It is often said that Immanuel Kant claims that lying can never be ethical and that we cannot claim a right to lie under special, or even under the most extreme, circumstances. This claim is based largely on readings of Kant’s foundational works, the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*. And, of course, there is also Kant’s specific statement against lying in “On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropic Concerns.” However, in his most developed work on morals, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant offers a distinction between a lie and an untruth. Here he holds that lying is unethical and harmful to humanity in *The Doctrine of Virtue*, but in *The Doctrine of Right* he argues that an untruth is permissible in circumstances when we would otherwise lose our autonomy. *The Doctrine of Right* shows more flexibility in Kant’s final word on ethical actions by claiming the *civil right* of telling an untruth to protect oneself from scoundrels, even though Kant holds that we are bound by duty to tell the truth to the murderer at our door in “On the Supposed Right to Lie.”

The distinction that should be kept in mind is Kant’s strict standards against lying for purely personal virtue in *The Doctrine of Virtue* versus the discussion of public autonomy in *The Doctrine of Right*. Over-reliance on the foundational work of the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* and the limits of reason in the *Critique of Practical Reason* can all too easily reduce Kant’s doctrine to often unworkable rigidity and formalism, while neglecting the more expansive view of autonomy in *The Doctrine of Right*, which allows for “untruths” in some circumstances.
AN UNTRUTH VS. A LIE – THE *FALSILQUIUM* VS. THE *MENDACIUM*

In light of the *Groundwork*, lying would contradict the categorical imperative’s Formula of Universal Law and Formula of Humanity, that is to say, respectively, that the duplicity of the lie prohibits its universalization as rational moral law and that lying violates human dignity at its rational-moral core. In “A Supposed Right to Lie,” Kant claims that we cannot justify lying from the intentions of effecting a good empirical outcome even if a murderer is looking for our friend and intends to do him harm. I am obligated to tell the truth in this case, and I hope for the best outcome. Furthermore, in *The Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant assigns truth-telling a fundamental status in both our duties to ourselves and our human dignity. Lying is “the greatest violation of a human being’s duty to himself.” Likewise, “by a lie, a human being throws away and . . . annihilates his dignity as a human being.” On this view, how can Kant allow for the telling of untruths?

Kant’s differentiation of an untruth (*falsiloquium*) and a lie (*mendacium*) allows for some distinctions. From the *Lectures on Ethics*: “Not every untruth is a lie. It is a lie only if I have expressly given the other to understand that I am willing to acquaint him with my thought . . . . if we were to be at all times punctiliously truthful we might often become victims of the wickedness of others who were ready to abuse our truthfulness.” Here, we can have an untruth, a *falsiloquium*, that is not a lie, a *mendacium*. In this case, no one is deprived of her rights, although it is still harmful to humanity in terms of virtue. In *The Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant explains that “an untruth from mere politeness” is not to be considered a lie, but is merely an untruth as no one is deceived by it (e.g., closing a letter with “your most humble servant”). In addition, Kant links justifications for telling an untruth with reciprocity. If someone intends to do me harm, my rights are in peril, and I have a right to protect them with an untruth. From *Lectures on Ethics*, “. . . if my enemy takes me by the throat and asks where I keep my money, I need not tell him the truth, because he will abuse it; and my untruth is not a lie (*mendacium*) because the thief knows full well that I will not, if I can help it, tell him the truth and that he has no right to demand it of me.” Kant bolsters the permissibility of an untruth as the protection of one’s rights by claiming it to be an issue of *reciprocity* – one of the hallmarks of Kant’s rational morality.

He has deceived me and I deceive him in return; to him, as an individual, I have done no injustice and he cannot complain;
but I am none the less a liar in that my conduct is an infringement of the rights of humanity. It follows that a falsiloquium can be a mendacium – a lie – especially when it contravenes the right of an individual. Although I do a man no injustice by lying to him when he has lied to me, yet I act against the right of mankind, since I set myself in opposition to the condition and means through which human society is possible.\footnote{An examination of the background of the famous example itself in “A Supposed Right to Lie” sheds some light on Kant’s opposition against lying to the murderer at the door. In SR, Constant has extrapolated from Kant’s example against lying in a similar situation in The Doctrine of Virtue in which we would have to answer for all the consequences the lie may have.}

An examination of the background of the famous example itself in “A Supposed Right to Lie” sheds some light on Kant’s opposition against lying to the murderer at the door. In SR, Constant has extrapolated from Kant’s example against lying in a similar situation in The Doctrine of Virtue in which we would have to answer for all the consequences the lie may have.

. . . [A] gentleman [Hausherr] has ordered his servant to say “not at home” if a certain person asks for him. The servant does this and, as a result, the master slips away and commits a serious crime, which would have otherwise been prevented by the guard sent to arrest him. Who (in accordance with ethical principles) is guilty in this case? Surely the servant, too, who violated a duty to himself by his lie, the results of which his own conscience imputes to him.\footnote{Here it is much easier to see the violation in this lie than in Constant’s extrapolated example of lying to the murderer at the door. Clearly the servant is an accomplice.}

In addition to this fuller view of the background, what Kant specifically rejects in Constant’s claim of the “right to lie” is the reduction of duty to a mere contingency – that we have a duty to tell the truth only to those who have a right to the truth. Kant’s rational universalism, of course, prohibits contingencies in either truth or duty, which are unconditional. Kant disputes the basic right to lying, for a right reduced to contingencies would be no real right at all, as it would no longer be universal. Further, for Kant, Constant’s expression “to have a right to the truth” is meaningless, as it attempts to reduce truth and its universality to personal subjectivity. “For to have objectively a right to truth would be the same as to say that it is a matter of one’s will [. . .] whether a given statement is to be true or false; this would produce an unusual logic.”\footnote{Also, it’s not a question of a permitted reciprocity of untruth for Kant in this situation – the murderer in SR is no liar and flatly states his intention to do harm.}
Kant finesses his formalist position on rights and truth in SR by adding a footnote to his declaration: “Truthfulness in statements that cannot be avoided is the formal duty of man to everyone.” And the footnote reads: “I do not wish to sharpen this principle to the point of saying ‘Untruthfulness is a violation of one’s duty to himself.’ For this principle belongs to ethics [Doctrine of Virtue], but here the concern is with a duty of right [Rechtspflicht].” In this way he distinguishes the flexibility of rights from the formalism of duty and virtue. As Allen Wood has claimed, Kant and Constant are simply talking past one another here.

With Kant’s view of rights in mind, we can see in his earlier Lectures on Ethics, how he allows for telling an untruth in a scenario quite similar to the murderer at the door in “On a Supposed Right to Lie”: “A man that knows I have money, asks me: ‘Have you any money on you?’ If I fail to reply, he will conclude that I have; if I reply in the affirmative, he will take it from me; if I reply in the negative, I tell a lie. What am I to do? If force is used, . . . then my lie is a weapon of defence. The misuse of a declaration extorted by force justifies me in defending myself. The difference is that Constant conflates universality and contingency, and duty [virtue] and rights, whereas Kant keeps them separate.

This nuanced view of a role for the telling of untruths fits with Christine Korsgaard’s interpretation, which sees some flexibility in the foundation of Kant’s moral system not only in its subtleties of the Doctrine of Right but in the categorical imperative itself. Korsgaard observes that Kant’s categorical view of truth-telling often seems to leaves us defenseless in the face of evil, as in the case of “On a Supposed Right to Lie” of the murderer at the door. Her sympathetic reading of Kant’s moral theory largely follows from her distinctions of the Formula of Universal Law (FUL) and the Formula of Humanity (FH) drawn from Kant’s first two formulations of the categorical imperative. Korsgaard’s view of the Formula of Humanity does not permit lying as it directly disrespects and harms the humanity of the murderer and one’s own humanity (just as Kant claims it does in The Doctrine of Virtue). Korsgaard, however, finding reciprocity to be at the heart of Kant’s Kingdom of Ends, holds that lying to the murderer can be allowed through the Formula of Universal Law by arguing that the murderer would more than likely withhold his true intention from the person at the door and thus act deceptively (e.g., he might say: “I’m here to read the gas meter” or “Your friend is a grand prize winner”). Because he has begun in deceit, we can justifiably universalize a maxim of lying to a liar, and Kant indeed uses a similar example and holds the same position of non-reciprocity in the Lectures. By arguing for
special principles in special situations (and by importing John Rawls’ double-level of ideal and non-ideal theory into her reading of Kant’s moral theory), Korsgaard remains within the boundaries of Kantian formalism while giving it some flexibility. Still, Korsgaard, like Kant, holds that in terms of virtue, lying harms reason, autonomy, and humanity at its core.

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant’s moral doctrine at its most developed permits untruths to be told as justifiable defenses against harm. But, for us, questions of the limits of formal reason remain – not questions about the filling out of the Kantian moral system, but about its very *foundation* of rational principles. Regarding this foundation, Kant allows no empirical contingencies or exceptions. Kant’s metaphysics of morals can only be *founded* on a principle of universality and necessity – i.e., rational law, as articulated in Kant’s supreme principal of morality, the categorical imperative. The foundational question asks whether there are imperative directives other than those of universal rationality that command our moral actions and decisions. This question is one of form or force – rationalism or phenomenology – which guide us by either universal principles or the commands of that issue from things themselves (the imperative directives of objects as objectives or the imperative “calling out” of the human subject by other persons). In this way, form does not monopolize intelligibility – force has its own original and intelligible directives. Force is, in fact, what makes form possible.

**FORCE AS THE BASIS OF THE IMPERATIVE**

By undertaking a phenomenological investigation of the imperative itself, Alphonso Lingis is able to take a step further away from Kant’s and Korsgaard’s universalism but retains the commanding force of Kant’s moral imperative, i.e., its original binding force. Also, because the imperative originates in force from specifics, not from universal form, it still allows us to distinguish proper moral actions in various situations without a doctrine of absolute universalism – e.g., lying in general is selfish and harmful (and harmful to humanity), but at times it is selfless and provides the required protection from gratuitous injury.

Before any formulations, universal or situational, can take place, we are first obligated by the imperative’s binding force. Obedience to this original obligation is not a matter of form but of original and orienting force, as the origin of the imperative is unformulatable and known only in obedience to it. (This view is analogous to Kant’s insight that we only know that we are free because we are obligated by imperatives, which can
apply only to free beings.) “Realized or not, this order is listened to before being heard or understood,” Jean-François Lyotard has noted about Kant’s imperative.\textsuperscript{14} There can be no formulation without obedience to this original force. This binding force of restraint is \textit{a priori} to any formulation and prior to \textit{any} \textit{a priori} principle. This binding force is what makes form and formulation possible.

Kant himself did acknowledge the role of imperative force in the “moral feeling” of the \textit{Triebfedern} of moral incentives and the restraint of respect (For Kant, “respect is a feeling something like fear, something like inclination, which affects and pains our sensuous nature and our natural appetites”\textsuperscript{15}). But Kant was far more concerned with the formal characteristics of the moral imperative – its universality and necessity. Because a phenomenological view of the imperative uncovers its original orienting force, this view entails a critique and rectification of Kant’s foundational formalism and argues for imperative directives in specific situations themselves (as well as directives in sensation, perceptual objects, animals, and other persons). Because of the imperative’s essential characteristic of command and subordination, we can still avoid the contingencies of empiricism and the slippery slope of satisfying our self-interests in ethical actions and judgments. The commanding force of the imperative is what originally supplies directives for our appropriate responses to things and circumstances, and these forces intrude upon us with their imperative importance and urgency.

\textbf{LAW VS. RULES – COMMANDS VS. DEMANDS}

Kant drew a clear distinction between law and rules to distinguish the categorical from the hypothetical imperative. Although we generally understand this distinction to be one of the formalism of a singular universal principle versus the heteronomous ragbag of prescriptions for happiness, we can also view Kant’s distinction in terms of force. Law, because it is universal and necessary (i.e., rational; whether laws of nature or laws of moral freedom) has commanding force, whereas rules merely have power. In contrast to the universality of law, rules are particular to specific situations and thus carry less binding force (as with the particular contingencies of “rules of skill”). To put it another way, force is \textit{irreversible} whereas power is \textit{reversible} (e.g., Plato would take truth and reason to be irreversible forces in contrast to the unstable and reversible power of opinion). Kant’s categorical imperative is an example of force \textit{par excellence} – the powers of my particular self-interests are absolutely subordinated to
the force of the universal moral law that stands over and commands me. In fact, Kant notes that the attempt to reverse this imperative relation by placing personal will above the moral law results in “radical evil” – perhaps the will at its most “pathological,” to use Kant’s term of the self-interested will. In contrast to the force of law, rules can and do change, and can even be reversed without corrupting the situation – as when the rules of the game change. Likewise, the Golden Rule, often said to be an obvious basis for moral theory, is after all only a rule; there is never the claim that it is the “Golden Law.” Kant objects to the Golden Rule’s empirical contingency, which he formulates as “do unto others what you do not want done to yourself [quod tibi non vis fieri].” On this condition, the criminal could dispute with the judges who punish him.

We can put this distinction yet another way in terms of duty versus desire, again, with an eye toward force instead of form – as command versus demand. Law commands the will, or issues from the moral will as a command, whereas rules are mere demands of the will (or the mere desires of feeling). I can, of course, demand anything I want, but I can only command with moral force that which is above and beyond my self-interest (although Kant does allow that duty and self-interest can converge). What phenomenology can do here is retain the Kantian distinction of moral force in command and duty versus demand, while rectifying Kant’s purely rational basis for moral law. This view boils down to a questioning of Kant’s dichotomy of categorical and hypothetical imperatives.

But are there not imperatives between only the categorical and the hypothetical, or perhaps beyond them? For instance, Kant would claim that eating, drinking, or sleeping are hypothetical imperatives, as they are physical and causal, and have nothing of moral autonomy in them. But, as Lingis notes, these imperative actions of sustenance are closer to the categorical. In contrast to hypothetical imperatives, we are not free from the outset not to pursue these actions.

But could Kant’s insights into the synthetic a priori offer some mediation of the strict division of categorical and hypothetical imperatives? It seems not, as Kant distinguishes the synthetic judgments of sensibility from moral judgments and their supersensibility. In regard to the judgments of sensibility, “intuition,” and perception, Kant holds in the first Critique that: “Such judgments, however, thus based on intuition, can never extend beyond objects of the senses; they are valid only for objects of possible experience.” The categorical imperative of moral law, however, is not characterized by experience and sensibility, but by supersensi-
bility. Regarding moral law, Kant writes in the second *Critique*: “This law must therefore be the idea of a nature not given empirically and yet possible through freedom, hence *a supersensible* nature to which we give objective reality at least in a practical respect, since we regard it as an object of our *will* as pure rational beings.” The laws of nature apply to sensibility and causality, whereas the laws of freedom apply to supersensibility and freedom. Kant describes these laws as counterparts, but they are not to infringe upon one another. Although analogous to natural law’s universality, the moral law is not empirically derived but is made possible through freedom.

Because Kant maintains the distinction between the laws of nature and the laws of freedom, the inviting possibility of a synthetic *a priori* in terms of categorical and hypothetical imperatives is not tenable on Kant’s own terms. Phenomenology, however, can bridge this gap, as it erases the distinction between causality and freedom by placing the free will at the center of both morality and perception. For Maurice Merleau-Ponty, imperative direction lies at the heart of perception. “The word perception indicates a direction rather than a primitive function.” In this way, perception is a movement of human behavior that actively intensifies an object’s preconfigured essence and makes the object’s qualities stand out. Because perception is active, it includes the perceiver’s will, a will that can be commanded by imperatives. In this way, sensible things are not causally given to perception but command perceptions like norms.

**Imperatives and “Moral Phenomena” – The Forces of Things Themselves**

With Emmanuel Levinas’s rehabilitation of sensation, which shows sensation’s guiding forces of immersion and sustenance, as well as Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception with things as ready-made wholes with their own directives not awaiting their synthetic totalization by Kantian representations, we can shift Kant’s original focus of the imperative from the theoretical and universal (i.e., from “practical reason”) to the phenomenologically concrete and the specific, as form no longer monopolizes intelligibility. Even with this shift from absolute to concrete contexts, Kant’s original guiding and binding force of obligation is retained, a force which can only be supplied by an imperative.

The phenomenological view speaks for the existence of moral phenomena, moral objects, and moral situations, with imperatives issuing from these things themselves. David Hume supplies some good exam-
ples when he notes that generous acts cannot help but touch us so deeply that they merit our approval, even if they are done by our enemies.23 Hume, in an almost phenomenological spirit, also indicates something like imperative directives issuing from things and situations themselves. He notes that no one, except the cruelest lout, would step on someone’s gouty toes in the same way he would step on the cinders of a path.24 Hume would find the source of these distinctions not in the objects themselves but in the feeling bolstered by custom and habit that one has for them. We expect to be pained when we touch fire because it has hurt us before. But if we move more closely to the phenomenon and away from Hume’s ultimate empirical skepticism of external events, we can ask how this pain occurs and where it originates. Clearly, the pain is from the heat of the fire itself.

Likewise, as there are moral phenomena, there are immoral phenomena; for instance, the gross violations of human rights – murder, slavery, or genocide. These immoral actions imperatively call out for remedy and command our actions and counteractions, even if we must resort to telling lies. At times, the “moral lie” may be the best recourse we have – think of Huck Finn’s reluctant joy after lying to Missouri slave hunters about Jim’s whereabouts. Or the lie may be the only moral recourse we have – it would be impossible to shelter a refugee like Anne Frank without deceiving the authorities of genocide or skirting the general public’s right to know the truth. Instead of leaving us powerless in the face of evil (the claim often leveled at Kant’s moral doctrine although Kant justifies untruths in self-defense), the imperative of the situation itself guides our appropriate response. In order to protect, and respect, life, the imperative in this situation commands us to lie. Rather than stemming from the “pathological” will, lying in these cases manifests a “good will” that is far closer to categorical duty than to hypothetical happiness.

**RATIONAL GOOD WILL AND RESPECT**

Even with his distinctions between untruths and lies, Kant does not allow us to speak of such a thing as a good-willed lie (and certainly not of any duty to lie). Kant’s rational foundationalism holds that the true purpose of reason is to produce a will that is unconditionally good in itself. Kantian good will shines like a jewel by its own light, even if it accomplishes nothing. Its usefulness or fruitlessness can neither augment nor diminish its value.25 The categorical quality of Kantian duty is based on the purity of this good will, which is produced by reason itself and exhib-
its reason’s highest practical function. Likewise, the phenomenon of respect for Kant is based on reason. What we respect in ourselves and in others is not humanity or personhood per se; it is the rational moral law within all humans that we respect. Kant offers the standard of universality in his rational moral system, one which seemingly cannot be surpassed. But with its foundation of a priori principles, Kant’s system can be seen as a rational reductionism that limits our moral responses by requiring them to be placed in the universal framework of a rational system.

Phenomenology avoids this formalist foundation by explicating the forces that can be shown to supply the necessary original directives, an explication that Kantism cannot provide on its own.\(^{26}\) Lingis’s criticism of Kant on this point is that the rational does not equate with the required.\(^{27}\) Reason’s universality and uniformity may even fail in the face of some imperatives, for instance, the imperative of death. What can reason tell us about our own or others’ deaths? Absolutely nothing. Death is a force but not a principle or law. Death outstrips all conceptual boundaries, but it remains imperative. Lingis has called death the ultimate alterity, and its imperatives lie somewhere beyond reason. Like Levinas’s ethical infinity (the only proper dimension of the ethical per Levinas), death outstrips reason and reason’s essential quality of the self-same. Death is beyond reason, but it still carries an imperative to which we must respond. It does matter how we die, and it is important (and even imperative) that we be there for Others in their time of dying. But isn’t this response also one of “good will” — without reducing good will to reason or reciprocity? The imperative urgency of things or situations often intrudes with an imperative that is neither rational, reciprocal, nor universal.

This “situational” view of moral imperatives allows for flexibility in morality, as well as some transcendence of the ethical limits of reason. In the case of lying to the murderer, slave hunter, or the banal but genocidal bureaucrat, one is still able to disapprove of, and even block, their murderous or anti-humanist inclinations. Is there not “good will” in lying to protect human life here, a good will that is neither self-interested nor rational? For this claim to be true, what is needed is a different reading of good will and duty, not as exclusively rational and unconditional but as our appropriate and responsible responses to situational imperatives.

Likewise, respect is not only respect for rational law but is sensitivity and receptivity for the imperatives we encounter in other persons, things, and situations — a sensitivity for the very conditions and forces of life (and death), while avoiding the restrictions of reason. Levinas shifts the origin
of respect from Kant’s interiority of reason to the exteriority of alterity. Levinas holds that the *attention* of respect (Kant’s term is indeed “Achtung”) is first attention to persons, not Kantian attention to the rational moral law. Still, Levinas extends alterity’s *attention* only to other humans (as does Kant: animals and the forces of nature cannot be objects of respect because they lack reason\(^2\)), as the faces of animals do not carry an ethical command in his doctrine of alterity.\(^2\)

It is Lingis, however, who gives the fullest reading of “respect” as sensitivity to exteriority. In Lingis’s phenomenological reading, respect is receptivity for other persons, animals, and even the objects of perception, all of which present their own specific imperative directives. “We see the coyote not as another piece of flotsam or jetsam in the flooding river, but as a fellow being struggling with the current.”\(^3\) It is the living things and situations that *command* our respect, just as duty commands us. “It is the insulted honor of the peasant, the grief of the widow, the affection of a child for a puppy, the misery of the trapped jaguar that command our respect.”\(^4\) In Lingis’s doctrine, this receptivity of *respect* applies even to imperatives in the objects of perception. Here objects are objectives: to perceive them is to take up their imperatives and to follow them through. To see something is to bring it into relief against its background; to hear something is to turn and follow it. In this way, perception is a matter of “respect” commanded by and for things. Thus, perception is not an act of Kantian representation of the mind but is imperative *respect* for things and our environment.\(^5\)

**CONCLUSION**

Formalism as the only ethical foundation must be replaced by the forces of concrete situations as the truly practical starting points that generate their own specific imperatives to which we respond and discover our responsibilities. Instead of leaving us powerless in the face of evil, imperatives arise in these situations and command us to counteract maliciousness. By protecting life we protect and respect the existential source of moral value. Although rectified in their universality and formalism, these imperatives retain a Kantian character that still directs us with the categorical imperative’s force without its formalist limitations.

Reason indeed has its own importance in human life, and reason brings its own imperatives of necessity; but, against Kant’s view, there are limits to reason in morals. The rational does not always equate with what
is required in our responses, responses that constitute our moral responsibility. Although Kant does permit lying in circumstances of *The Doctrine of Right*, his metaphysics of morals is explicitly founded on unconditional, rational, and formal principles. The unconditionality of the categorical imperative needs rectification so that we can elucidate imperatives of moral force and not only the imperatives of reason (and elucidate imperatives between or beyond the categorical and hypothetical). Kant still offers us something valuable – the introduction of imperative form, from which we can begin to explain its original orienting force phenomenologically – the force that is prior to any *a priori* form or principle, and that makes any form or formulation possible. Kant had implicitly acknowledged this original binding force in his doctrine of *Triebfeder* of respect, and in the superior force of law over rules. And Lingis has shown that it is phenomenology’s unique task and unique capacity to make this force explicit.

NOTES

1 I thank an anonymous reviewer for comments on an earlier version of this article. An earlier version was presented at the 8th International Conference of the Society for Ethics Across the Curriculum, November 16-19, 2006, at Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.


3 Ibid.


5 In *Immortality*, Milan Kundera admits that he was guilty of confusion in this situation after receiving a rejection letter in Prague from a Parisian publisher signed “Be so kind, dear sir, as to accept the assurance of my delicate feelings.” Although disappointed by the rejection, he jumped for joy that there was a woman in Paris who loved him. Years later he discovered that the French have an entire semantic repertory of closings for letters, with which they can determine the most subtle degree of feeling they wish to transmit to the addressee. On this scale, “delicate feelings” expresses the lowest degree of official politeness, almost bordering on contempt. Kundera had mistaken a mere Kantian untruth and had confused French formalism with Slavic passion [Milan Kundera, *Immortality*, Peter Kussi, trans. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991) p. 198].

7 Ibid.


9 Kant, “On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropic Concerns,” 64; 426.

10 Ibid.


12 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 228. [Force may also be the mitigating factor here for Kant, unlike in “On a Supposed Right to Lie.”]


16 For instance, from the origin of English football in the late 1800s until the 1970s tackling through an opponent was allowed as long as the ball was won, but in the interest of the game and in prolonging the careers of its most skilled players, the rule was reversed (sadly too late for artistic players like George Best, who were mercilessly subjected to this abuse). Now players would receive a caution or an outright ejection for this offense, an offense that was earlier considered to be within the rules of the game. Interestingly, FIFA refers to its official rules of the game as “The Laws of the Game,” which are in no way laws by Kant’s standards but are merely rules.


18 In Kant’s third formulation of the categorical imperative, moral command issues from the will – the will, instead of merely undergoing the imperatives, now activates them – the will is commanded to be in command – and shows how the will is fully autonomous and sovereign.


20 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 39; 5:44.

21 Ibid., 38; 5:43.


24 Hume, p. 47.

In this way, phenomenology can augment Kantism, and Kantism offers phenomenology the imperative foundation that it has lacked with appeals to “the given,” the apodictic, or the free initiatives of the existential subject. In this way, the world is not simply given but is “given as imperative.”

Lingis, The Imperative, p. 219-22.

Kant does claim, however, that we do have “indirect duties” to animals, as our treatment of them reflects our attitude to human persons, to whom we have “direct duties.”

Derrida has claimed that Levinas has said: “Does the snake have a face? I do not think so.” “The Animal I Am.” Lecture delivered at The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, Spring 1998.

Lingis, The Imperative, p. 126.

Lingis, The Imperative, p. 128.

Lingis, The Imperative, p. 67.

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