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KANT'S CONCEPTS OF DUTY AND HAPPINESS

The aim of this paper is to present Kant's concept of duty upon which he seems to have built the whole structure of his ethical theories. We shell also try to determine the place of happiness within the framework of Kant's concept of duty. In evaluating these concepts, we shall also face an obvious question, i. e., what is the place of ends and consequences in his ethics. This is because, the way Kant presents his ideas, it seems that any reference to ends and consequences is incompatible with his doctrine of duty. It is to be noted that it is in this connection that the critics of Kantian morality have levelled the charge of rigorism and formalism against Kant.

For the exposition, we shall refer in the main to his *Groundwork of the Metaphysis of Morals*[1] and the *Critique of Practical Reason,*[2] but where a more adequate treatment of the same topic is afforded by some other works, we shall take advaantage of them when occasion requires.

It should be noted that in his *Critique of Pure Reason*[3] morality has been treated as a given fact. The only thing that remains is to prove its nesessity and universality. This is what he does in his *Groundwork.* In his *Pure Reason,* Kant also shows that imperatives are principles of the possibilty of experience, and they contain the *apriori* condition of worthiness to be happy.[4]

In contrast with his *Pure Reason,* Kant begins his *Groundwork* from a different point of view. In the *Pure Reason* Kant begins with the empirical elements of experience, where as in the *Groundwork* , he begins with the *apriori* elements in human experience, and finally in the *Practical Reason* he shows the applicability of this *apriori* elements to man. In the last one, Kant tries to answer the question, how pure reason can be practical-the question which he regarded as empirical in his *Pure Reason,* and transcendental in the *Groundwork*[5].

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Kant's sole aim in his *Groundwork* is "to seek out and establish the supreme principle of morality"[6]. With a view to this, Kant, in the beginning of the chapter-I of the *Groundwork*, asserted,

> it is impossible to conceive anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except goodwill.[7]

This means, a goodwill alone is good in all circumstances and unconditionally. By goodwill Kant does not mean a mere wish or ideal willing but "straining of every means so far as they are in our control." If it is then left alone it could accomplish nothing; "it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake as something which has its full value in itself."[8]

This means, what counts for moral value is not the results we achieve, but willingness to do our best, the effort of will involved in any action. This notion of inward goodness of will, Kant asserts, is "already present in a sound natural understanding",[9] which cannot be derived from experience.

Now, how do we know that an action done, has been done on goodwill? Kant's answer is that if it is done for the sake of duty. How do we know, again, that an action done, is done for the sake of duty alone? If an action is done in accordance with the formal laws of morality, it will be understood as an action done for the sake of duty. In other words, that an action done from duty derives its moral worth not from the end which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim from which it is done; that duty is the necessity of acting out of reverence or respect for the moral law.[10] Kant asserts that this idea of law is the determining ground of the will and also a pre-eminent good which we call moral.[11]

But the question is, what kind of law can this be, the thought of which, even without regard to the result expected from it, has to determine the will, if this is to be called good absolutely and without qualification ? Kant's answer is :

> Since I have robbed the will of every inducemennt that might arise for it as a consequence of being any particular law as such, there remains nothing except the universal conformity of action to law in general, and this alone must serve the will as its principle. That is to

> say, I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law. Here bare conformity to universal law as such ... is what serves the will as its principle."[12]

Upto this point Kant has appealed to common experience of moral obligation and has not even questioned the common interpretation of duty. By his example of 'false promise' he was able to show the distinction between prudence and rightness. In the chapter-II of his *Groundwork* he intends to show that this distinction would never have been drawn but for a reccgnition of duty as implying an *apriori* principle. Kant argues that since "it is absolutely impossible for experience to establish a single case in which the maxim of an action in other respect might have rested solely on moral grounds, and not on the thought of one's duty", we must seek for it something outside experience. And what is not empirical, must be *apriori*. Psychologically, it is a true claim. Because no psychologist can help in finding out one's motive of an action. Kant echoes the same point when he says, 'in fact, we can never, even by the strictest examination, get to the bottom of our secret impulse of self-love."[13] Kant also says that if we fail to discern the *apriori* character of the consciousness of duty, we shall also fail to distinguish between goodness and enlightened self-interest, as in the case of a shop-keeper who does not overcharge his innocent customers. It is, therfore, Kant argues,

> clear that no experience can give us an occasion to infer even the possibility of such apodeictic laws.[14]

Thus, Kant concludes that the concept of duty is *apriori*. He writes :

> All moral concepts have their seat and origin in reason completely *apriori* and indeed in the most ordinary human reason just as much as in the most highly speculative : they cannot be abstracted from any empirical, and therefore merely contingent knowledge. In this purity of their origin is to be found their very worth to serve as supreme practical principles.[15]

In chapter - II Kant assumes that the reason can be practical and can of itself alone be the motive of an action. Practical reason, he says, expresses itself as a command in the case of human will (as distinguished from holy will), and the agent feels obliged to obey it. At

this point Kant brings in the term imperative into his argument."The conception of an objective principle", he says, "so far as this principle is necessitating for a will is called a command (of reason) and the formula of this command is called imperative".[16] And all imperatives can be either hypothetical or categorical. Categorical imperatives are non-moral imperatives. Kant also contrasted them in many ways with different types of predication, as moral imperatives are unconditional, necessary, formal, *apriori*, synthetic, apodeictic, immediate and direct, whereas non-moral imperatives are conditional, contingent, material, empirical, analytic, non-apodeictic, mediate and indirect.[17]

II

Now the question is, how these imperatives determine our action; since, according to Kant, it is absolutely possible that there could be no counter-part in reality to the notion of an act categorically commanded,[18] how the moral law can of itself be a motive of an action. Kant's answer is that " we shall have to investigate the possibility of a categorical imperative entirely *apriori.*"[19] However, in the *Practical Reason* Kant remarks that " how a law in itself can be the direct determining ground of the will (which is the essence of morality), is an insoluble problem for human reason".[20]

In fact, Kant never doubted the reality of morality or that the moral law could be the determining ground of action. He only says that as there is no reference to particular end or purpose in categorical imperative, the agent can *a priorily* determine what ought to be done The only thing the agent has to see is whether his action or maxim of of an action would be in conformity with the Universality of law. Hence, Kant formulats the principle of morality: "There is, therefore, single categorical imperative and it is this : Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."[21] (We will mention it as a formula - I).

With the formulation of this 'single' categorical imperative, one might expect Kant to have completed this part of his exposition. But without stopping there Kant proceeds to a lengthy argument, in which he formulated some other principles. We may list below Paton's identified formula with the level attached to them. (Formula - I above, the formula of universal law).

(b) Formula Ia (the formula of the law of nature) :

Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of Nature.[22]

(c) Formula II (the formula of End in itself) :

so act as to use humanity, both in your own person and in the person of every other, always at the same time as an end, never simply as means.[23]

(d) Formuls III (the formula of Autonomy) :

so act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim.[24]

(e) Formula III (the formula of kingdom of ends) :

So act as if you were always through your maxim a law making member in a universal kingdom of Ends.[25]

By doing this, Kant, in fact, created considerable confusions in his moral theory. Various wordings of these principles caused confusion among the commentators as to the exact number of principles that are contained in the argument. Most widely accepted number is three. H.J. Paton, as I have shown above, identified a total of five principles including the original one, though he admits that there are main three formulas, but Kant showed five in order to show connection among different formulas.[26] Some writers say that there is but only one principle - the supreme principle of morality of which Kant promises in the preface to his *Groundwork*. A.R.C. Duncan holds that the question of number of principles may mean either (a) how many formulas did Kant think he had offered ? or (b) how many formulas can be suggested by an ingenious reader ? According to him, only the former question is relevant in this context. So, he admits only four formulas excluding from Paton's list formula IIIa.[27] According to Caird, there are only three formulations- 1, II, IIa.[28] Broad also holds that there are three but he identifies them with I,II and III.[29] Silver points out that these formulations of the categorical imperative cannot be regarded as final. The number is actually indeterminate, because Kant begins with the moral law as a single formal principle and attempts to make its meaning increasingly clear for intuition by a variety of formulations.[30]

But the problem is that Kant himself speaks of three formulas. This is evident from Kant's own wordings on page 98 of the

Groundwork where he refers to the principle as 'our third practical principle of the will,' and on pp. 103-4 where he reviews the various formulas, he says,

> The aforesaid three ways of representing the principle of morality are at bottom merely so many formulations of precisely the same law, one of them by itself containing a combination of the other two.[31]

This passage suggests that Kant accepts in all four formulas. Three subsidiary formulas (Ia,II IIIa) are the three ways of representing the principle of morality. These are subsidiary to the universal formula - 'only... single categorical imperative'. They are formulated 'to secure acceptance for the moral law' by bringing the universal formula nearer to intuition - and so nearer to our feelings. The difference between them is not objective but subjective.

But, if above explanation is acccepted as being Kantian, the problem arises as to the place of the formula of autonomy in Kant's theory, to which Kant refers as the 'sole principle of ethics'. It seems that the formula III occupies a higher position above the formula I. The place of the principle of autonomy in Kant's theory, thus, poses a special problem for the commentators. Neither Paton nor Duncan could give an adequate and satisfactory account of this problem. Duncan even placed it under formula IIIa as a different wording of the same formula. T.C. Williams argues (ofcourse, with interpolation in he actual text) that principle of autonmy is neither superior nor inferior to formula - I. Two formulas state two separate moral principles. The principle of autonomy, he says, is the principle of presupposition for moral action, and

> the importance of the principle of autonomy for Kant's theory lies exclusively in its function as stating the fundamental presupposition of morality - the presupposition on which the validity of the principle of the categorical imperative itself rests.[31]

But, it should be noted, the number of the formulas does not carry as much problem as does the question of their interrelations. More particularly, the question of place and function of the formula-I is a much debated topic in Kantian ethics, and confusion arising out of detemining its actual function leads the commentators to level

several charges against Kant, to which we will return next. Though Kant himself regarded the categorical imperative as a guiding principle for moral action, yet the crux of the problem lies in the kind of guidance it gives. Generally, it is taken as a precise standard or criterion by which the moral value of actual action might be tested.

Now the question is whether it offers a negative criterion or a positive one. Williams expresses doubt as to whether it expresses a positive criterion, as accepting it as offering a positive criterion, "would imbue moral character into very act of breathing and is also so patently absurd that one may fairly question whether it could form part of Kant's doctrine."[32] He considers the categorical imperative as a test of (a) what is prohibited, and (b) what is not prohibited- what is permissible.[33] In order to make Kant consistent Williams rejected the pasage which indicates a positive criterion, as being wrong in the early stage of his formulation.[34]

Now let us see Kant's position in this regard. We know that immediately following the formulation of the law of nature, Kant illustrates the common notion of duty. He divides duty into (a) duties to self and (b) duties to others. Further, he divides each duty into perfect and imperfect, making in all four kinds of duties. Let us note the four examples he puts in this regard : not to commit suicide (perfect duty to self), to keep one's promise (perfect duty to others), to cultivate one's gifts (imperfect duty to self) and to help others (impefect duty to others).[35] These examples have nothing contingent about them; they correspond respectively to four types of end-duties from which the doctrine of virtue will erect the system, based on two foundamental ends : the perfection of oneself and the happiness of others. These ends stem from an anthropology, not empirical but moral, from an anthropology, which does not establish morality but which procures for it a field of application. Because, finally, to take again the four very examples - the 'idea of a 'life' to be preserved, of a "promise" to be kept, of "gifts" to be cultivated, of a "need of love and sympathy for others", these values could not be deduced from the moral law; it's a question of facts which permit it to be applied. Yet, these facts are not contingent; they are constitutive of human nature; culture can vary from one society to another, but man will always have "gifts" to cultivate; a society can replace charity by social well-being; I shall still have to aid others one way or another. Likewise, in the case where the right of ownership

would completely disappear, there would always be a promise to keep, a pledge to honour, were this only towarsds the socialist society.

This is why Kant has no need of recouse to God to deduce concrete duties; he has recourse only to man. His moralitly is only formal in its initial movement, when it is a question of determining its supreme principle. Once having laid the foundation, Kant elaborates a "metaphysics of morals", and his first objective is to give it a content, a system of ends for the will, ends which he draws from human nature : not from our empirical and variable nature, but from that ensemble of determinations without which we would not be human.

In short, the value of the moral law would be, above all, of a critical character; it would not tell me what I ought to do, but if what I propose to do is moral or not. Nobody forces me to enter the game; but if I do, I accept its rules and cannot break them, without contradicting myself. Hence, in the same token, if I accept the deposit or make the promise, I cannot logically keep thefirst and violate the second;; I cannot will the ownership while keeping the deposit for myself.

Thus, one could say, an antiracist is immoral when he refuses to sit in the bus beside a coloured-man, because the maxim of his action could not be consistent with that of his antiracism. But the racist ? If he remains consistent with his principle, what could one reproach him for? The difficulty of Kant's morality resides precisely in this : on the one hand, it seems to consider the content of the categorical imperative as purely analytical and has recourse only to the principle of contradiction in order to justify it; but on the other hand, it affirms that the imperative, inasmuch as it obliges me unconditionally, is, in fact, a synthetic judgement, and that it is here, precisely, that it is categorical, not hypothetical. In other words, moral principles do not constitute an axiomatique, which one could refuse or acknowledge, on the sole condition of remaining consistent. Without doubt, Kant would condemn both the inconsistent antir acist and the consistent racist. In the name of what ?

In the *Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant expresses himself precisely on this. Anticipating the Hegelian critique of "empty formalism", he states that the moral law offers us only a negative principle; in order to give it a content, it is necessary to admit the notion of end, as a motive for free-

will. Not empirical ends, those which each of us pursues in fact, but ends which are at the same time duties. The "end-duty" adds to the law the positive element which it lacks; it does not permit us to legitimize our maxims, but to discern, among our legitimate maxims, the one which fits here and now; thus, we can not only will morally, but will morally something.

III

In this connection let us mention the views of some commentators of Kantian ethics. Paton's drastic reapraisal of Kant's 'formalism' is considered a very significant contribution in Kant's ethical theory, though he is not, I suspect, free from defects in his *total* approach to Kant's moral philosophy.

According to Paton, the difficulty in understanding Kant's categorical imperative and consequently the charge of formalism against Kant, mainly arises from the identification of 'law of nature' with the formula-I. There is a close proximity between the two; yet there are also differences. In the illustrations Kant has given in his *Groundworks*, Kant is using the subsidiary principles with their imaginative appeal to ends, not the purely formal principle. That is why, in his first illustration, he makes five references to law of nature. Again, in his summary of the illustrations, Kant makes it plain that he has been demonstrating the application of the subsidiary principle of the law of nature with its reference to an end, and not what is presumed to be the principle of non-contradiction, as Kant writes :

> Some actions are so constituted that their maxim cannot even be *conceived* as a universal lawl of nature without contradiction, let alone be *willed* as what *ought* to become one. In the case of others we do not find this inner impossibility, but it is still impossible to will that their maxim should be raised to the universality of a law of nature, because such a will would contradict itself.[36]

This is one of the few passages in Kant's doctrine which caused confusion among the commentators of Kantian ethics. The first sentence apppears to suggest a logical contradiction. But it is difficult to see that they exhibit purely logical contradictions. What is that with which the maxim contradicts ? No plausible answer is suggested by Kant.

Kant was, however, perfectly aware of the difficulties involved in the conception of using the formal principle itself as a practical criterion. In his *Practical Reason* Kant specifically urges that the purely formal principle of the categorical imperative cannot by its very nature be represented in *concreto*. It is, he says, 'an idea of reason' and not a 'schema of sensibility'; hence no scheme can be supplied for the purpose of applying it in *concreto*.[37] Filling the gap between supersensible moral law and a system of nature ruled by moral law Kant introduced an idea of 'type' which symbolically represents the supersensible moral law, and it is only through such a 'type', he says, that the moral law can be applied in practice. It is because,

> if common sense did not have something to use in actual experience as an example, it could make no use of the moral law of pure practical reason in applying it to that experience.[38]

Castigating the traditional thinkers Paton exclaims that it is strange that those who regard Kant as a great thinker, attribute to him something which can hardly be considered as anything but silly. Thus, it is commonly maintained that :

> good man must deduce all the manifold of duties of life from the bare conception of moral law as such-without any regard for the characteristics of human naure or the circumstances of human life. These doctrines and others equally paradoxical, if they were held by Kant, would not indicate that he had any profound insight into the nature of morality. They can hrdly but suggest that his moral philosophy may be dismissed as negligible, if not deseased.[39]

Williams also expressed the same view and said if Kant meant that "the validity of moral rules can be determined precisely and defnitely in abstraction by appeal to the purely formal categorical imperative alone without any reference to ends and conequences such a doctrine is to tbe rejected."[40]

Paton suggests that there are two aspects in Kant's formalism

(a) No action can be moral if we have any natural inclination towards it or if we obtain a slightest pleasure from its performance.

(b) A good man must take no account whatever of the consequences of his action but must deduce all the manifold of duties of life from the bare conception of moral law as such.

Our sole endeavour above was to consider the second aspect. Now remains the first.

The first aspect postulates a rigid dichotomy between moral action as such and action motivated by inclination. If we suppose this was Kantian, it would present morality as joyless affairs. Whereas Kant himself specifically rejected this view, attributed to him by Schiller, Kant called it misanthropic ethics. He says:

> This *misanthropic* ethics, sets moral conduct in opposition to all pleasures... the ethics of morseness assumes that all amenities of life and all pleasures of the senses are opposed to morality... It goes wrong, ofcourse, in holding that pleasures and morality are inconsistent with each other.[41]

Paton, however, admits that the looseness of Kant's words are partly responsible for this sort of views about him. Paton argues that only for clear demonstration of action, Kant used the method of isolation. Kant's doctrine, nowhere presupposed a dichotomy between:

(a) action for the sake of duty; and

(b) action which is based on inclination.Kant rather postulated dichotomy between:

(a) action for the sake of duty; and

(b) action for the sake of certain ends and consequences. Kant's point is that end and consequences should not be the determining ground of any moral action if it has to be of any moral worth. "Kant is not so foolish as to deny that an action done for the sake of duty will produce results and will seek to produce results." However, if "Kant had said merely that we must not allow our desire for particular consequence to determine our judgement of what our duty is, he would have avoided a great deal of is understanding.[42]

Paton, in short, rejects the notion of the categorical imperative as a precise test of morality of maxim by appeal to their form alone. The value of the principle is capable of being demonstrated only when it is actually used by the agent who is actively seeking to live a moral life.

Duncan distinguishes between two kinds of interpretations that are current in Kant's philosophy. First, the ethical interpretation which is represented by G.C.Field, A.C.Ewing, C.D.Broad, E.F.Carret, A.E.Taylor and T.C.Williams. It holds the categoical imperative as'prescriptive principle'. Second, the critical interpretation, which is represented by Duncan himself; it holds the categorical imperative as 'descriptive principle'. The 'prescriptive principle' is a law or rule adopted as a guide to action or as a generalized rule of conduct which forms the logical starting point when one deliberates on the rightness or wrongness of a particular action. The ' descriptive principle', on the other hand, is a principle which states the truth which gives the explanation of things' working . According to Duncan, Kant's categorical imperative should be regarded as descriptive principle. It describes the *apriori* element, the form, bestowed by practical reason, the essence of which is the capacity of the maxim to be universalized.

But, by taking this position, Duncan faces two difficulties: First, as Duncan himself admits, Kant also sometimes regarded his principle as prescriptive. Duncan regards this as a misleading stand-point of Kant. Second, Kant formulates the principle in imperative mood, which implies command. Duncan clarifies Kant's position by holding that Kant's object was not simply to describe the form of moral willing but also to characterize the element of command and demand.[43]

IV

In the very beginning of the paper I promised, and also the title of the paper entitles me, to consider the place of happiness in Kant's ethics. Some critics of Kantian morality have termed Kant's ethics as a joyless affairs, as nobody, according to them, could perform his duty without hope of any reward, except reluctantly; it is simply a name of a struggle for an unfulfillable end. Is It really so ?

In order to answer this question we should first of all consider Kant's postulates of morality, as the question of happiness is in some way related to his postulates.

Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* sums up the Kantian morality by three postulates : autonomy of the will, the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. Hegel also holds that

one cannot separate the ethics of Kant from the rest of his philosophy. One could not posit the autonomy of the conscience without questioning oneself of the concrete content of the duties that it is supposed to prescribe. One could not affirm duty as an absolute without wondering if man has the power of fulfilling it (second postulate). One could not decree that virtue merits happiness without endeavouring to understand how virtue attains it (third postulate).

The first postulate bears on the possibility of knowing one's duty; the second bears on the possibility of fulfilling it. We know that, for kant, this possibility requires progress to infinity which leads him to postulate immortality of the soul.

Now, what is the goal of progress to infinity ? The end of effort, and accordingly of morality; one progresses towards perfection which is the abolition of that which gives a meaning to progress. One will reply that it is progress itself which matters, not its goal. In that case, morality is condemned to remain eternally in vain, since etenally unfulfilled. Progress to infinity, one can say, is only a "bad infinity", synonymous with what does not come to an end.Kant also refuses us the experience of perfection in order to place it at the end of a progress to infinity.

The last postulate of Kant bears, we know, on the necessity of believing in a personal God as alone capable of realizing the highest good. In other words, the accord of virtue and happiness, the accord of exterior nature and reasonable will.

Hegel objected that Kant poses from the beginning virtuous will and individual happiness as two realities, completely foreign to one another, without any instrinsic movement permitting them to be reunited. On the one hand, an active will, formal and empty, limited to pure intention, on the other, a happiness contingent and passively received from without. The highest good, accord between happiness and virtue, remains, accordingly, a thoughtless synthesis, a blind faith.

In other words, Kant forbids himself, Hegel insists, any understanding of that which renders the highest good possible. Because, he defines, right form the start, nature and freedom as contradictories, essentially exclusive of one another, while positing the moral necessity of rising above the contradiction. Instead of showing how he gives way

to the happiness of the wicked, a metaphysical scandal, which he surmounts by the subjective belief in a just God.

Hegel has himself claimed to rise above the contradiction between duty and the capability by the concept of objective morality. To Hegel, virtue ceases to be an unattainable ideal; it is "morality in so far as it is reflected in the individual character determined by nature".[44]

Because the individual ought to become moral, not contrary to reality, but in a reality which is already moral and rational; then each can determine and achieve virtue according to his own character. Hegelian virtue has, accordingly, a concrete content; it is wholly realizable and allows the individual to affirm himself in his own particularity as indispensable to his position. In short, we find in Hegel a doctrine of realized moral life, of success, which permits him to reproach Kant for "not having conceived what is moral : a system of the spirit realizing itself."[45]

Let us now examine the above claims, or better, charges, against Kant. We have dealt with the question of autonomy above. The critique of the second postulate claims that, in the dualist perspective which is that of Kant, the fulfillment of morality could only signify the end of morality. It is that morality is, according ro Kant, eternally unfinished and that this limitation does not signify the failure of morality, but constitues its very essence. Is it necessary to conclude from this an insurmountable contradiction ? Let us examine the term virtue which gives his meaning of progress to infinite.

In the morality of Kant, virrtue constitutes a veritable aporia. If one understands by virtue, like Hegel after Aristotle, "a second nature" a fund of morality is secured and becomes habitual, such that one has no longer to make an effort to do his duty, then virtue properly signifies the end of moral life. For moral habit is fundamentally suspect; nothing proves that it is not at all the fruit of training or of an egoistic calculation; one does not become moral as one becomes a technician. As for the pure practical maxim — to act through duty — it cannot become habit without the freedom to affirm the maxim disappearing, freedom which constitutes precisely its practical character.

If Kant still retains the notion of virtue it is because he admits that there must be a force in us in order that the moral law has in us the

force of law. Only he no-longer defines it in terms of habit, but of courage : courage in a being at the same time reasonable and sensible, to overcome the obstacle that sensibility opposes to reason. Virtue is, therefore, very much a struggle.

Is this to say that it is essentially painful, that man would never be vertuous except reuctantly ? Hegel, after Schiller, interpretes the morality of Kant in this manner : "to do with aversion what duty commands ;" and joyfulness would then always be suspect. Kant, however, had anticipated this kind of objection : precisely because virtue is a struggle which imposes on us the sacrifies of many enjoyments, it requires a courageous and joyful soul; to fulfil one's duty reluctantly signifies the risk of not fulfilling it sincerely. Effort, then, is not the essence of morality, but only the sign of morality in a being at the same time reasonable and sensible. Contrary to what Hegel asserts, intrinsic moral value does not reside in effort, strife, but in autonomy; this autonomy is the source of the dignity of human nature. This is why human progress is directed not towards a suppression of sensibility but towards a strengthening of autonomy.

Nevertheless, human morality, even "in its highest development" would only be a virtue, that is effort and strife. Because insofar as courage is concerned, it is never secured; one can hoard everything save courage. In fact, Kant maintains at the same time that virtue is unceasingly in progress, always starting from zero. Is that the bad infinity ?

One could admit it if progress to the infinite constitutes a reality in itself. But moral man is always in progress towards a goal inaccessiable from human view point; but he knows that, in the intelligible world, he has already attained this goal; an *already* which gives to progress its authentically moral sense.

Considered from this angle, morality for Kant is essentially religious.

It is precisely on the relation between morality and religion that the third postulate bears : the existence of God as realizing the harmony between nature and freedom. It is certain that this is what Hegel's critique conveys : Kant makes God the object of an act of faith

on the part on reason, but while denying reason the capacity to understand the how of the realization, of the the reconciliation. To claim to pass from moral faith to absolurte knowledge would be, for Kant, not progress but a regression towards precritical dogmatism.

This criticism does not hold good for Kant. Kant never claimed that our action could realize the supreme good and that happiness was immanent in the performance of the action. Virtue is never that which renders us "worthy of being happy" and all that it can admit of immanance is the satisfaction of duty fulfilled. This, wholly negative, does not prevent the expectation of a positive happiness, as the reward of virtue. Moreover, for Kant, effort is only a sign of morality, not its essence. There is, therefore, no contradiction in maintaining that the goal of morality is its fulfilment; in other words prefection.

In other words, if one finds in Kant not only a rational faith but a religions faith, it is because reason, since it passes from the essence of morality to moral existence, runs up against an incomprehensible. It is impossible for it, at least from the theoretical point of view, to resolve the triple human problem : the origin of evil, the possibility of going from evil to good, the certitude that we meet there." Now, is it necessary to see in this inability of Kantian reason the consequence of "empty formalism", in which reason would be confined from start? Is it not, in fact, rather a question of recognition, by human reason, of its own limit ? I do not think that man betrays his reason in acknowledging that he is not God.

In short, Hegel holds that Kant would have failed to understand the absolute force of reason. A failure which, in his morality, would take on a triple aspect : the impossibility of understanding what the concrete duties are, how man can fulfil them, how the accord between nature and his will will be realized.

From an historical point of view, this criticism, I think, demonstrates a certain disregard of Kantian thought. It starts off, ideed, from the view point that the *form* alone of the law can furnish an objective moral principle. But all subsequent steps aim at giving to this form an objective content, to the will a real goal, as well as the hope of realizing it. If Hegel knew how to pose the Kantian problem in its

totality, he understood only in partial and biased way the solution that Kant gives to it.

From a more fundamental viewpoint, Hegel relies on the postulate that reaso can transgress the limits that Kantianism assigns to it and can understand how spirit realizes itself in nature and the history of the world. But is the postualate lawful : can man put himself in the place of God ?

When Hegel claims to place himself in the viewpoint of the absolute, and accordingly to go beyond the Kantian "formalism", one wonders if this going beyond does not singnify *concretely* the abandonment of human reason for the benefit of concrete universal, with respect to which man is no more than a simple means. If reason ceases to be human, it is no longer the force of man. And how can we know it does not act against man ?

V

In spite of all the defenses of Kantian position we do not mean that Kant is free from all contradictions. The same is true about the place of happiness in his ethics. It is true that if any one can establish the place of end in his doctrine of duty, he walks half the way, atleast, in this direction. If end has a place, and we have seen in a sense it has, we can legitimately claim a place for happiness too. But we find Kant in this respect in a very confusing position. It appears that Kant sometimes regards happiness as little more than the greatest possible amount of uninterrupted pleasure throughout the whole life, as he writes, "A rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life which without interruption accompanies his whole existence is happiness."[46] This he considered to be the final end which all men seek considering its influence on our whole of existence :

> reason certainly has responsibility from the side of his sensuous nature to attend to its interest and to form partical maxim with a view to the happiness of this and, where possible, of a future life.[47]

Compare this passage with another in the *Grounàwork* :

> The concept of happiness is so indeterminate a concept that although every man wants to attain happiness, he can never say definitely and in unison with himself what it really is that he wants and wills ..... .

> He has no principle by which he is able to decide with complete certainty what will make him truly happy .... the problem of determining certainly and universally what action will promote happiness of rational being is completely insoluble.[48]

This certainly exhibits Kant's inconsistency of thought. Besides, he also confused between ends and means of happiness. He some times considered richness, knowledge, health, etc., as means to happiness and some other times as elements of happiness.

Kant took different view in respect of one's duty to himself and duty to others. According to him, to seek one's own happiness is not direct duty but an indirect duty, for "discontented with one's condition under pressure from many cares and amid unsatisfied wants could easilly become a great temptation to transgress duties."[49] He argues that to seek one's own happiness is a contradiction, because, "what each person inevitably wills of himself does not belong under the concept of duly, for this is a constraint to a reluctantly adopted ends."[50] Kant here seems to argue that what already 'is'cannot be made ought as there is no road to 'is' from 'ought'. Again, to be a duty, the thing to be wanted should not be part of 'natural inclimation', but should be those which human beings do not naturally want.

Kant never considers among the direct duties one's own perfection and the happiness of others. But this cannot be inverted, because of the fact that "the perfection of another man as a person consists precisely in the fact that he is himself capable of setting before himself his own ends according to his concept of duty, and it is contradictory to require (i.e., to make it my duty) that I ought to do something which no one except himself can do.'[51]

As to the reason why we should make the happiness of others as our end a duty, Kant says that as human being does not naturally seek happiness of others, it should be our duty to seek it. As to the reason why we should seek happiness of others Kant loosely argues that"the reason why I ought to promote the happiness of others is not because the realization of their happiness is of any consequent to myself ... but solely because a maxim which excludes this cannot also be present in one and the same volition as a universel law."[52]

But Kant warns us that happiness of others may be the object of the will of a rational being, but it still could not be the determining ground of the maxim.

VI

Before I conclude, let us have a brief survey of what has been said so far with some remarks, though at the risk of repetition.

Kant started his *Groundwork* with some presuppositions: Universality of human reason, good will, common moral experience, though he also presupposed some other things in the course of formulation of his thought. He says good will is only good, without qualifications, good in itself, the highest good and the condition of all the rest. Reason's highest duty is to establish the good will which is present in a sound natural understanding. That is why it needs no clarification (Kant could say, it is not possible either). From this point Kant abruptly passes on to the concept of duty which includes good will. 'Duty is the necessity of acting out of reverence or respect for the moral law' without any regard to any consequence or end. That is to say only dutitful will is good. Law itself is an incentive for moral living. As there is no counterpart in experience to show that something done is done out of respect for the moral law, and we cannnot distinguish self-love, self-interest or prudence from right action by appeal to any experience, we should seek it somewhere else. This 'else' is *apriori.*

Kant maintains that practical reason in its use of human will expresses itself as a command. Here he brings his hypothetical - categorical distinction to set a differentia of moral action against non-moral. With the analysis of categorical command Kant discovered the law of the categorical imperative. He formulated the first formal principle. Agent can apriorily determine what ought to be done - whether his maxim (subjective principle) would be capable of being universalized. If it is capable of being universalized without contradiction, it is right to act on it and if it is not, it is wrong to do so. Kant here is talking about the universality of the law, not of its generality. Universality is derived from rationality, whereas generality is derived from experience. This universality- generality distinction is not, however, clear in Kant's exposition.

We have seen that the real problem started with Kant's formulation of different kind of laws and with the illustration of them with reference to different kinds of duties. Some questions have been raised : what do they prove ? Could they prove anything conclusively ? Could Kant prove what he intended to prove ? What was his real intention ? More important, how to apply the formal principle of the categorical imperative in practical life? Is it possible at all without regard to ends and consequences? In this connection we have considered the charges of formalism and rigorism brought by Hegel and Hegelian critics against Kant. Kant also was aware of this difficulty of applying the purely formal principle in *concreto*. We have seen that to reduce it to a formalism is only a textbook cliche which does not illuminate but disguises its proper movement. It is true that Kant surmounts ultimate contradiction of his morality only through religious faith. It remains consistent, however, with the absolute requirement that he had started at the beginning : respect for human dignity identified with the autonomy of the will.

Here I would like to add that Kant did not exclude totally the role of ends and consequences from his moral judgements. He only stressed that we should not take any account of them. Kant here seems to apply the method of 'indifference'. Kant also points out that the presence of subjectie inclination and desires makes duty, by contrast, more bright and more shining.[53] Again, the concept of end and content is rooted, I think, in the very concept of freedom itself, which is the necessary presupposition of morality. Freedom presupposes at least two alternatives to choose from. If we regard moral law as the only incentive, it jeopardises the very idea of freedom.

I would like to conclude with a remark from A.C. Ewing. He once wrote :

> It must be admitted that there is no great moral philosopher whom it is so easy to criticize as Kant. To point out obvious objections to his central ethical doctrines does not seem to be beyond the capacity of even a third-class student.[54]

Ewing had made the remark about a half a century ago without anticipating perhaps that sometimes in future it would be very difficult for even a 'first-class' student of philosophy to point out, not objections as such, but what is 'obvious' against Kant. For what is 'obvious' is itself

a big question now a days. Though everybody wants to give Kant fair run for his money, it is difficult to determine what is actually 'fair'. The whole heap of literature on Kant shows that there is hardly any commentators who could give a consistent account of Kant's doctrines. Some commentators, as we have seen above in case of Williams and Paton, added to, or rejected from, the actual body of Kant's writings some portions which they think necessary to make Kant consistent, or to make Kant to mean what he actually should mean. By saying this I don't dare say that Kant is wholly right or wholly wrong. There is no 'whole truth' in philosophy. For this state of confusion and controversy, partly Kant and partly commentators are responsible. The laconic way of expressing his fundamental doctrines and sometimes repeating some points by Kant, are greatly responsible for the difficulty in understanding Kant. And to read into Kant what one feels right is partly responsible for creating confusion from the side of the commentators. This controversy, however, belittles neither the authors of great originality nor the commentators of good scholarship. In fact, richness, depth and subtlty in great thinkers contributed so much to the difficulty experienced over in understanding their thoughts. Here lies their greatness.

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NOTES

1. The German title of the book has been translated variously, such as *The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals, Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.* Thus, whenever I refer to these titles I shall mean the same work. I have used here mostly the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals,* translated with an introduction by H.J. Paton as *The Moral Law* (London: Hutchison, 1965). Henceforth I shall use the shortened tille of the books cited after the first reference where the details of publication will be mentioned.

2. I have used The *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosphy*, ed. L.W.Beck (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1949). Heneceforth referred to as *Practical Reason*

3. Translated by N.K.Smith (New York: St.Martin's press, 1965).

4. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A-302/B-830,A-807/B-835, A808/B-836.

5 *Idem, Practical Reason*, pp.16-19.

6. *Idem*, Groundwork, p. 10.

7. *Ibid.*, p.61.

8. *Ibid.*, p.62

9. *Ibid.*, p.64.

10. *Ibid.*, pp.65-68.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

14. *Ibid.*, p.76.

15 *Ibid.*, p.79.

16 *Ibid.*, p.81.

17 Chin Tai Kim, "Kant's Supreme Principle of Morality", *Kant Studien* 59 (1968), pp. 298-299.

18. Kant, *Groundwork*, p. 87.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Idem., Practical Reason*, p. 180.

21. *Idem., Groundwork*, p.88.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

26. H.J. Paton; *The Categorical Imperative* (London : Hutchison, 1965), p. 129.

27. A.R.C. Duncan; *Practical Reason and Morality* (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1957), pp. 172-173.

28. E. Caird, *The Practical Philosophy of Kant,* (Glasgow, 19890, p. 207.

29. C.D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London : Routledge, 1951), pp. 131-132.

30. J.R. Silver, "Procedural Formalism in Kant's Ethics," *Review of Metaphysics* (1974).

31. T.C. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative* (Oxford: The Calaredon Press, 1968), p. 34.

32. *Ibid.*, p.41.

33. *Ibid.*, p.42.

34. The passage to which I have indicated is: "it would be easy to show how human reason, with this corpus in hand, is well able to distinguish in all cases that present themselves what is good or bad, right or wrong." Cf. *Groundwork*, pp. 71-72.

35. Kant, *Groundwork*, pp. 89-91.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

37. *Idem.*, *Practical Reason*, p.177.

38. *Ibid.*, p.178.

39. Paton, *Categorical Imperative*, p.15. o73

40. Williams, *The Concept of the Categorical Imperative*, p.55.

41. Quoted *ibid.*, p.60.

42. Paton, *Categorical Imperative*, p.76.

43. Duncan, *Practical Reason and Morality*, pp. 70-73.

44. Hegel, *Principles de la philosophic du droit* Principles of the Philosophy of Right), Meiner edition (Hamburg, 1955), p.150.

45. Idem, *Vorlesungen Uber die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Text III, ed. Fromann, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt (Hambourg, 1965), p. 593.

46. Kant, *Practical Reason*, p.133.

47. *Ibid.*, p.170.

48. *Ibid., Groundwork*, pp.85-86.

49. *Ibid.*, p.86.

50. *Idem, Metaphysics of Morals* in L.W. Beck edited *The Practical Reason*, p.355.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Idem, Groundwork*, p.109.

53. *Ibid.*, p.65.

54. A.C. Ewing; "Paradoxes of Kant's Ethics", *Philosophy* 13(1938), p.40.