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STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF KANT

Studies in The Philosophy of Kant

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diagnostic value to the historian of ideas. Yet he was also the nemesis of the Enlightenment as a historical epoch. More than any other philosopher, he placed limits on knowledge without falling into the irrationalism of the forerunners of Romanticism. He exposed the superficiality of the humanistic and intellectualistic optimism of the time without becoming an apologist for the past.

Together with Hume and Rousseau, he subjected current ideas to a searching examination and found them wanting. Hume's demonstration of the nonintellectual foundations of science and Rousseau's nullification of contemporary institutions prepared the way for fundamental changes. These two critics, however, did not constructively replace what they had rejected. Hume was finally left with only a contemplative skepticism, which Kant turned into a justification of science; Rousseau prepared men's minds for the Revolution, but it was Kant's deepening of Rousseau's criticism of law imposed from above that gave philosophical dignity to *liberté, egalité, fraternité.*[1] Indeed, George Herbert Mead, in his *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, gave to Kant the title usually reserved for Rousseau, "the philosopher of the Revolution."[2]

This dual relationship of Kant's thinking to the Enlightenment can best be accounted for by his two dominant interests—his interest in natural science and his religious allegiance.

More than any other philosopher of the period except perhaps Leibniz, Kant was attentive to the results of the scientific exploration of nature. Even when placing restrictions on science, he seems always to have thought as a scientist. His earliest works were purely

1 Kant formulates these ideals as liberty, equality, and independence. See *On the Saying, "That May Be True in Theory But It Does Not Hold in Practice,"* II (Academy edn., VIII, 290). See also William Hastie, *Kant's Principles of Politics* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1891), p. 35.

2 Kant's attitude toward the French and American revolutions is complex, because his rejection of violent revolution in general (see Hastie, pp. 50–56) went with an enthusiastic approval of the ends sought in these revolutions. See *Strife of Faculties*, Part II, §6 (trans. Robert E. Anchor, in *Kant on History*, "Library of Liberal Arts," No. 162 [New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1963], p. 144). His position with regard to the French Revolution has been pictured in detail by Karl Vorländer, "Kants Stellung zur französischen Revolution," *Philosophische Abhandlungen Hermann Cohen . . . dargebracht* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1912), pp. 246–81; and by Paul Schrecker, "Kant et la Révolution Française," *Revue philosophique*, XXVIII (1939), 394–425. Schrecker says: "The Revolution and even more the echo it set up in the world are to the Kantian ethics what the discovery of the circulation of the blood is to the mechanism of Descartes: a confirmation, as it were, an experimental confirmation, of the fundamental principles of the theory."

impresses upon him and as he has almost always been misjudged even by philosophers,[7] but rather the abiding nature of man and its unique position in creation. . . .[8]

This "abiding nature of man," differently conceived, becomes the central topic in Kant's later ethical works.

The philosopher who had the greatest influence on Kant's ethics was undoubtedly Rousseau. Kant's admiration for Rousseau is most clearly expressed in unpublished fragments in which he speaks of Rousseau's "noble sweep of genius" and of the beauty of the style as so disturbing that he has to read him a long time before he can be reasonable in his approach.[9] According to a well-known anecdote, Kant missed his customary walk on the day *Émile* arrived. Although the published writings on moral philosophy mention Rousseau only a few times, and in the works in the broader field of social philosophy explicit references to him are generally somewhat critical, Rousseau's influence on Kant is obvious.

Hendel finds the dominant motifs of Rousseau's philosophy and life in the "ideas of obligation, contract, equality, freedom."[10] These are likewise central in Kant. For both, the social contract is not a historical fact but a principle of justification, a political postulate.[11] Freedom for both is not just political freedom but a symptom of reason's dominance and, as such, inseparable from moral obligation. Rousseau describes immoral action as a violation of the contract by which the individual is bound to the whole. Immoral action restricts equality by partiality, and it is possible because reason does not free man from the importunities of the senses. The will which engenders moral actions must be independent of personal contingencies. This, for Kant, is the good will, and it is clearly anticipated in Rousseau's general will.

[7] The allusion is clearly to Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, whose views he has just previously said are incomplete.

[8] Academy edn., II, 311.

[9] Academy edn., XX, 30.

[10] Charles William Hendel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Moralist* (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1934); reprinted in one vol. in "Library of Liberal Arts," No. 96 (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1963), II, 165.

[11] See *On the Saying, "That May Be True in Theory But It Does Not Hold in Practice,"* II (Academy edn., VIII, 297). See also Hastie, *Kant's Principles of Politics*, p. 49.

These two analogous concepts reveal at the same time a marked difference in point of view. For Rousseau, the general will is a political ideal which is to serve as a check upon the will of the majority. This ideal underlies the original contract itself, and from it all positive laws derive their justification. In its capacity as the ultimate legal norm, the general will corresponds to "the right" in Kant's philosophy, to which all positive laws must be accommodated. But the good will has a far wider competence than the general will, and this wider competence befits its higher metaphysical status as a fact of pure reason. It is the direct evidence for and the sole condition of morality. Its expression is the categorical imperative and (in politics) the criterion of publicity.[12]

Each of these points of agreement between Rousseau and Kant involves both the universality neglected by British moralists and the concreteness lacking in Wolff's universals. Rousseau sought to discover man's nature by historical analysis. As Kant says, he did not so much wish that man should return to the state of nature as that, from his present position, he should look back upon his natural condition as a means of discovering in himself the universal—the essence of what he is, apart from the various distortions introduced by society.[13] In this way Rousseau succeeded at the precise point where Kant had found Hutcheson and Shaftesbury wanting:

> Among the multitude of forms assumed by man, Rousseau first discovered man's deeply hidden nature and the concealed law by the observation of which providence is justified. . . . God is justified by Newton and Rousseau, and more than ever is Pope's thesis true.[14]

Kant's indebtedness to Rousseau is best stated in a fragment probably dating from the 'sixties:

> By inclination I am an inquirer. I feel a consuming thirst for knowledge, the unrest which goes with the desire to progress in it, and satisfaction at every advance in it. There was a time when I believed this constituted the honor of humanity, and I despised the people, who know nothing. Rousseau corrected me in this. This binding prejudice disappeared. I learned to honor man, and I would find myself more useless than

[12] See *Perpetual Peace*, Appendix II.

[13] See *Anthropology*, II, E (Academy edn., VII, 326).

[14] Academy edn., XX, 58–59.

> the common laborer if I did not believe that this attitude of mine [as an investigator] can give a worth to all others in establishing the rights of mankind.[15]

In this fragment Kant reflects Rousseau's conviction of the superiority of uncorrupted natural feeling over vain pride of intellect, his pessimism concerning progress through enlightenment, and his faith in democracy founded upon moral egalitarianism. It also foreshadows Kant's doctrines of the limits of human reason. The idea of limits of human reason is to be interpreted morally as the primacy of practical reason, a possession of all men and not just of the enlightened few.

From the concept of the limits of human reason—fully developed only twenty years later—flows the philosophical justification for the other views Kant shared with Rousseau. First among these is the moral argument for the existence of God anticipated in *Émile*. In order to voice his protest against contemporary naturalism, Rousseau, lacking speculative power, had to fall back on personal faith. Kant, by formulating and defending a metaphysics that was both a priori and practical, developed Rousseau's insight into an indispensable part of his own more critical philosophy.

In the 1760's, when Kant was studying Hutcheson and Rousseau, he was working on what he intended to be his definitive treatise on ethics, which, with characteristic optimism in matters of authorship, he expected soon to finish. From the fragments that have come down to us we might reasonably suppose that it would apply the method of the *Inquiry*, searching out by analysis the hidden nature of man of which he speaks in the announcement of his lectures for 1765–66. We might expect that the projected work would emphasize the indemonstrability of the ultimate principles of ethics and would support them by arguments not unlike those found in Hutcheson and Rousseau. Or Kant might have developed a speculative metaphysics, also in the manner of the *Inquiry*, which would provide a context for the more empirical ethics.

But something unexpected happened. Kant read Hume, and, before he could go forward with his ethical works, ultimate questions had to be answered. The competence of reason had been radically questioned, and, before the mind could enjoy the luxury of metaphysics, or the security of rational certainty in science or of moral certainty in religion, reason's authority in experience and science' relation to the spirit had to be determined. Only upon a basis so secured would it be possible to found an ethics more than merely edifying. The result of this fundamental investigation was the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

[15] Academy edn., XX, 44. This revealing passage has been subjected to an exhaustive analysis from the existential standpoint by Gerhart Krüger, *Philosophie und Moral in der Kantischen Kritik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1931), pp. 60 ff.

THE ETHICAL IMPORT OF THE *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

The explicit task of Kant's first *Critique* was to answer the question—restated in more exact terms—which had occupied him in the *Inquiry* of 1764: "How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?" Since all rational knowledge consists of a priori synthetic judgments, failure to answer this question could not but affect every department of thought.

A synthetic judgment is one whose predicate is not contained in the concept of its subject. It *synthesizes* diverse elements into one proposition. For instance, "This table is of oak" is a synthetic judgment, while "This table is a piece of furniture" is analytic, because we find the predicate of the latter by merely analyzing the concept of table.

An a priori[16] judgment is one which applies to all possible experience of a relevant kind without being derived from any particular experience. If a judgment is derived from particular experiences, i.e., if it is a posteriori, we cannot know that it is universally and necessarily true. Now, since mathematics and natural science make statements which we accept as being universally true, their validity cannot be derived from experiences, however often repeated.

All this was well known to Kant's predecessors in the rationalistic school. But Kant discovered that the basic propositions in these fields of knowledge were both synthetic—going beyond the subject—and a priori—requiring no experience to amplify the concept of the subject. Before Kant, "a priori synthetic judgment" would

[16] "A priori" was originally used in formal logic to denote the evidence for a deduction, wherein the conclusion is known from prior grounds. A more critical account of Kant's concept is given below, pp. 102–4.

parallelism between the mode of argument and the conclusions in the theoretical and practical phases of Kant's philosophy. In both, reason appears as the lawgiver and as bound by the laws which it gives. Kant clearly compares these two legislative functions:

> The legislation of human reason (philosophy) has two objects, nature and freedom, and therefore contains not only the law of nature, but also the moral law, presenting them at first in two distinct systems, but ultimately in one single philosophical system. The philosophy of nature deals with all *that is*, the philosophy of morals with that which *ought to be*.[23]

Apriority of knowledge can be maintained only by rooting it in understanding; apriority of duty can be preserved only by basing it on an equally pure, but acting, reason. Just as empiricism in epistemology destroys certainty, so empiricism in morality destroys its obligatory character. Any ethics deriving from the idea of the good as happiness dislodges the person from his autonomous position as legislator and destroys both the dignity of the agent and the necessity inherent in moral law.

Hence, in order to justify the phenomenon of moral necessitation, moral will must be identified with pure but practical reason. This pure reason is the same reason that was discovered in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, but it is here acting in a different capacity. It is no longer theoretical, no longer loses itself in transcendent speculation. Only in action can it be adequately manifested. The ideas of reason remain transcendent and problematical to thought, while in action they are concretely effective. Kant says that in the "ought" reason "frames to itself with perfect spontaneity an order of its own according to ideas."[24] Caird has succinctly stated the continuity and difference between the two functions of reason: "Just because reason cannot find its ideal realized in the world, it seeks to realize that ideal for itself."[25]

Not only does the first *Critique* thus erect the framework in which all Kant's subsequent thought naturally fits, but there are several

[23] *Ibid.*, A 840=B 868, trans. Kemp Smith.

[24] *Ibid.*, A 548=B 576, trans. Kemp Smith.

[25] Edward Caird, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1889), II, 164. Kant asserts this continuity throughout the second *Critique*. Note especially his statement that all interest, even that of theoretical reason, is ultimately practical (*Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 121).

clear indications in it of the specific ethical theses developed later. In 1781 Kant had already passed beyond the moral doctrines of the precritical period, though this transition was a gradual evolution rather than a radical change. The following specific ethical doctrines are anticipated in the first *Critique:*

1) Moral laws are principles of the possibility of experience, the imperatives being objective laws of freedom.[26]

2) The laws of morality are not empirical and prudential, i.e., they do not show how happiness is obtained, but they contain the a priori conditions of worthiness to be happy. This worthiness, unlike happiness itself, necessarily constitutes a system, a "*corpus mysticum* of the rational beings in it [the world]."[27]

3) The highest good, defined as the proper proportion between happiness and virtue, gives practical confirmation to other ideas that were only problematical to speculative reason, viz., the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The way in which immortality is postulated in the first *Critique* should be particularly noted: happiness and virtue do not correspond in this life, though reason demands that they should; hence there must be another life. In the second *Critique*, however, the argument is more strictly moral: we are required by moral law to be perfect, and, as this is impossible for a finite sensuous being, a continuation of moral progress *in infinitum* is postulated—a consequence of Kant's view that an obligation is invalid unless it can be fulfilled.[28]

APPROACH TO THE *CRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON*

Kant's chief works on ethics—the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*—may almost be said to be afterthoughts. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, as first planned in 1772 and published nine years later, was designed to lay the

[26] *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 802=B 830, A 807=B 835.

[27] *Ibid.*, A 808=B 836, trans. Kemp Smith.

[28] In this change, Kant has anticipated the objection often made that happiness, being a state in which all desires are satisfied, is conceivable only for a sensuous being and hence is incompatible with the idea of immortality. The moral argument for the existence of God undergoes an analogous refinement in the *Opus postumum*. See below, pp. 51–52.

foundation of philosophy in its entirety—for a metaphysics of nature as well as for a metaphysics of morals. But, instead of following the order of development as foreshadowed in the first *Critique*, Kant first wrote a *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), and then, as though the work of laying foundations were still unfinished, a *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) followed. This duplication or triplication is all the more surprising as Kant, while developing the concept of practical reason in the *Foundations*, denied the necessity of a critique of practical reason. In 1797 the *Metaphysics of Morals* —the book that might have been expected to follow on the heels of the *Critique of Pure Reason*—at last appeared. But this final work turned out to be less significant than its predecessors.

These changes in Kant's plans require some explanation. The most obvious change in thought occurs between the first *Critique* and the *Foundations*. In the former, ethics is not a part of transcendental philosophy; in spite of its a priori form, it must have reference to particular empirical conditions in man which we cannot suppose to be universal and necessary characteristics of rational beings generally. These conditions are feelings of pleasure and pain and desire. It was to be the task of the *Metaphysics of Morals* to take the a priori forms enunciated in the *Critique* and apply them to the empirical nature of man, just as the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences* did this for nature in general. The *Foundations*, however, begins from quite a different point of view: a metaphysics of ethics is developed wholly a priori. Later, the applicability of this metaphysics to man is proved in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Here Kant asks how pure reason can be practical.

The *Foundations* follows the analytic method outlined by Kant in the *Inquiry*. It reproduces the natural order of thought by beginning with a phenomenon that requires explanation, whereas the *Critiques* begin with principles and "elements" and only subsequently arrive at the experiences to be explained.

Why was the second *Critique* written? The most obvious reason is that Kant wished to answer various critics of his ethical theory as previously expounded. Since Kant was not given to petty polemics, a reply to each critic on each point did not appeal to him. The objections indicated that his work had not been understood; the *Critique of Practical Reason* may be considered as Kant's new attempt to explain his ethics from the ground up. This is borne out by

evidence that the work we now know as the *Critique of Practical Reason* grew out of the revisions Kant projected for, but did not include in, the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

But of more importance than any answers to criticism are the problems which, in Kant's own opinion, must have needed more explanation and development than they had previously received. These may be listed as follows:

1) The phenomenon of morality and the necessity expressed by the imperative are simply accepted in the first *Critique* as facts. The full seriousness of this acceptance is not evident until we reach the somewhat exhortatory tone of the *Foundations*.

2) How man as a member of the world of sense can take an interest in morality, i.e., how the moral law can be effective, is hardly discussed at all in the first *Critique*, though a framework for an answer to such a question was provided. Therefore, the *Critique of Practical Reason* asks explicitly: How can pure reason be practical? This was regarded as an empirical question in the first *Critique*, but the *Foundations* showed how it could be treated as a transcendental question. It required an answer before the *Metaphysics of Morals* with its encyclopedic delineation of human duties could be written.

3) While the conflict of theoretical and practical claims is solved —in principle, at least—in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and presupposed in the *Foundations*, the essay *What Is Orientation in Thinking?* and the second *Critique* provide the definitive exposition of the doctrine of the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason. The problem of the identity of reason in its dual employment, explicitly excluded from discussion in the *Foundations*, is of central importance in the *Critique of Practical Reason*.

4) The doctrine of immortality, inadequately developed and defended in the first *Critique*, undergoes a thorough revision in the second.

These various points must be examined in the light of the whole system of which they are integral parts.

THE PHENOMENON OF MORALITY

The use of the transcendental method characterizes all phases of Kant's work. He begins like a scientist examining an object or an experience. He notes what aspects are explicable in terms of what

is given and sets out to find a reason for those aspects not adequately explained in these terms. That is, he makes a regress upon the conditions of the datum, requiring that the conditions explain adequately the peculiarities of the conditioned. In the first *Critique* he investigates the contents of the sciences and finds that their a posteriori material and their a priori form require quite different modes of derivation and explanation. And in turn the a priori conditions, which cannot be empirically given, require a justification (a "deduction") to show that they actually serve as conditions of this experience. Through this dialectical development, the original experience becomes clarified, the a priori form becomes more explicit and highly articulated, and the whole experience grows richer in implications.

The *Critique of Practical Reason* does not reveal this method as clearly as the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. The former begins with definitions and theorems, and seems, at first, to "deduce" morality in the ordinary sense of deduction—i.e., to derive it from something more universal. But, farther on, the reader comes upon Kant's repeated assertions that we cannot answer the question as to why man should be moral. This shows that the deduction actually goes in the other direction, from the phenomenon to the transcendental conditions which underlie it. Though the moral phenomenon, "chill duty," may be, as Hegel says, "the revelation given to reason," it is not "the final undigested lump left in the stomach"[29] but rather the starting point of the investigation.

For this reason Kant places a high value on the ordinary moral convictions of mankind. Though innocence may be misled, in moral matters it is a useful guide. Duty, being obligatory upon men, cannot lie beyond their comprehension. Thus Kant takes his departure from the ordinary practical knowledge of morality. Philosophy is to elucidate moral common sense and to strengthen it by distinguishing its essential from its accidental features.

[29] *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simpson (3 vols.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1892–96), III, 461. There is Kantian authority for this Hegelian judgment. When Kant says that deduction of the categorical imperative is impossible, he is thinking of an ideal that he did not reach even in the first *Critique;* in both *Critiques* deduction is the exhibition of a formal supreme principle as underlying an actual experience. Messer, in pointing out this fact, remarks that while Kant is usually criticized for forcing a parallelism on the arguments of the two *Critiques*, here is an actual parallel that he ignores or denies (August Messer, *Kants Ethik: Eine Einführung in ihre Hauptprobleme und Beiträge zu deren Lösung* [Leipzig: Veit, 1904], p. 109).

"Concerning the ruling ideas in the practical part of Kant's system," said Schiller, "only philosophers disagree, but men have always been unanimous."[30] These ideas, summarized in the first section of the *Foundations*, are basic to Christian ethics, especially to Pietism.

In this section Kant gives an unusually concise anatomy of morality. A moral action, he asserts, is one done solely from duty, not for any specific purpose. This is the most remarkable and also the most debatable of his basic ideas. Benevolent actions are enjoined by Christianity, and they were made the basis of those British ethical systems which remained closest to common sense. Why, then, does Kant deny moral value to actions motivated by a feeling of altruism, animated as they are by a worthy motive?

Although benevolent actions are obligatory, their moral value lies in submitting to the obligation, not in actually achieving the end.[31] If the end of the benevolent action were the root of the obligation, failure to achieve it would nullify the morality of the action regardless of the intention. The English philosophers remained close to common sense in not actually drawing this conclusion. Kantianism drew the conclusions latent at this point in their philosophy.

Kant's conception of the nature of man would not permit him to derive man's obligation from anything in the world of sense. By doing so, he would surrender the apriority of duty. The a priori character of morality, however, is not just an implication of Kant's system, and, in insisting upon it, he is not a mere stickler for principles. Rather, the moral a priori indicates a fact largely overlooked by the ancient writers and explained away by Kant's forerunners,

[30] Quoted in Kroner, *Kants Weltanschauung*, trans. John E. Smith, p. 20.

[31] An alternative to the dichotomy between actions for ends and actions from specifically moral motives has often been suggested in recent British ethics. This concept of prima facie duties has been proposed as a way out of a peculiar problem in Kant's ethics: since a certain motive involving a specific attitude toward obligation constitutes the necessary condition of morality, we cannot have an obligation to be moral, for that would be an obligation to have an obligation, and so on *in infinitum*. Moreover, the *feeling* that we have an obligation is not a feeling that can be commanded. Kant's answer to this problem is more abstract than that of his British critics, since he makes the phenomenon of constraint in general the basis of specific duties, while they begin with intuitions of particular duties. But, in finding distinct sources for the goodness and rightness of an action, their assumption of the quality of goodness is not unlike Kant's own, and their ascription of rightness is not immune to Kant's criticism of teleological theories. There is a brief, but excellent, comparison of Kant with his British critics in H. J. Paton's *The Categorical Imperative: A Study in Kant's Moral Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 110–12.

viz., obligatoriness constitutes the essence of morality. To explain this hard fact of moral obligation, Kant requires a Copernican Revolution in ethics. This revolution results in the doctrine of moral autonomy—man gives the law to himself. He can do so because he exists as sovereign in the intelligible world, and, even while a subject in the world of sense, he may respect both himself and his fellow-men as pure noumena, pure rational beings. This constraint of self by self is obligation; subjectively, it is respect for the law.

Action from respect for law is the key to the universality and necessity of moral precepts, which would be variable and contingent if they depended upon particular ends, however general they might be. Universality and necessity are the marks of apriority. And just as necessity which would bind thought could come only from the mind itself, so the moral law which is a priori must be dictated by the reason which is to fulfill it. Otherwise this reason would not be free and would have to be encouraged to obedience by incentives of reward and punishment.

Reason, unaffected by individual differences, gives only the universal form, not the particular material. From the analysis of the apriority of duty follow both the formula of morality and the chief characteristic of Kant's system: *it is subjective a priori formalism.* This characterization of his ethics has often been taken lightly, as if by itself it constituted a sufficient criticism of his system. When properly interpreted, it is its truth and strength.

At this point it is well to see what is *not* involved in the concept of the formal a priori character of duty. First, that which is a priori is not prior in time. The moral law is not inborn, nor is it given by outer fiat. On the other hand, it is found not by induction from experience but by a critical analysis of the conditions of experience, commencing from what is implicit in any moral experience. Moral education is a process of developing the child's mind toward perceiving the essential features of morality. Though Kant's ethics claims universal validity, the fact that there is no universal agreement on ethical principles constitutes no objection to his theory. Ethical universality does not entail anthropological uniformity.

Second, though all experience must conform to the a priori, no experience is adequate to its universality. Because of this, Kant can disapprove of the appeal to examples for ethical theory and yet use them in ethical training.

In spite of the variety of arguments employed, they may be divided into two types—those that reject moral value as a separate species and those that accept moral value as irreducible yet localize it in a way incompatible with Kantianism.

The doctrines which deny the specificity and irreducibility of moral value—whether they arise in Marxian, Darwinian, theological, or utilitarian philosophies—use one or both of two tactics. They deny the phenomenon of obligation as anything more than a myth, fiction, or mistaken feeling; or they accept it as a prima facie fact to be justified on their own assumptions.

Against the first tactic, Kant did nothing and could do nothing except exhibit the phenomenon of morality and show that its interpretation as a natural fact (the theory advanced by his opponents) is incompatible with their own teleological theory of nature. He points out that, if moral injunctions were part of natural economy, nature would have done better by leaving decisions to instinct. On the other hand, if the conception of nature is not one based on design and if no supranatural source of morals is postulated, the phenomenon of morality becomes an illusion, to be explained in the light of a mechanistic natural science. Kant rejects this theory for the same reason that he rejected Hume's conclusion in science: it flies in the face of facts which should be explained, not explained away. For him, moral constraint is the starting point, which cannot be justified except by its philosophical fruits—the intelligibility of the world revealed through its analysis. Just as Aristotle waited until moral character was formed before teaching the theory of morals to the young, so Kant presupposes the acceptance, in broad outlines, of a Christian-humanistic moral attitude and speaks only to those who share it.

The second tactic fails for the same reason that the various naturalistic explanations of the logical a priori failed in the nineteenth century. In each case a speculative cosmological system is made the foundation of rational necessity, and the results of science are made fundamental to the process by which they are discovered. This is a vicious epistemological circle. The a posteriori cart is placed before the a priori horse. One of Kant's greatest contributions was his demonstration of the inevitability of skepticism, once knowledge is regarded as a natural fact on the same level with its object. Similarly,

moral relativism and skepticism must result from ethics which derives the concept of what ought to be from that of existence as it seems to be in the light of contemporary scientific knowledge. And this moral skepticism is equally self-refuting, because science has its moral foundations just as it has its rational presuppositions in the narrower sense of theoretical rationality.

The criticism to which we now turn is of greater philosophical interest. Accepting moral value as an irreducible and unique fact, the German phenomenologists, the British analytical moralists, and their many fellow-workers throughout the world renounce Kant's transcendental subjective formalism and yet seek to preserve the apriority of moral law or moral values discovered through some kind of intuition or immediate rational insight. To evaluate this criticism, we must first review Kant's own attitude toward the moral sense and then examine one of these countermovements.

In the beginnings of modern European philosophy, Christian dualism had kept the senses in a secondary position in morals long after the importance of sense perception to scientific knowledge had been re-established. But it was inevitable that the increasing secularization and naturalization of thought should bring with it a reorientation to natural man. This change of outlook was associated with a rejection of the moral precepts involved in Christian dualism; in time of change it is not easy to separate the central elements from the peripheral ones in opposing views. The revolution, therefore, resulted not in a naturalistic ethics but in an amoralism, whose greatest exponent was Thomas Hobbes. After Hobbes a reaction came; the main trend of British ethics was to reconcile an ethics of natural man with Christian tradition.

Within the naturalistic framework, Shaftesbury, with his concept of "disinterestedness" of the senses, contrived an escape from amoralistic conclusions. Like Locke, he held that the senses are capable of reflecting upon themselves and thus of becoming free from domination by the object of desire to which they are normally directed. Shaftesbury says:

> In a creature capable of forming general notions of things, not only the outward beings which offer themselves to the sense, are the objects of the affection; but the very actions themselves, and the affections of pity, kindness, gratitude, and their contraries, being brought into the mind by reflection, become objects. So that by means of this reflected sense, there arises another kind of affection toward those very affections themselves, which have already been felt, and are now become the subject of a new liking or dislike.[36]

Hutcheson, developing Shaftesbury's idea, held that something absolutely good is apprehended in actions. This good, in his philosophy, is benevolence, or that which tends to promote "public natural happiness." The perception of moral excellence is different from perception of an object of desire, and thus the sense for natural good is distinct from that for moral good.[37] It is not itself the incentive to moral action (this being benevolence) but the source of approbation or disapproval:

> This moral sense, either of our own actions, or of those of others, has this in common with our other senses, that however our desire of virtue may be counterbalanced by interest, our sentiment or perception of its beauty cannot; as it certainly might be, if the only ground of our approbation were views of advantage.[38]

In his precritical period Kant seems to have inclined toward such a view in his *Observations on the Feeling of the Sublime and the Beautiful,* which is composed in the manner of Shaftesbury. Kant speaks, in the *Distinctness of the Fundamental Principles of Natural Theology and Morals,* of "sensations of the good" and of feeling as the "faculty of sensing the good." Nevertheless, in his critical writings, he completely rejects the concept of moral sense, though he attempts to reconstruct the concept of moral feeling.[39] It is easy to see why his critical system demands this rejection. The mind is receptive rather than spontaneous in assimilating sensory material, and any knowledge resulting from receptivity is a posteriori. Hence the theory of moral sense would vitiate the autonomy of reason and destroy the apriority of morals.

[36] Shaftesbury, "An Inquiry concerning Virtue" in L. A. Selby-Bigge, *British Moralists* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897; reprinted in one vol. in "Library of Liberal Arts," No. 152 [New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1964]), I, 11. (I have modernized the spelling here and in the following passage.)

[37] Francis Hutcheson, "An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil" in *British Moralists,* I, 78, 159.

[38] *Ibid.,* p. 78.

[39] *Metaphysics of Morals,* Part II, *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue,* Introduction, V, XII.

With the modern phenomenological approach, however, the old issue has been reopened on a level not anticipated by Kant. The phenomenologists claim for intuition what is specifically denied to it by Kant—an a priori insight into content (material) and not merely formal conditions. Phenomenology thus represents a Counter-Copernican Revolution in philosophy, locating the a priori in the essential relationships between experiential objects grasped through immediate insight. At the same time the a priori ceases to be a manifestation of a transcendental subject; it is the basic structure of any possible object of experience.

This powerful method offers a new alternative to Kant's formalism. Hartmann agrees that if Kant's disjunction between "nature" and "reason" is exhaustive, then Kant's formalism must be accepted as the only alternative to an a posteriori naturalism. But he and other phenomenologists deny the exhaustiveness of this disjunction, asserting that there is a realm of values into which we have an a priori insight. On this foundation, it is claimed, an ethics which is both material and a priori can be erected.

It is profitless to argue, outside of a general treatise on metaphysics, concerning the relative merits of two such radically different approaches to philosophy. Nor is it possible to borrow a little from Kant and a little from Scheler and Hartmann to piece out an eclectic system—a method repeatedly repudiated by Kant with impatience and irony. Nevertheless, in some respects, especially in ethics, these two approaches are complementary; and, while it is out of the question to make a system of them, it is important to notice how they supplement each other.

The Kantian ethics is weak in two respects. First, the manner in which moral concern comes into experience is never satisfactorily examined. Kant often speaks of the "fact" of obligation, and he calls the moral law the "sole fact of pure reason." Yet the sense in which it is a "fact" is never made clear; it is the starting point, but the analysis of it leads away from its factuality. Second, "monotony" arises in the Kantian ethics from the attempt to discover everywhere the same basic pattern in all actions having moral worth. Naturally, every ethical theory must seek the highest common factor, but in Kant's writing the road back to the rich and variegated complexity of the moral phenomenon is seldom followed. The store of ethical phenomenology found in the *Observations on the Feeling of the Sublime and the Beautiful* was never put to use in Kant's mature philosophy.

On the other hand, it is precisely the factuality and empirical variety of the moral phenomenon which have attracted the closest attention of Scheler, Hartmann, Ross, and others who are phenomenological or "analytic" in their approach. Though their picture lacks the logical and metaphysical simplicity of the Kantian, it is much more subtle in its portrayal of the facts of the moral life. For this richness it must pay by an occasionally uncritical assumption of faculties and principles.[40]

Finally, phenomenology, with all its emphasis on the a priori, is unable to give as convincing an account as Kant does of the necessity inherent in moral imperatives. Kant states that an ethics beginning from the good necessarily leads to heteronomy and to hypothetical imperatives. To attribute to the object (the good) a character of "obligatoriness" in its relation to human action, as some phenomenologists do, is to make use of an *ad hoc* hypothesis which may well be discarded without making the phenomenon unintelligible. On the other hand, the Kantian conception of the relation of the good to obligation is simple, clear, and cogent. The *logique du cœur* of the phenomenologists seems to be a poor foundation for imperious duty exalted by Kant.

HUMAN NATURE AND FREEDOM

Kant repeatedly refers to his theory of morality as the "ethics of intention," and moral personality is everywhere the center of his thought. Only the good will is good; every rational being is an end in itself; humanity in man must be treated as an end and never as a means only; and our own moral perfection and the happiness of others are ends which are also duties. Kant's theory, however, legitimizes the moral command for rational beings in general. Morality cannot be derived from the empirical nature of man, nor should it be applied to man alone. It lies in the essence of rationality itself and applies to all rational beings.

[40] Although the following story may be apocryphal, it represents an impatience which is often created in a reader by the elaboration and overelaboration of entities in phenomenology. It is said that, when Scheler first read Hartmann's *Ethik*, he exclaimed, "My colleague Hartmann believes he can take a stroll through the realm of values as though it were Cologne!"

Man, however, is not merely a rational being; and his peculiar position in the world, as a rational being affected by sensuous needs, creates special problems for him. It requires special efforts on Kant's part to show how man as a citizen of the sensuous world can fulfill his destiny in the intelligible world. The problem of *human* morals is thus resolvable into two questions: How can man be a member of the intelligible world? How can the demands made upon his intelligible nature be met in the world of sense? The first is the problem of freedom; the second, that of the empirical character which is obligated to act morally.

The moral law is the "sole fact of pure reason."[41] But freedom is the "*ratio essendi* of morality" and "the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason."[42] It is the central problem of Kant's entire work and, as such, appears in various perspectives and at various strata within his philosophy.

There is, first of all, freedom of choice, which in one place[43] is said to be independent of transcendental freedom, the truly metaphysical concept springing from the third antinomy. Then there is the metaphysical concept itself, fully developed by means of the distinction between phenomena and noumena. This metaphysical concept of freedom is worked out problematically in the theoretical phases of the system and is asserted practically in the great ethical treatises. Finally, there is the concept of freedom which results from the faculty of judgment as the mediator between the worlds of appearance and reality. This is the latest of the three, elaborated in full in the *Critique of Judgment*.

41 *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 32, 48; trans. Beck, pp. 32, 48. The difference between the two passages cited (*"Faktum," "gleichsam ein Faktum"*) is of interest. The former passage states that it is not an empirical fact, and the latter hesitates to call it a fact at all. In modern terminology Kant might call it a construct in both passages. Alfred Hegler (*Die Psychologie in Kants Ethik* [Freiburg i.B.: Mohr, 1891], p. 92) writes that the moral law is *Faktum* "because it shows itself as real in maxims determined by it, and constitutes an ultimate possession of consciousness not reducible to any other," and that it is *gleichsam ein Faktum* "because it is not a single empirical datum [*Thatsache*] in consciousness, like some presentation or volition; it is not an empirical fact, but the sole fact of pure reason." [Cf. this volume, Essay XII.]

42 *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 3–4; trans. Beck, pp. 3–4.

43 *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 803=B 831. [I no longer accept the interpretation given here of this passage; cf. my *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 190, n. 40.]

Freedom on the first level is empirically given. It is freedom from the immediate importunities of sense. Kant is correct in saying that its reality is independent of the answer to the speculative problem of whether or not the will whose freedom is thus assured is ultimately a part of the mechanism of nature. He is not consistent, however, in his statement that this freedom is adequate to the requirements of morality as he expounds them in the remainder of his work. Nevertheless, this rudimentary concept of freedom helps us understand how the empirical personality can act morally.

Wholly within the realm of appearance, then, there is in man a faculty which can be called empirically free—the faculty of choice.[44] Choice "is the faculty of desire so far as it is connected with the consciousness of the competence of its action to produce its object."[45] It is free to the extent that choice is determined by reason (considered simply as the highest faculty of the mind which in its turn is a part of nature) and is contrasted with the animal will (*arbitrium brutum*), which is exercised without this control.[46] Choice can thus be considered, within the one world of nature, to be both free and necessitated.[47]

Such freedom, however, is of "limited liability." It is not capable of freeing man from all his yesterdays. Because it leaves man finally a part of nature, it does not justify us in imputing a man's actions to him as if he, and not nature, were the author of his works. It is freedom only in the legal sense. Freedom, Kant says elsewhere, cannot be understood psychologically; it is the stumbling block of all empiricism and cannot be salvaged if time is the mode of existence of things-in-themselves. Empirically, it is at most a partial manifestation of true freedom.

> Freedom of choice with respect to human actions as phenomenon consists in the capacity of choosing between two opposing things, the

44 *Willkür*. In Kant this word does not have the implication of willfullness that it possesses in modern German, where it implies some degree of arbitrariness and irresponsibility. Abbott translates it as "elective will," which conveys the meaning very well but has the disadvantage of rendering a common everyday German word by a technical philosophical term.

45 "Introduction to the Metaphysics of Morals," I, in Part I of *Metaphysics of Morals* (Academy edn., VI, 213).

46 *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 534=B 562.

47 *Lose Blätter*, Reicke edn., II, 28.

> lawful and the unlawful. Herein man regards himself as phenomenon, but as noumenon he himself is theoretically and practically legislative for objects of choice. In this respect he is free, but he has no choice.[48]

These two concepts—choice without true freedom and freedom which is conformity with the law prescribed by reason—are contrasted as the negative and positive concepts of freedom.[49] The former is freedom *from* something; it is arbitrary and lawless in itself, for reason as its determining ground is as yet undefined. Reason might conceivably be merely the name of a transcendent thought-process directed ultimately to the satisfaction of the senses which are unable to command the faculty of choice directly. But even though such a faculty of thought might transcend the ordinary laws of psychology, so long as its goals were in nature it would be restricted by man's empirical character as a being of wants and needs. Hence to be free from the senses in an unqualified way requires something more than the possibility of enlightened choice between alternatives. A determining ground of choice is required which will legislate for it directly, not indirectly through its objects. This determining ground must be independent of the entire world of sense. Only then can freedom *from* the world of sense become freedom *to* something else positively defined. If we could see freedom as an efficient cause, Kant affirms, we could also see that the practical law (reason's legislation) is the supreme law for choice, for it is the efficient cause issuing from rational beings.

But Kant does not make the transition from the negative to the positive concept of freedom in this way, since we cannot perceive the freedom of an efficient cause.[50] Rather, he seems to make a fresh start. This phase of the argument has two distinct parts—one which shows freedom, positively defined, to be possible, and one which

48 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

49 "Introduction to the Metaphysics of Morals," I, in Part I of *Metaphysics of Morals.*

50 In one place Kant writes as if we might make such a transition, though what he says will also bear a different interpretation. He says that the positive concept of freedom is "the capacity of pure reason to be practical of itself. This, however, is not possible except through the subjection of the maxims of any action to the condition of the worthiness of these maxims to serve as universal law" ("Introduction to the Metaphysics of Morals," I, in Part I of *Metaphysics of Morals* [Academy edn., VI, 213]).

causal series—is in conflict with the Analogy of Experience,[55] which treats the entire world of sense as a causal system. The initiation of a new series cannot be interpreted as an *influxus mysticus* without surrendering the category of causality. Kant says that, in a given case, reason could not otherwise determine action except by making the empirical character itself different,[56] and this in turn would require a change in the entire causal order so that sufficient empirical conditions could be found for its alternative state. Hence a causally integrated totality of appearances would require a completely integrated noumenal order which, in the case in point, would have had to be different from what it actually is. If these two orders are independent of each other, it is impossible to see how the manifestation of the rational character could be considered a spontaneous initiation of a causal chain within the empirical world. The consequence seems to be Spinozism: nothing can be different from what it is.

The mere possibility of evil in a world which is supposed to be the appearance of the world of reason, the source of all morality, presents a difficult problem for the theory. The actuality of evil actions accentuates this difficulty. If we grant that the first two *Critiques* sufficiently justify the possibility of moral actions, they do not explain how actions which ought to be morally good can fail to be so. The existence of evil is incompatible with a pure will which is free but without choice. Evil cannot be regarded simply as phenomenal, for then it would not be imputable as *moral* evil.[57] It is rather a mistaken subordination of pure and empirical maxims in the empirical character, and the theory of freedom is still unable to justify the claim that one might have refrained from an evil action which actually was performed.

These and similar difficulties are unavoidable in the second phase of Kant's conception of freedom because the argument is still on a theoretical level. They are irresolvable for two reasons.

First, the concept of freedom at this level, though distinguishing between appearance and reality, does not adequately define their relationship. It leaves morality and science each claiming its own

[55] *Critique of Pure Reason,* A 211=B 256.

[56] *Ibid.,* A 556=B 584.

[57] See *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,* trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1934), p. 17.

concept of causality, and these concepts are kept from open conflict only by a strict definition of areas of application. But when the two kinds of causality are applied to a specific moral action or character, their claims again inevitably conflict. Nevertheless, it is one reality in its several manifestations that we need to judge in order to bring peace and not just a truce to philosophy. Until the harshness of the distinction is tempered without loss to the positive results of the two *Critiques*, such contradictions will occur in every specific judgment. Though the first two *Critiques* established an "impassable chasm" between the two realms "as though they were so many different worlds," the law of freedom, Kant says, "ought to have an influence" on the world of sense.[58] The problems arising from the "two-world theory" can be solved only when the relationship between the two worlds is developed affirmatively.

Second, the claims of reason and those of understanding are at variance, yet each is sovereign in its own sphere. Neither is capable of extending its claims at the expense of the other. But, more significantly, neither is competent to apply its own principles directly to its object. These principles are without exception formal. The problems, however, are not formal but material, arising from the rival but justified claims of these two faculties to the phenomenon whose true estimation is in dispute. For the adjudication of these claims, a mediating faculty is required.

This faculty is judgment, and the third *Critique* presents the last and most profound treatment of freedom to be found in Kant's works. It is also the most difficult, because freedom itself is seldom the center of his attention. Rather, Kant turns primarily to consider a different, but related, problem—that of purpose.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* requires the formal unity of the a priori laws of nature, but it does not establish the idea of an equally inclusive system of individual objects. Nature, Kant says, constitutes a system by its transcendental laws, but

> . . . there is such an infinite multitude of empirical laws and so great a heterogeneity of forms of nature . . . that the concept of a system according to these empirical laws must be wholly alien to the understanding, and neither the possibility nor even less the necessity of such a whole can be conceived.[59]

[58] *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, II, IX.
[59] *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment*, II (Academy edn., XX, 203).

This concept of an empirical whole is nevertheless demanded as an ideal, as a regulative concept giving sense and direction to the search for interrelationships among the phenomena of nature. This interrelationship is provided by the faculty of judgment which subsumes particulars under given universals or finds universals that fit given particulars. In carrying out this function, judgment presupposes a "formal design" in nature, i.e., an all-pervasive, comprehensible order.

We are never excused from searching for a mechanical explanation of any single fact (including human actions), yet at the same time we cannot anticipate a "Newton of a blade of grass." The mechanistic theory does not lead us from the parts which it investigates to the whole of its organization. This limitation is particularly relevant to human actions, even though they are in principle, Kant says, as predictable as astronomical events.

The idea of formal design is of pre-eminent importance in the case of man, for man's character is purposive in the sense that all parts are to be properly subordinated to the whole; moreover, man's moral conduct understood as conformity with his own internal law transcends mechanical causality, in which causes are external to the acting character.[60] For these reasons it is proper to judge man by the regulative idea of his design and purpose, which is moral, and we can do so without prejudice to a mechanistic explanation of nature.

Because both of these ideas, purposive design and mechanism,

[60] William T. Jones, has emphasized this point in "Purpose, Nature, and the Moral Law," in *The Heritage of Kant*, ed. G. T. Whitney and D. F. Bowers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), and in *Morality and Freedom in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940). He denies the validity of the concept of noumenal causality and denies that the third *Critique* can bridge the gap between theory and practice by its attempted proof that the highest good is possible in nature. In fact, he goes further and says that this attempt is itself incompatible with the deepest insights of Kant's system concerning the true relation between morality and nature. He holds that the existence of the organism permits a constitutive use of the category of purpose (which is, of course, denied by Kant), and that it supplies an analogon by which we can see the supplementation to natural necessity required for the achievement of the highest moral end. Mr. Jones quite correctly sees in the organism not a natural purpose requiring a peculiarly transcendent cause but an objective analogon of morality itself. "The peculiar kind of order which distinguishes organisms from other natural objects," he says, "is identical with the order which, we find, connects motive and act in morally good action and which distinguishes it from all other action" (*The Heritage of Kant*, p. 240). Thus freedom (but not freedom of choice) is found in an order of being to which mechanistic explanation is simply irrelevant.

not be formulated as rules for this kind of synthesis. We can comprehend the observed dependence of part upon whole not through a category of purpose or wholeness—as many biologically oriented writers on Kant have proposed—but only through a regulative idea, *by analogy with our own technique.* As technicians, we do combine parts into wholes and order means to ends in the light of a guiding idea, a concept of the whole. By analogy, we think of a *technique of nature,* as though nature worked for certain ends in the light of a guiding idea, i.e., as created or as creating with a design. But in nature it is not the whole as such which is the condition of the parts (for the parts are parts of physical nature and are under the condition of time and efficient causation). It is rather the *idea* of the whole which conditions their relationships as we see them. Purpose, however, is the concept of an object so far as the concept contains the ground of the reality of the object itself.[62] Hence the discursive nature of human understanding makes concrete constitutive insight into the organization of nature impossible and compels us to interpret design, in a merely regulative manner, as a consequence of purpose. We have, thus, only an abstract insight into nature's structure, and our concrete insight into nature's relationships is always constituted by the category of causation in time.

But it is possible to think of another kind of understanding, one free from human limitations, an "intuitive understanding." Such an understanding would proceed from an intuition of the whole to its parts, thereby reversing the procedure of the human understanding, which can only construct a whole out of its parts. This superhuman understanding would, by directly intuiting wholes, see wholes as the efficient causes of parts. Our intuition presents us with conditioned wholes which, in the order of time and efficient causation, are the effects, not the causes, of their parts. We can think abstractly of an absolute and unconditioned whole, but we cannot intuit it. As our conception of it is abstract, we comprehend it only by an analogy, in which the *concept* of the whole is seen as the condition of the particular constellation of its parts. This is precisely what we mean by design or purpose. Therefore it lies in the nature of the human mind to think in teleological as well as in mechanical terms. The mechanical pattern, in which the category of causality has a schema in time,

[62] *Ibid.*, Introduction, IV.

is constitutive of the world of experience, while the teleological procedure, without a temporal form, is regulative of our search for the order between various causal sequences.

Freedom, like purpose, is a regulative idea. It posits a design, and this design does not lie in the constitution of nature. As purpose is regulative of our theoretical judgment, so freedom is regulative of practice. Purpose and freedom are not constitutive, and the world of nature is not the world of morality. But just as the *Critique of Judgment* permits us to guide our thought by the idea of purpose, the *Critique of Practical Reason* states as the typic of the moral law the injunction: act as though the moral law could become a law of nature.

The faculty of ideas—pure reason—thus becomes practical. Morality and freedom are the positing of a regulative idea as an ideal to be achieved and the conduct of reason so as to achieve it. The regulative idea of the unconditioned condition which functions theoretically in the teleological judgment now becomes practical.

That which is regulative always has direct relevance to the practical. All practical ideas are regulative not merely of thought but of conduct. It means little or nothing to demand that the practical be constitutive—man's reach should exceed his grasp.[63] For an intuitive understanding, design, purpose, and even freedom might be constitutive categories, and they would not in the least conflict with the demands of mechanism. For us, there is an antinomy between freedom and efficient causation when both are taken constitutively, and this conflict can be resolved by us only by considering freedom and design to be regulative. The conflict holds between our diverse procedures, not in reality.

The *Critique of Judgment*, while not breaking down the distinction between appearance and reality, thus points the way to a *de facto* justification of the judgment of freedom. Without making

[63] The answer to the question, "What ought I to do?" "consists of *one* presupposition and *one* inference. The presupposition: It must be proved (and the two *Critiques* do prove) that the unconditioned is not impossible, that there is some hope of its achievement and realization, small though it be. For no man could knowingly and without reserve throw himself into something conceded impossible and indeed apodictically impossible. The inference: If there is the slightest hope that the Absolute can ever be realized in the intelligible world, then so act as if the maxim of your action should become, by your will, a law of nature" (Lucien Goldmann, *Mensch, Gemeinschaft und Welt in der Philosophie Immanuel Kants* [Zürich and New York: Europa Verlag, 1945], pp. 173–74).

universe but is the very nature of the self. This immanent teleology of moral obligation is expressed in an early fragment: "If there is any science man really needs, it is the one I teach: how he may properly fill the place assigned to him in creation. From it he may learn what he must be, in order to be a man."[65]

But how different from the ideal of man is actual man! Man is a creature of needs, the satisfaction of which gives pleasure. This pleasure is the only natural incentive to action. Consequently, all theories of human nature which place the driving force of conduct in the satisfaction of needs are ultimately forms of hedonism. Moreover, ethical theories based on them are heteronomous, since they view reason at most as a guide to the successful attainment of the ends of desire and not as active on its own account. Happiness as an ideal is the satisfaction of all desires. Though technical imperatives can be formulated for the achievement of pleasure arising from the satisfaction of an immediate need, happiness is a concept of such fluctuating content that no definite imperative can be derived from it.

The moral law, however, lays down a rule without exceptions, giving commands instead of counsels. Before its majesty the senses are humiliated. This humiliation awakens respect for the law. Respect thus functions as moral feeling. It is the subjective aspect, not the cause, of morality. It is painful as an arrest of the natural inclination but akin to pleasure in presenting a moral goal which every man can achieve out of the inward resources of his rational nature, irrespective of his position in the world. The moral law, as a universal principle integrating the diverse forces in man's nature, is the basis of what is commonly called "character." The inner form of character is virtue, or "the moral disposition in conflict" with the wayward and chaotic inclinations. In building his character, man develops a genuine interest in his own perfection as a moral goal. This interest, combined with faith, gives strength and substance to character by awakening hope of the highest good in the world.

Such are the central features of Kant's account of human nature. Two criticisms of it are sufficiently important to require examination: that Kant's theory does not give sufficient scope to human emotions and is "false to human nature" and that Kant's supposition

[65] *Fragmente aus dem Nachlasse*, Academy edn., XX, 45.

clearly the difference between the two.[1] Only in reading the *Metaphysics of Morals* does one see Kant, with an appropriate terminology, distinguish between them. The principal writings of Kant had been written without this clarification, and it is somewhat difficult to go back and apply the later distinction in the earlier works in every place where it is necessary for full clarity. It can and ought to be done, though some difficulties will still remain, since the explicit definition of the two concepts in the *Metaphysics of Morals* itself is not without ambiguity.

From the *Critique of Pure Reason* there comes the concept of freedom as spontaneity, the faculty of initiating a new causal series in time. The first *Critique* does not profess to demonstrate that this is a "real concept," i.e., a concept that really has an object. It shows simply that there is nothing logically impossible in it, and that though it is not necessary to the sudy of nature by theoretical reason, it is necessary if the structure of theoretical reason is to be perfected. It is nonetheless true that Kant, in 1781, believed that it was a concept applicable to the human will and that it applied to spontaneous and voluntary actions, though the same actions were comprehended, theoretically and empirically, under the causal laws of nature. In the first *Critique* (except for the "Methodology"), Kant was little occupied with problems of moral philosophy. Still, he knew already that a good will is a free will which obeys a moral law, though the formula and the source of this law were not developed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The search for the formula and source of the law for a spontaneous will constitutes the principal task of the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. In this little book, however, there appears an entirely new concept of freedom, viz., that of autonomy. Autonomy refers to the creator of law. An autonomous or free will is a will subject to no law except one of which it is itself the author; it is a will independent of any law (like the laws of nature) which has any other source. The faculty which, in this sense, is strictly autonomous is "pure practical reason," and Kant identifies it also with will.

Thus appears the ambiguity of which I have spoken. Kant speaks generally of the spontaneous initiation of a causal series as emerging

[1] This was pointed out, and its importance emphasized, by Victor Delbos, *La philosophie pratique de Kant* (2nd edn.; Paris: Alcan, 1926), p. 455.

in an act of will; and he speaks of the source of the law to which this spontaneity is subject as also a will. But the two conceptions are obviously different, and much later Kant tried to establish the difference between them by introducing a terminological distinction between *Willkür*[2] and *Wille*.[3]

Kant had often previously used these words, sometimes to intimate a tacit distinction which he had not fully developed in his own thought; but more often the words seemed to be interchangeable. And, further, even after he had established the distinction, Kant often did not remain faithful to it; it has been wittily said of Kant that he succeeded in being technical without being precise. Yet I do not believe that he ever used the word *Willkür* when he meant to say *Wille* in a strict sense (though the converse error is common).

The formal definition of *Wille* given in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is: "A power to determine the causation [of an act] by the representation of rules."[4] This is the concept already made familiar in the first *Critique*. Since reason is required[5] to derive an act from a rule, law, or maxim, one can say that the will is nothing but practical reason; it is this faculty which makes a rule of reason the efficient cause of an action by means of which an object can be realized, or the means by which one goes from mere idea to the state of affairs envisaged in it. *Wille* is distinguished from simple desire since it is never determined by the object or even by our concept of the object, but always by a law which can be formulated only by reason, although its application may be to the endeavor for objects of desire.[6] If the motive for an action is found in the lower faculty of desire, it is solely a conception of the object and is always empiri-

[2] On the difficulties of translating these words, see my *Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 177 n. [I wish now to call attention to the review of this book by John R. Silber in *Ethics*, LXXIII (1963), 179–97, the second part of which is a scholarly study of *Wille* and *Willkür*.]

[3] "The faculty of desire which operates under concepts, in so far as the principle which determines it to action is in itself and not drawn from objects, is called the faculty of arbitrarily doing or refraining. As related to the consciousness of the power to act to produce the object, it is called *Willkür*. . . . The faculty of desire of which the internal principle of determination resides in the reason of the subject is called *Wille*. . . . [The latter] is practical reason itself" (*Metaphysics of Morals*, Academy edn., VI, 213).

[4] *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 32; trans. Beck, p. 32.

[5] *Foundations*, Academy edn., IV, 412.

[6] *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 60.

The rule of reason still leaves undetermined the choice of the object of *Willkür*, but we are now concerned not with this determination but with the origin of the rule of reason itself. If this rule of reason is derived from our empirical or theoretical knowledge of the causal conditions for achieving an object of desire, there is nothing new in the problem; theoretical or cognitive reason furnishes the knowledge that "*A* causes *B*," and practical interest in *B* converts this into "*A* is a means of attaining *B*."

In moral action, the rule cannot have such a material content as its condition, for it would not then be universally valid but valid only on the condition that *B* was desired. The source of the rule, therefore, cannot be theoretical reason, and the origin of the rule cannot be attributed to the *usus logicus* of reason, even to the *usus logicus* of practical reason. Thus reason must have a real use: it should be seen as the faculty of formulating a priori synthetic rules. This corresponds to the use that reason has in transcendental logic (with regard to the formation of theoretical a priori synthetic judgments), and not to the use of reason in general logic, which is solely concerned with the form and implications of the form of judgments. After the *Critique of Pure Reason*, this use of reason is familiar to us in its theoretical function. The second *Critique*, in establishing that there is a *pure* practical reason, establishes in the same way the fact that practical reason has a *usus realis* and not merely a *usus logicus*.

The difference between the pure reason of the first and the pure reason of the second *Critique* is not found in the difference between *usus realis* and *usus logicus*, but in the kind of a priori synthetic judgments established by reason. If the judgment is practical, that is to say, if it is a rule for *Willkür*, reason is practical, and pure practical reason is then identified with the moral will.

It thus appears that we now have two concepts of will, totally different from each other. The one, which is called *Willkür* in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, we may refer to as an executive faculty. The other, which is pure practical reason, is *Wille* in the strict sense, and may be called a legislative faculty. "From *Wille* there arise laws; from *Willkür*, maxims."[10] *Willkür* is obliged to execute that which pure practical reason in its real use (not its logical use) makes law. Thus,

[10] *Metaphysics of Morals*, Academy edn., VI, 226.

unfold in the order of nature, and though they can, in principle, be predicted by virtue of our knowledge of the laws of nature, they are nonetheless free actions and we are responsible for them, since they are chosen with respect for a law which is not determined by the state of affairs in nature.

This is the liberty of *Willkür*. But what is the freedom of pure practical reason of *Wille* in the narrow sense? It is not free in the sense of being indeterminate, of being free of fetters or in possessing a supernatural spontaneity. It does not possess freedom, Kant once tells us, because it does not act at all.[14] Its freedom is its purity, the nonempirical character of the universal law which it gives. It is freedom in the sense of autonomy. Autonomy is the faculty of making laws by itself and for itself, and the term autonomy applies not only to pure practical reason, but to pure reason in general.

We can now summarize and bring the two concepts together. *Willkür* is *completely* free, i.e., spontaneous, only when it adopts as its law an autonomous decree of pure practical reason or *Wille*. By a kind of hybridization of concepts, we speak of an autonomous *Willkür* and a spontaneous *Wille*. Still, it is better to speak of a free and spontaneous *Willkür* which is not naturally determined as being free in what Kant calls the negative sense, and of an autonomous *Wille* as being free in what Kant calls the positive sense of freedom.[15]

II

One of the principal difficulties in moral philosophy before Kant was this: if freedom of choice is granted, how can one subject it to the law and make it moral? The history of the philosophy of the eighteenth century is full of attempts to respond to this question. The most typical one was that there was a motive of the will which was different from the knowledge of the law, and which was added to this knowledge, such as the desire for happiness, or the desire for recompense for certain actions, or the love of God. Since Kant saw clearly that there was a generic difference between morality and prudence, between a truly good will and a will prudent in following

[14] *Metaphysics of Morals*, Academy edn., VI, 226.

[15] *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 33; *Metaphysics of Morals*, Academy edn., VI, 213–14.

its own interests, this kind of answer did not suit him. All explanations of this kind are heteronomous, i.e., are dependent upon conditions which have to be discovered empirically and which are destructive of the universal necessity which is the mark of moral obligation. For morality, the consequences of such a heteronomous empiricism are comparable to those of strict empiricism in our knowledge of nature. Both, Kant believed, led to skepticism.

The response Kant made to this question is his most important contribution to moral philosophy. That the will of man both creates and executes obligations is one of the most dramatic theses in Kant's philosophy. It is as dramatic as, and comparable to, the "Copernican Revolution" of his theoretical philosophy. As long as the origin of the law, be it natural or be it moral law, was ascribed to the nature of things and as long as it was believed that it could be known only by means of experience, its universality and necessity were illusory. Although one might well be a theoretical skeptic in the manner of Hume, for Kant skepticism in matters of morality seemed to be at once unfounded and ungenuine, and immoral in its effects.

It was known to some of Kant's predecessors that the moral law is rational and is discovered a priori and that it is an obligation of man to render obedience to this law without regard to the reward which followed—at least one believed it followed—the obedience. That morality is the pursuit of a perfection, and that the realization of a perfection is accompanied by pleasure, was recognized by Wolff, for example, who did not fall into the common error of thinking that it was the accompanying pleasure rather than the perfection itself which was the object of choice. But no one seemed to know why one should choose perfections nor how to determine what they were and how to approach them. Their error, Kant thought, was that of trying to establish practical conduct on tautologies. To avoid the tautologies, the disciples of Wolff (e.g., Baumgarten) surreptitiously reintroduced all the hedonistic and eudaemonistic elements which Wolff had, at least officially, suppressed. Kant admitted that that was the only thing they could do; all their material principles, however rationalistically conceived, were only principles of self-love and private happiness.

Now because Kant discovered the law as a product of pure reason and as rendered evident by "the sole fact of pure reason," and because

he did not have to try to obtain it from the abstract concept of perfection or the concept of Wolff's "will in general," it was possible for him to see that the will as "creator of the law" was an idealization of the spontaneous *Willkür*. Granted that, Kant did not have to look for exterior motivation for obedience to that law, nor support it by any appeal to the authority of God or nature. Rational personality as initiator of the laws is a being which is *ipso facto* an ought for partially rational beings. Or, put another way, the duty of which we are conscious as constraining the actions of our *Willkür* is a product of law on impulse; the law would be a law which *Willkür* would obey spontaneously if *Willkür* did not have an impulsive element and did not to some extent lack rationality. The same faculty, as a pure faculty, initiates the laws and, as sensibly affected, is bound to obey them. "One need only analyze the sentence which men pass upon the lawfulness of the actions to see in every case that their reason, incorruptible and self-constrained, in every action holds up the maxim of the will [*Willens*] to the pure will [*Willen*], i.e., *to itself regarded as a priori practical.*"[16]

Thus Kant can say that the law and the conditions necessary to obedience to it—the spontaneity of *Willkür*—have one common source, a source which his predecessors did not discover and of which they hardly even felt the need. His predecessors, therefore, were never able to translate their formalistic ontological ethic into a practical doctrine without destroying either the formality of their ontological principle or the purity of the conception of the moral law. All too often, in their ignorance, they did both.

The central point of the Kantian philosophy was anticipated only by Rousseau. It is so essential in the philosophy of Kant that I propose to call it, by analogy to the "Copernican Revolution," the "Rousseauistic Revolution" in moral philosophy. Rousseau said simply: We are not obligated to obey any law in whose establishment we have not participated. Obligation to any other law is slavery, and obedience to it can be obtained only by a system of reward and punishment in which there is no place for dignity; but obedience to a law one gives oneself is freedom. Others saw in law only a restric-

[16] *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 32; trans. Beck, p. 32. It would have been preferable to have said *Willkür* for *Wille* and *Wille* for pure will. Italics added.

tion on freedom, a restriction no doubt necessary, but all the same a restriction. Rousseau said: Valid law is an expression of freedom. Kant suggests: "Moral law is nothing else than the self-consciousness of pure practical reason, and is thus equivalent to freedom."[17]

While Rousseau established the essential connection between law and freedom primarily in the political sphere, where his doctrine was adopted with little change by Kant, the doctrine of autonomous government by free citizens of a republic is deepened by Kant into a moral, metaphysical, and even religious conception. Precisely because he developed this doctrine in his theoretical ethics more than Rousseau did, we are in a better position to clarify his political doctrines than we are to clarify those of Rousseau. We can easily see how diverse political views, often imputed to Rousseau and even occasionally to Kant, can be explained, or reconciled, or refuted by turning to the fundamental differences in the two conceptions of will in the principal ethical writings of Kant.

For though it is not hard to find in reading Rousseau an ideology for anarchy or for fascism, it is not so easy to consider Kant under either aspect (though some efforts have been made in these directions). The reply to such efforts is to recall the specific senses of freedom or liberty as related to his two conceptions of will.

III

The specific question is: Can the human will be, at once, spontaneous, obedient, and autonomous? These prima facie incompatible attributes can belong to it, if Kant is right. They must belong to it if he is correct, since each involves the others. But if spontaneity and obedience to law are taken in superficial forms, or if obedience and liberty as political concepts are taken in a superficial form, paradoxes can be found in Kant's ethical theory and in his social and political teachings that are exactly parallel to those which have been found, perhaps with more warrant, in Rousseau's. There are three.

1) Kant is individualistic in his ethics and in his political doctrines. But the moral person is only an abstraction for him, a bearer of a formal potential good will, which is supposed to dominate the concrete individual person who, in his specific characteristics, is

17 *Critique of Practical Reason*, Academy edn., V, 29; trans. Beck, p. 29.

by a vote of the latter, Kant thought it could be approached through a regression upon the conditions of the latter, upon the conditions which give to the latter whatever degree of freedom and spontaneity it can possess.

The alleged paradoxes are not so much paradoxes of an inherent dualism in Kant's ethics as they are manifestations of a paradoxical predicament of human life itself. We find in ourselves individualized manifestations of universal mandates and injunctions. Man is the only being in the world that can get himself entangled in these paradoxes, with all the horror they bring and all the heroism they demand. For man is the only being in the world who is a citizen of two worlds, and subject to both psychological explanation and moral exhortation; he is the only being in the world who is torn between the roles of spectator and actor. He alone can issue, recognize, obey, disobey (and not merely illustrate or fail to illustrate) laws. If he were a beast, he could neither create nor obey laws; were he a god, he could create them without having to obey; were he a slave, he would have to obey but could not create laws. But he is, for good or evil, neither beast nor slave nor God.[21]

Had the Kantian teaching avoided either of the first two paradoxes by really separating the will into two faculties, it would have been less responsive and faithful to the fatefully paradoxical aspect of human life itself, for it would have edged man a little nearer to being a slave (paradoxes 1 and 3) or a god (paradox 2).

The greatest error possible in the interpretation of Kant—an error so great that it must seem to be politically or ideologically motivated—is that which leads to the third of the paradoxes. According to this, Kant esteemed obedience so highly that neither moral nor political freedom could exist as more than polite names for obedience to tyranny; and such a doctrine does not stop, any more than the historical impulse it represents, with making men slaves; it regards them as beasts in the mechanism of nature, which may of course include the arbitrary edicts and powers of tyrants.

Fortunately, this greatest error is the one easiest to refute. This error not only separates one will into two, but locates each in a different person (or institution), each of which is in conflict with the other. The end result is that rights are ascribed to one, and only the

[21] *Metaphysics of Morals,* Academy edn., VI, 241.

duty to obey is ascribed to the other. But if the Kantian answer to the first two criticisms is subtle and must be ferreted out, that to the third is clear and forceful in Kant's own words, and does not require a reconstruction or reinterpretation of the texts in the light of the distinction between two meanings of the concept of will and freedom. For Kant says:

> With regard to the most sublime reason in the world that I can think of with the exception of God—say, the great Aeon—when I do my duty in my post as he does in his, there is no reason under the law of equality why obedience to duty should fall only to me and the right to command only to him.[22]

Accordingly, Kant quotes with approval (but with a certain arch cynicism, too) the apothegm of Frederick the Great that he was the servant of his people.[23]

This pretended separation of rights from duties, of obligation-creation from obligation-execution, ignores the fact that all moral discipline is self-discipline, from which it follows that all just government is self-government. The same man, by virtue of the same faculty in its legislative and executive functions, its formal and its material conditions, is at the same time the subject and the sovereign both in the realm of ends and in the just political state. Kant's doctrine of man in the state, therefore, does not hold that he can be or ever should become merely an abstract citizen, participating abstractly and uniformly in a *volonté generale*; nor does it hold that he is and must necessarily remain an animal to be tamed only by police machinery working for an alien law. With Rousseau, Kant finds man the citizen as the a priori condition of man as exercising all his spontaneous capacities against the merely natural, i.e., the nonpolitical and the nonmoral, mechanism of life.

That this is the proper Kantian order of political and moral concepts is shown clearly in his essays on the philosophy of history and in his conception of the moral commonwealth (the Church

22 *Perpetual Peace,* Academy edn., VIII, 350 n.; trans. L. W. Beck, "Library of Liberal Arts," No. 54 (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), pp. 11–12 n. God only is excepted because he is under no law (in the form of an imperative). That is, as a holy will there is no obligation for God. But the same moral law is perfectly manifested in His holiness and imperfectly manifested in our virtue.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 352; trans. Beck, p. 14.