God designed our natures such that all of humanity will succumb to this propensity and cannot emerge from its effect on our moral standing without His aid. Accordingly, with regards to radical evil at least, (AP) is likewise lost – or so it seems.

What then is Insole’s ultimate ‘solution’? Transcendental idealism does set the stage for it, insofar as it allows for the possibility of freedom. But this possibility is not sufficient to solve ‘the problem’. Rather, it is because we are free yet created by God that we have ‘the problem’ at all. Nevertheless, transcendental idealism is still relevant to Insole’s ultimate ‘solution’, for its epistemic strictures bar us from having knowledge of the supersensible. Thus despite Insole’s initial foray into some of the current metaphysically friendly readings of Kant, he ultimately relies upon the unknowability thesis and the opportunity this thesis provides for Kant’s positive philosophy of religion. That is, as mentioned above, it is through setting out the limits to knowledge that transcendental idealism makes room for faith. Metaphysically friendly readings, by contrast, insofar as they press for knowledge of the supersensible, undermine Kant’s key strategy for the liberation of religion from ‘the monopoly of the schools’.

It is, accordingly, via this practical/religious avenue into the supersensible where many of the significant steps towards ‘the solution’ are to be found. We find, for example, in its chapter on *Glaube* the pivotal argument: (1) we only come to believe in God and freedom out of the ‘needs of practical reason’; (2) as our practical cognition of these postulates are shaped by these ‘needs’, whatever features we attribute thereby, the warrants for those attributions are for the sake of sustaining our moral vocation; (3) therefore, while there may be no metaphysical explanation as to how divine agency is compatible with our freedom, it is a consequence of why we postulate God and freedom at all that divine agency does not violate either (UR) or (AP).

Just as Kant raises our thought of God to a practical cognition through the determinacies entailed by His role in the Highest Good, so likewise our determinate cognition of both God and freedom must be such that they secure rather than violate the conditions necessary for our moral lives. Hence in whatever way the conundrum of grace is solved, and in whatever way the broader ‘problem’ is as well, if we only assent to God and freedom because they are, in one way or another, commitments necessitated by the moral law, then we must out of these commitments as well also grant that there is a ‘solution’, for the same grounds that lead us to faith in God and freedom also demand our

*faith* that ‘the problem’ has an answer, albeit one we can never *know*. As Insole remarks, whether or not one will ‘go along with Kant here will depend upon one’s attitude to practical reason as an independent source of warrant for belief ... and also on how comfortable one is with allowing incomprehensibility and our cognitive limitations to do *positive* as well as negative work’ (p. 132).

**Lawrence Pasternack**

Oklahoma State University  
email: l.pasternack@okstate.edu

#### Note

1 In my view, Insole’s exposition of ‘the problem’ could have been enhanced through a chapter on the 1791 essay ‘On the Miscarriage of all Philosophical Trials in Theodicy’, for we see within it Kant likewise struggling with the question of how to explain our culpability for moral evil without making God, who created our natures, likewise culpable. One recent paper on the ‘Theodicy’ is Duncan (2012). I likewise discuss its importance in my commentary on Kant’s *Religion* (Pasternack 2013: chs 3 and 4).

#### References

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Heather M. Roff, *Global Justice, Kant and the Responsibility to Protect: A Provisional Duty*

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Heather Roff takes Kant’s moral, legal and political philosophy into largely new territory here by examining Kant’s practical philosophy in relation to the novel doctrine of a ‘Responsibility to Protect’ recently developed by a number of United Nations institutions (pp. 36–9). Broadly speaking, the doctrine spells out the conditions when it is proper for other nations, at the behest of the UN, to intervene in the affairs of another state. The object of the intervention would be to prevent and correct gross abuses of power and the neglect of human rights. The doctrine is controversial in that it involves interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, but none the less plays a large part in thinking about the deployment of UN forces in the early