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Naturalism and Realism in Kant's Ethics

In this comprehensive assessment of Kant's metaethics, Frederick Rauscher shows that Kant is a moral idealist rather than a moral realist and argues that Kant's ethics does not require metaphysical commitments that go beyond nature. Rauscher frames the argument in the context of Kant's nonnaturalistic philosophical method and the character of practical reason as action-oriented. Reason operates entirely within nature, and apparently nonnatural claims – God, free choice, and value – are shown to be heuristic and to reflect reason's ordering of nature. The book shows how Kant hesitates between a transcendental moral idealism with an empirical moral realism and a complete moral idealism. Examining every aspect of Kant's ethics, from the categorical imperative to freedom and value, this volume argues that Kant's focus on human moral agency explains morality as a part of nature. It will appeal to academic researchers and advanced students of Kant, German idealism, and intellectual history.

FREDERICK RAUSCHER is Professor of Philosophy at Michigan State University. He is the editor and co-translator of *Kant: Lectures and Drafts on Political Philosophy* (with Kenneth R. Westphal, Cambridge, 2015), co-translator of *Notes and Fragments* (with Paul Guyer and Curtis Bowman, Cambridge, 2005), and editor of *Kant in Brazil* (2012).

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contributors to discussions at these events who have stimulated my thought and caused me to deepen my interpretation.

I wish also to thank the original publishers of material reproduced here. With the exception of “‘God’ Without God”, which forms the content of Chapter 5 with little alteration, these papers have been excerpted and/or modified. In most cases, only parts of the paper are included in the book, even scattered over several chapters.

Part of Chapter 4: “Freedom and Reason in Groundwork III” in *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A Critical Guide*, edited by Jens Timmermann (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 203–23.

Part of Chapter 2: “Why Kant's Ethics is A Priori – and Why It Matters”, in *Recht und Frieden in der Philosophie Kants: Akten des X Internationalen Kant-Kongresses*, Band 3, hrsg. Valerio Rohden, Ricardo Terra, Guido de Almeida, and Margit Ruffing (Berlin: Walter deGruyter, 2008), pp. 347–57.

Chapter 5: “‘God’ Without God: Kant's Postulate” *Kant e-Prints* Série 2, v. 2, n. 1, jan.–jun., (2007), pp. 27–62 [www.cle.unicamp.br/kant-e-prints/]

Part of Chapter 4: “Reason as a Natural Cause”, in *Moralische Motivation. Kant und die Alternativen*, edited by Heiner F. Klemme, Manfred Kühn, and Dieter Schönecker. Reihe *Kant Forschungen* Band 16. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2006), pp. 97–110.

Parts of Chapters 1 and 3: “Kant's Moral Anti-Realism”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002): 477–99.

Parts of Chapters 2 and 3: “Kant's Two Priorities of Practical Reason”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 6 (3) (1998): 397–419.

Parts of Chapters 2 and 4 were originally published in Portuguese as “Razão prática pura como uma faculdade natural” [“Pure Practical Reason as a Natural Faculty”], translated by Milene Consenso Tonetto, *Ethic@* 5 (2006), pp. 173–192 [<https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/ethic/issue/view/1453>]

Part of Chapter 7 was originally published in Portuguese as “Os limites externos da filosofia prática e as limitações da Dedução na Fundamentação III”, translated by Kariel Giarolo, *Studia Kantiana* 14 (2013): 127–41 and in German as “Die äußerste Grenze aller praktischen Philosophie und die Einschränkungen der Deduktion in Grundlegung III”, in *Kants Begründung von Freiheit und Moral in Grundlegung III: Neue Interpretationen* edited by Dieter Schönecker, (Münster: Mentis Verlag, 2015), pp. 217–31.

Citations of Kant's writings

Quotations from Kant use the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant when available. I have modified the translation in some cases. When the material is not included in the Cambridge Edition, the translations are my own.

All references will be given parenthetically in the text. References to Kant's writings except the *Critique of Pure Reason* will be to their volume and page number in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 29 Vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter [and predecessors], 1902–). References to *Critique of Pure Reason* are taken from the edition *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* edited by Jens Timmermann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998) and identified by page numbers for the first and/or second editions, cited as “A” and “B”. These page numbers are given in the margins of the Cambridge translation.