Kant's Analysis of The Summum Bonum

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ABSTRACT

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There is a generally acknowledged opinion that Kant's ethics are morose or joyless. This is quite understandable for Kant emphasizes the value of a moral motivation which will act from duty rather than inclination. Recently, however, certain proponents of Kant have pointed to his concept of the summum bonum, thereby seeking to indicate that Kant's thought is neither inhuman nor morose. However, what I will attempt to show in this thesis is that the summum bonum and the view of dutiful motivation expressed primarily in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals are not coherent expressions of a single point of view or insight. Though Kant believed they were, I will attempt to show that a belief in the possibility of the summum bonum cannot but undermine the type of motivation he stresses.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the meaning of moral behavior as set out in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, and subsequently, the concept of the summum bonum as introduced in the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason". My object is to elicit the differences and inconsistencies which I find between the earlier and later writings. In the Foundations of the Meta-Physics of Morals,* Kant emphasizes the necessity of being guided by the principle of duty rather than the ends proposed by happiness, inclination, of self-interest. However, in the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason", Kant represents moral behavior as necessarily having a final objective, of which one of the components is happiness. I think it is important to ask whether the representation of moral behavior as having a particular ultimate objective is consistent with certain of Kant's statements in the Foundations concerning one's principles and ends. Further, one should consider whether the assumption of the summum bonum as our ultimate end affects or changes the characterization of moral motivation as found in the Foundations. Finally, one should similarly enquire whether the introduction of happiness into the summum bonum additionally modifies or effects the question of motivation. These, I believe, are significant topics, and in order to treat them

* Henceforth, for convenience, Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals will be read as Foundations.

effectively, I will begin first with an exposition of the more salient ideas expressed in the Foundations.

In the structure of this exposition I will attempt to derive by analysis (as Kant does), the supreme principle of morality. After having derived this principle, I will analyse those salient elements, which, according to Kant's insight, comprise the workings of ordinary moral judgement and behavior. Finally, I will consider whether Kant's undertaking is wholly successful, which is to say, whether Kant's categorical imperative does account for and explain those aspects of conduct which are commonly regarded as criteria of moral motivation. In this analysis I will emphasize the relationship between happiness and moral behavior. This latter aspect, I think, is important since happiness is a component of the summum bonum.

I

The Argument of
The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals

Kant begins the Foundations with the assertion that

> "...nothing in the world - indeed nothing beyond the world - can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a good will."1.

It is important to see what Kant means by saying that the will is the only good that is unqualified. He states:

> "Moderation in emotions and passions, self-control, and calm deliberation not only are good in many respects but even seem to constitute a part of the inner worth of a person. But however unconditionally they were esteemed by the ancients, they are far from being good without qualification. For, without the principles of a good will, they can be extremely bad." 2.

This sort of statement seems to express the theme one meets throughout Kant's thought: that everything else in the world can only be conditionally good on the premise of a good will. "This will must indeed not be the sole and complete good but the highest good and condition of all others, even of the desire for happiness."[3]. In other words, by saying that the will is the highest or unconditional good, Kant is not denying that other good things exist; what Kant says is that the goodness of other things depends upon whether they exist concomitantly with a good will. For example, with a virtue like moderation, Kant says goodness depends upon whether it is the instrument of a good will. As for more recognizable or tangible goods, Kant says much the same thing, that is that they fail in goodness if there is an absence of a good will. He says:

> "Power, riches, honor, even health, general well-being, and the contentment with one's condition which is called happiness make for pride and even arrogance if there is not a good will to correct their influences on the mind and on its principles of action." 4.

In short, these other goods presuppose a good will; otherwise their goodness becomes subverted or perverted. It is therefore, first of all, moral goodness which must be sought, for without it nothing else could be worthwhile.

In the preface to the Foundations, Kant lays it down that goodness of the will is to be found by ascertaining the principle from which it operates: "The present foundations, however, are nothing more than the search for and the establishment of the supreme principle of morality." 5. Kant says that the ground of morality can only be found in the principle which guides the pure reason. This is to be found a-priori and independent of experience, for rules or principles gained from experience can only be called practical rules and never moral laws. The principles which guide the will of the good man must have as their basis a supreme principle existing independent of his experience, but to be found solely within the a priori realm of reason. Kant takes it that moral dicta should be capable of being ascribed universally. Hence, the basis for this universality which can not be universality of a practical kind, could only be sought in a principle of the reason by which all good men universally govern themselves. We find therefore, that Kant attempts to ascertain the concept of a good will with an investigation as to a supreme principle

from which all other moral rules are generated, and that this principle is to be understood by an analysis of the workings of practical reason.

In the first section, Kant begins his investigation of the good will. His avowed purpose, as we said, is to investigate and elicit those principles from which a good-willed person acts. The method employed is one of analysis which begins first from the commonly accepted fact of morality, and that behavior designated as moral. As I interpret it, Kant proceeds to his principle by means of elimination. He would appear to assume or accept that moral behavior is opposed to self-interested behavior, and hence, in his modus operandi, he seeks to withdraw from one's principles all considerations of self-interest. In the forthcoming exposition we will see that Kant initially equates dutiful behavior with moral behavior, proceeding to ascertain a principle devoid of exigencies of self-interest and thereby suitable to serve as the basis of duty. Without further preparatory explanation, I will begin as exposition of Kant's analysis.

Kant expounds three propositions which are intended to express what it means to act with a good will. His first proposition is that the actions of a good-willed person are done not from inclination nor from self-interest, but for the sake of duty.[6.] Kant explains that a dutiful act is not simply one which conforms to the demands of duty, but rather one which is done from the motive of duty.[7.] To explicate,

he says that an act which may fulfil the requirements of duty is not necessarily a dutiful act, for the agent may perform the act solely in order to satisfy an inclination.

> "To be kind where one can is duty, and there are, moreover, many persons so sympathetically constituted that without any motive of vanity or selfishness they find satisfaction in spreading joy and rejoice in the contentment of others which they have made possible. But I say that, however dutiful and amiable it may be, that kind of action has no true moral worth. It is on a level with other inclinations, such as the inclination to honor, which, if fortunately directed to what in fact accords with duty and is generally useful and thus honorable, deserve praise and encouragement but no esteem. For the maxim lacks the moral import of an action done not from inclination but from duty." 8.

Kant's position, unequivocally, is that what we mean by the term moral conduct is not simply conduct which agrees with the formal demands of duty, but rather conduct inspired by duty, for it is very possible that one may act in accordance with what is dutiful and yet do so because one finds it convenient or to one's taste; Kant mentions the grocer who is fastidiously honest in giving weights, but the rationale behind this man's seemingly impeccable behavior is that honesty in the long run is more profitable than dishonesty.[9]

In his first proposition, one observes that Kant distinguishes a moral act as one which is based upon considerations of duty not inclination. I said in the prologue that Kant seeks to distinguish moral motivation from self-interested motivation and that his object is to preclude the possibility of self-interest from figuring in the principle of morality. One notes that Kant's first proposition is a movement in this

direction. In his conception, when a rational being's principle is the satisfaction of inclinations, his objective is happiness:

> "...all men have the strongest and deepest inclination to happiness because in this idea all inclinations are summed up." 10.

But when one acts to satisfy one's happiness, one is acting from nothing more than a principle of self-interest or self-love:

> "Now a rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life which without interruption accompanies his whole existence, is happiness, and to make this the supreme ground for the determination of choice constitutes the principle of self-love." 11.

Hence, Kant calls upon the reader to recognize that moral behavior is not moved by the principle of fulfilling one's inclinations, which is necessarily equivalent to a principle of self-love. Duty, rather, is opposed by the principle of self-love, that is, motivation based upon the satisfaction of desire or inclination.

However, I should interject a word of caution; though I have identified acting from inclination with acting for happiness, and finally with the principle of self-love, I should not have asserted the identity of happiness and inclination without first making certain qualifications. Primarily, happiness is said to be an idea of reason in which "...all inclinations are summed up."[12.] However, to simply act from inclination is not necessarily to seek happiness because: "...the precept of happiness is often so formulated that it definitely thwarts some inclinations." [13.] What Kant means

is that to simply follow one's inclinations is not necessarily in accordance with furthering happiness. The man whose end is happiness has an idea of total well-being (or satisfaction of needs), and in order to promote this condition of maximum satisfaction he will often have to limit and suppress certain inclinations or desires. Kant sees that rational agents in seeking to satisfy an inclination have as their end their own general satisfaction and well-being. Hence, when he speaks of a rational being acting to satisfy a desire, he presupposes that this human being is motivated by the idea of happiness. Further, a rational being, even when he acts to satisfy a desire, must set rules for himself, which is to say, he considers his end (the satisfaction of a particular desire), and sets about finding universal rules of skill which will function as a means to that end. This is by way of contrast with an animal which merely acts from blind instinct or impulse without the intervention of rationality. Therefore, it is characteristic of a rational being that he exercises forethought and prudence, and will set as his end, not the wavering impulse itself, but an optimum of well-being and satisfaction, happiness. This is to say that when a rational being acts to satisfy a desire, he has made a decision in accordance with the principles of happiness. This is corroborated by Kant's statement: "To be happy is necessarily the desire of every rational but finite being and thus it is an unavoidable determinant of its faculty of desire." [14]. In conclusion, one can say that the alternative to a motive of duty is motivation

which looks only to the satisfaction of inclination based on considerations of happiness in accordance with the principle of self-love or self-interest.

After having asserted that a person of goodwill acts from duty, Kant proceeds to establish two further propositions concerning the good will. The first states that:

> "An action done from duty does not have its moral worth in the purpose which is to be achieved through it but in the maxim by which it is determined." 15.

He explains this by saying that the effects of our actions and the intended consequences can not impart value to the will. He claims that this is clear from what has been previously said. Now, firstly, one might question as to why an intended end or purpose would not be a determinant in assessing the goodness of the will. One realizes that a lack or absence of worthwhile accomplishments does not necessarily indicate that one's will is lacking in goodness; however, would not the worthiness of intended accomplishments indicate goodness of the will whether or not that will was fortunate or capable enough to achieve them?

This objection would perhaps be valid had Kant not given us a sketch of what he mean by dutiful action. In that sketch he makes it clear that an action can fail morally even when one's intended ends are of value, if one acts for these ends, not from duty but solely from personal proclivity. 16. Kant concludes that what is at issue are the rules or principles by which we guide ourselves and therefore the salient question

is whether they are based upon self-interest (inclination) or duty.

It is Kant's observation that rational beings in their actions follow maxims or principles. The concept of a maxim has reference to certain generalizations of the rule of behavior which we regard ourselves as following. For example: if one's intention was to secure money by promising to repay a lender while knowing that this will never be the case because of one's impecunious condition, then one's maxim would be something like "whenever I am in a bad financial state, I will secure money by false promises". The idea of a maxim is that men do not simply make decisions for the moment but rather attempt to set general rules for themselves based upon certain considerations. Kant designates the principle of the above kind, a material maxim, that is a principle of action which is based upon a certain intended effect. In this particular instance, the intended effect is the redressing of one's financial situation. However, principles which correspond to material maxims cannot be the basis of duty, since such rules are derived from the desirability of particular ends. If the concept of duty is not to elude us, rules must be founded on something other than considerations of self-interest. The principles which guide us must direct us for the sake of duty alone irregardless of the ends prescribed. It is Kant's conclusion that the principle which guides the moral man must be a formal principle which compels obedience without justifying itself by reference to any end. In order to assure that one

acts from duty alone, Kant withdraws from this formal principle any material content, ——. reference to any definite object. Hence, the formal principle of morality is to be distinguished from a material maxim, the latter being justified by reference to certain objectives, for example, redressing one's finances.

Kant now proceeds to a third proposition, which, it appears, is intended to convey the reasons or considerations which compel one to obey this formal principle. The third proposition states that:"Duty is the necessity of an action done from respect of the law." [17]. Kant claims that this proposition is the consequence of the other two and says that: "...as an act from duty wholly excludes the influence of inclination and therewith every object of the will, nothing remains which can determine the will objectively except the law and subjectively except pure respect for this practical law."[18]. In other words, since the motive of the will cannot be the desirability of our intended end and therefore cannot be inclination, Kant argues that the motive for a dutiful act must be that of respect for our principles as law. It must be admitted that it is not immediately clear that if we take away all motivation due to inclination, the only thing which could move us would be respect for the law. However, it is undeniable that some other motivation must be presupposed. Nevertheless, a more detailed explanation than is sketched in the Foundations can be suggested; one conjectures that Kant reasons a man will

do something either from inclination or because he is commanded by some authority. Now if he obeys authority because of rewards and punishments, then this type of behavior is simply motivated by inclination (the inclination to seek rewards and avoid hardships). However, there is still another motive for obeying authority, and that is based upon respect. It is Kant's position that a command is capable of affecting us with respect if we recognize it as lawful. According to Kant, when we honestly apprehend something as lawful, we feel bound to obey it whether we believe its demands serve our personal inclinations or not.[19] It would seem that if our principles are to be followed from something other than preference or advantage, they must embody or represent law, for only that which we apprehend as lawful is capable of motivating us for reasons other than self-interest. Nevertheless, it might be questioned that respect as the motive for following the law does not clearly distinguish something different from inclination and motives based upon inclination. In common usage we often speak of being respectfully inclined to do something just as we speak of a person as being selfishly inclined. However, to disavow this criticism it should be pointed out that by inclinations, Kant means various self gratifying desires, whereas by respect he means not desire but rather the conception of worth recognized in what is lawful. Hence, respect represents something different from a feeling or a passion; it presupposes, first, the apprehension of something as being

lawful and subsequently, a conception of worth in that which is apprehended as lawful. Kant says that it is this conception which thwarts self-love, that is, the inclination to seek out those things which will bring personal gratification. Respect moves us not by desire or passion, but rather by a conception of worth which can compel me against my desires. Kant gives us an additional explanation of respect which is defined as the consciousness of the determination of the will by the law.[20] In other words, what is being represented by respect is more of an intellectual awareness of a value before which we naturally submit in obedience. Hence, Kant's third proposition, that the reason or necessity for performing a dutiful act is that of respect for the law.

However, what needs to be made clear is what it means to follow the formal principle of duty. So far, the principle of duty has been characterized in negative terms distinguishing it from those principles which are based upon the directives of our desires. The question remains how are we to fulfill the demands of the conception of law said to be expressed in the formal principle of duty. Kant has deduced that the will must act from a formal principle (as opposed to a material maxim), and in addition that it is this principle when acted upon which imparts value to the will. Further, this principle must be looked upon as law, for only respect for the law can command the will when all material incentives have been renounced. But what is it we obey when we follow a formal principle which we

revere as law?

According to Kant, what we obey cannot be a particular principle, such as "Thou shalt not kill", because particular principles in themselves are incapable of motivating us. The motive for obeying particular rules would be one which looked to agreeable consequences. Kant's exclusion of all material maxims from serving as the moral principle equally excludes obedience to principles based upon the desirability of consequences, for this is equivalent to obeying a material maxim. It remains that in obeying the formal law we respond not to a particular principle or law, but to the conception of law alone. According to Kant, in responding to the conception of law, one attempts not to make one's actions agree with a principle or law, but rather to ensure that one's actions themselves are fit to be law:

> "Since I have robbed the will of all impulses which could come to it from obedience to any law, nothing remains to serve as a principle of the will, except universal conformity of its action to law as such. That is, I should never act in such a way that I could not will that my maxim should be a universal law." 21.

Since the individual cannot look for particular laws to guide him, what he must see is that his own subjective principles (maxims) are adequate as laws. The way in which he judges whether or not his actions fulfil moral law is to ask whether or not his subjective maxim or principle can be willed as universal law. In brief this has been Kant's derivation of what he calls the "categorical imperative", the formal principle of duty.

Kant illustrates the meaning of the categorical imperative by asking us to consider whether I may or may not, when in difficulties, make a promise with the intention of not keeping it. If we consider this action from the aspect of prudence, it is apparent that the acceptance of such a maxim as a general maxim depends upon how I weigh and discern thepossible consequences. However, if I enquire solely as to whether this maxim conforms to the demands of duty, I need not conjecture about possibilities; rather I look to the maxim itself and enquire whether it could be willed as universal law:

> "I immediately see that I could will the lie but not a universal law to lie. For with such a law there would be no promises at all in as much as it would be futile to make a pretense of my intention in regard to future actions to those who would not believe in this pretense or - if they overhastily did so - who would pay me back in my own coin. Thus my maxim would necessarily destroy itself as soon as it was made a universal law." 22.

One obeys the formal principle of duty not through considering the consequences or projected consequences of a particular rule, but rather by enquiring as to whether theprinciple itself is adequate as a universal law. If a material maxim satisfies this formal principle, irrespective of its intended ends, then it accords with moral demands. One observes that in considering the morality of one's rules or maxims, one refrains from judging its material element, that is the ends proposed (its intended consequences); rather one judges whether it possesses the universal legislative form which is the criterion of its acceptability as law.

Hence, Kant has derived the absolute formal principle which he believes is the basis of all good-willing. This principle is not a particular dictum urging us to pursue certain designated ends; rather, in acting morally, the will follows the most general and formal of rules, which is that the laws we prescribe for ourselves should themselves be suitable as law. More technically, this means that the formal principle of morality does not prescribe definite ends but, more properly, is a formal criterion by which we are said to test the suitability of our material maxims.[23] This is observed quite clearly in the nature of the categorical imperative. From a consideration of the categorical imperative "in vacua", one cannot ascertain what one should do. The categorical imperative can only function when one is furnished with material maxims whose objectives come to one from appetite or the faculty of desire; then one ascertains the moral appropriateness of these proposals by enquiring whether they could be willed universally. The will, if it is not furnished with this material element (ends from the faculty of desire) is unable to prescribe actions on the basis of the formal requirement alone, that is, the universal legislative form of the law. The idea to be grasped is that the will limits the material of volition (ends proposed by desire), by the form of the moral laws, which means, ultimately, that the moral law functions as the test or criterion as to the morality of proposed actions.

I shall now sum up the development so far. I have

been seeking to elicit Kant's argument from which he derives the principle of morality. I have followed the three basic propositions which he lays down. Nevertheless, though I have given a brief illustration of what it means to act from that principle, I believe one needs to give a more substantive account. In order to do so, I will make three points concerning Kant's meaning.

Kant's three propositions provided an exposition of his deduction of the categorical imperative; however, the three following points have as their object a more general understanding of what it means to act morally.

The first point taken is that moral behavior is characterised by the submission of self-interest to the demands of principle or law. Kant has stated that the moral man legislates his life by the principle of duty, rather than that of self-love or happiness. That is to say, that when the moral man decides upon his conduct, his dominant concern has not been service to himself; the dominant concern for a man of moral priorities is not his own wishes, but the demands of duty. As we have seen, the individual of moral principles is the man who restrains his desire for certain ends (expressed in material maxims), if they fail to accord with the demands of universal legislation.[24]. In other words, the man of moral intention will constrain his own inclinations and desires (which for the rational agent, are determined from the principle of self-love), in deference to the requirements of the moral law. The will which maintains

this adherence to duty rather than to its own selfish proclivities, is said to gain value, and thereby, to be deserving of respect.

From this point follows the second point, that moral action is that behavior done in conformity to principle, not for the sake of one's ends. This is because if one acts solely for the sake of one's ends, and not from obedience, to moral principle, then one is in danger of losing the basis of morality which is submission of self-interest to principle. Although Kant might give his approbation to such phenomena as actions inspired by altruistic or even righteous ends, I do not believe he would attribute moral worth to their performance if done solely for these objectives. For Kant, moral motivation signifies that a man acts not primarily for his own sake, but instead, acts out of obedience to the requirements of the principle of duty. It would seem that this disposition can only be achieved when one regulates one's conduct by the formal requirement or moral principle, not when one acts from an attraction to certain ends. I believe that Kant recognized (as is borne out in his examples) that enthusiasm even for altruistic ends, is often a source of inner delight to the agent so that extremely noble purposes can still be the product of something indistinguishable from inclination.[25] Hence, in order to maintain a valid conception of morality, Kant distinguishes moral conduct which is governed by principle, from conduct which is done for the

sake of certain ends. With this conclusion, Kant wished to support the insight that in acting for the sake of one's ends, the motivating factor is more like inclination, whether this constitutes direct desire or a less conscious delight in worthy purposes.

As we have seen, Kant claims that a principle which does not justify itself by reference to any end must be a completely formal principle. Principles entirely devoid of material content can only be generated by pure practical reason. This is because only the apriori ground of reason can furnish a completely formal rule which is universally applicable to any ethical action. Only reason can give us rules which are formally or universally valid. Hence, my third point, that the formal principle of duty must essentially be an a-priori formal requirement of pure practical reason. Kant claims, therefore, that it is a demand of reason that our actions conform to the concept of law, that is, that the rule of behavior can be followed universally. Maxims which do not have this universal legislative form are found abhorrent by reason. The explanation is not difficult: maxims which are incapable of being applied universally are those which will contradict themselves when universally followed; for example, the maxim of insincere promise making. Since reason must abhor contradiction, it is not hard to see why it must be a formal demand of reason that we reject principles which cannot be given consistent universal application. It therefore stands

that when one respectfully submits to the concept of law, one is perforce, agreeing to the legislation of pure practical reason for which the sole rule is this requirement of universal promulgation. Subjective questions of self-interest, or even more objective questions of general utility, are of no consequence to its deliberations. Pure practical reason only wishes to know that our rules have this universal legislative form.

Although I have not yet had the occasion to make this clear, it is Kant's conviction that the impersonal legislator of the law is reason. For Kant, wholly rational behavior and moral behavior are identical. Though prudential action may be rational, it is not wholly so, for its incentives, its ends, come from the faculty of desire. However, when one acts in accordance with the categorical imperative, one decides upon the proper action solely upon the basis of whether the action fulfills the demand of universal legislation, and not on the basis of the desirability of the proposed ends. In this manner, one's decision as to what must be done rests ultimately, not with one's inclinations, but rather with the requirements of pure practical reason. In Kant's thinking, only rational creatures possess a concept of law, and hence, reason makes it possible that a rational creature can regulate himself by the universal form of the law. When one begins to scrutinize or judge one's behavior rationally, one necessarily takes or assumes a moral standpoint, for when one rationally considers one's actions, one evaluates them according to the

concept of law, thereby judging them according to the ethical criterion. On the other hand, if one refuses to think and guide oneself in a wholly rational manner, and thereby morally, one relinquishes any claims to an objective rational standard (the concept of law) and one is forced to proceed according to subjective inclinations which have neither rational nor objective foundation. One apprehends that for Kant the rational criterion of moral action is objectively and universally the same for all men. In Kant's thought, all rational beings implicitly acknowledge the moral law, even those who transgress it.[26.]

The following three propositions and their implications are, to my thinking, central to the Foundations: first, that which says the moral man denies considerations of self-interest and acts from obedience to the principle of morality; second, that which says a moral man acts from principle or law and not for the sake of the value of his ends; third, that which says that reason is the impartial legislator of the moral law which is conceived according to the concept of universal legislation. We have dwelt upon these three aspects because they are points to keep in mind, both in comprehending and in criticizing the concept of the summum bonum, When considering the summum bonum, it is important to enquire into what respects it is a consistent extension of these other ideas, and also to question whether or not its modifications can be understood as consistent extensions or additions.

This adumbration of these three points is intended to provide a general characterization of what Kant recognized as moral behavior or what he felt to be "the moral knowledge of common human reason". In other words, this basis of judgement is operative in ordinary moral behavior, "though common human reason does not think it abstractly in such a universal form."[27] This is because common human reason ordinarily does not hold its own activities up to abstract scrutiny.

However, I think it would be worthwhile to return to the individual issue upon which this analysis has turned. Specifically, I am referring to the moral principle and the question of selfless or disinterested motivation. As I have been emphasizing, Kant arrives at the supreme moral principle by seeking to withdraw from our rules any content which is founded upon self-interest. As we also said, in this process he derives a completely formal law devoid of any material content. However, simple deduction of the principle of morality does not comprise the entire task which Kant set out for himself. In the Preface, Kant states that the latter part of the book returns to common moral knowledge where the moral principle finds its application. In the latter parts of the second section, one becomes acquainted with the principle of autonomy which, Kant asserts, explains how the agent can follow moral dicta without being determined by appeals to personal advantage.[28] I have shown that the moral law functions basically as a test for the morality of a contemplated action, and further, that

it is respect for this law that motivates the agent to comply with its requirements.[29] However, the moral law, as Kant deduces it in the first section, has not been put forth with great regard for its utilization in moral decision making. The principle of autonomy is presented as one of the formulations of the categorical imperative (found in the second section), and thereby intended to provide a fuller understanding of how the moral law is applied or used in ordinary moral reasoning. The specific mark of the principle of autonomy is that it indicates how the moral law is followed without the agent having to be induced through interest. At this stage, a complete appreciation of the meaning and implication of this principle cannot be gained without a review of the moral principle as we become acquainted with it earlier, with consideration as to how it excludes self-interest.

It will be remembered that Kant felt that the formal principle of law must be the basis of dutiful motivation because it is without material content, that is, it refers to no particular end. Kant reasons that if we were to follow laws founded on particular objectives, our motivation would have to be that of desire for these ends; however, if our rules had their genesis, not in certain ends, but in a principle which is abstracted from any end, then the ground for disinterested action could be established. Accordingly, the ends we pursue would have to be undertaken, not because of any attraction we could have for them in themselves, but

because they would be posited by our formal law. Although Kant goes on to characterize this formal law as determining our will by means of respect, it remains that it is this formal aspect which precludes self-interest by withdrawing material content, and thereby renouncing considerations based on one's ends.

Though Kant offers this account of the universal moral law in the first chapter of the Foundations, he presents a further elaboration of this concept in the second chapter. Upon reading the second chapter, one gathers that Kant offers this elaboration in order to explain how it is that the moral agent acts without being induced through appeals to his self-interest. One finds this explanation proceeding from an effort to explain what it is that distinguishes moral imperatives from hypothetical imperatives. Albeit, we are already aware that hypothetical imperatives are usually followed with the furtherance of happiness in view,[30] whereas the categorical imperative moves us with respect; however, Kant seems to say that there is still something left unanswered. This something involves the coincidental fact that both the categorical imperative and the hypothetical imperatives require submission to their rules; both seem to impose upon or coerce the will, the former by the demands of morality, the latter as counsels of prudence. The salient question is: "where is the qualitative difference to be found?" In the case of moral action, it is not enough to say that the source

of determination is respect, for there still remains the fact of determination and, seemingly coercion of the will.

Kant resolves this question by exploring moral determination according to the principle of autonomy. The principle of autonomy, in effect, states that the constraint which the moral law imposes is, in fact, self-imposed constraint since the will is the author of the law by which it is restrained.[31] The autonomy of the will is a simple concept and is said to follow from the fact that the will, in acting ethically, creates its own rules by enquiring of a proposed maxim whether it satisfies the form of universality. Since the will formulates its own rules, in following these rules, it is not being externally imposed upon, since its principles are of its own devising. By contrast, in following counsels of prudence formulated as hypothetical imperatives, the will regulates itself by rules which do not proceed from its own authorship, but which are derived from the object of desire.

This analysis enables Kant to explain how the moral principle differs from rules based upon self-interest. According to Kant, when one discerns that man is capable of acting from laws of his own legislation, then one can understand how it is that one can act free from coercion by self-interest. Kant argues that all moralists who fail to see that the moral will authors its own rules are led to assume external laws or dicta to which the will must conform. Since these

rules do not arise from the agent's own legislation, these moralists are likewise led to formulate some form of compulsion or force to induce obedience; inevitably, this compulsion takes the form of inducements to self-interest. Kant labels such principles, principles of heteronomy, by way of opposing these to the moral principle, the principle of autonomy.[32.]

Heteronomy is said to arise when the will assumes some objective or end as determining it prior to the moral law, or when we unreflectingly conform to a law which is imposed by some authority; for example, rules imposed by a state or religion.[33.] In both these cases, the principles we follow do not result from our own legislation, and therefore, there must be some form of inducement to force our compliance. In one case, it is self-interest operating in us through desire or appetite; in the other case (as in an imposed moral code), it is usually some promise of future rewards or punishments. Kant understands that when the will acts from principles of heteronomy, it is coerced to obedience by some sort of appeal to its self-interest.[34.]

To put the case succinctly, one finds that the principle of autonomy is put forth in order to explain how it is that a moral agent is capable of acting free from self-interest. Kant thought that to simply assert that the agent's motivation is based on no particular end does not explain how it is that one is impelled to action if there are no considerations to personal advantage. By stressing the self-legislating aspect

of regulation by the moral law, Kant felt that he had found the answer to this problem. It seemed to Kant that the self-regulating moral will does not need to be incited by self-interest since its demands spring from its own legislation. It is only the will which looks outside itself for motives that must be assured of inducements, for such a will must comply with rules which are not its own.

What this characterization aims at is to distinguish rules of morality from rules of prudence; that is to say, it indicates a particular characteristic of rules of morality which distinguishes them from rules of prudence, and which shows how the former can be followed without inducements to self interest. As I interpret it, the fact that the will is self-legislating indicates something about moral deliberation, and further, what it indicates about ethical deliberation would appear to explain how selflessness is possible. Kant asserts that in the case of moral conduct, the principles one reasons or deliberates to, follow from reason's own inherent criterion, the moral law, whereas when one follows counsels of prudence, one's rules are formulated as hypothetical imperatives, principles which must be followed if one is to obtain the ends one has willed. In order to put the case more explicitly, one can say that the agent, in obeying the moral law, autonomously reasons to his rules because he deliberates from his own moral criterion, whereas in the other case (when hypothetical imperatives are obeyed), his rules

are derived from the contingencies which play a part in affecting the ends he has chosen. Thus, in following hypothetical imperatives, he is, in fact, conforming to those means which are necessary in order to gain his end. By contrast, in obeying the moral law, reason does not derive its rules in accordance with external contingencies, but autonomously formulates them from the immanent and transcendental moral criterion of pure practical reason. Hence, Kant says that inducements (usually taking the form of rewards and punishments) must be assumed in order to make one comply with principles which do not result from one's own autonomous deliberation.

Now, I believe the principle of autonomy to provide a convincing explanation as to the possibility of a practical reasoning, or a deliberation uninfluenced by extrinsic demands. However, does the mere fact that one acts from principles of one's own devising mean that one has realized a rejection of self-interest? Kant certainly thinks this to be the case, for he asserts that the concept of autonomy explains how the renunciation of all interest is the specific mark of regulation by the categorical imperative.[35.] Kant therefore is claiming that autonomous deliberation, immanent in moral regulation, is significant of a renunciation of self-interested determinants. Now, I question this claim because though the exercise of one's own judgement is necessary if moral behavior is not to be coerced, and thereby corrupted into a form

of prudence, it would still seem that the realization of the denial of self-interest occurs apart from the act of deliberation. Selflessness occurs when we actually realize our convictions in behavior which may be antithetical to our self-interest - when we force ourselves to obey our convictions even though the act may be inimical to ourselves.

My meaning is that the rejection of self-interest can only be accounted for in the actual context of the act and not by our form of deliberating. Ultimately, selflessness or the rejection of self-interest is only realized when one concretely decides to reject this or that prompting of inclination which could lead us away from what is right. The denial of our interests is not yet a reality when we deliberate, but only becomes real when we deny ourselves something which promotes our advantage. Hence, in order to assess selflessness, it is unavoidable that one have a direct acquaintance with the act itself, thereby allowing one to identify what tangible objectives of desire actually have had to be renounced; it would seem that this cannot be known from the autonomous form of our deliberations.

To substantiate this line of argument, one should return to the fundamentals of Kant's moral theory. The moral man, as we have shown earlier, is the man who regulates his material maxims (derived from the faculty of desire) by the legislative form of the moral law.[36] It would seem, therefore

that the occasion upon which the moral agent realizes his moral worth comes with his decision in favor of duty rather than an errant material maxim. It is in these sorts of instances that his adherence to obligation is evinced, for in acting dutifully he chooses to deny some definite attraction to his self-interest. Contrariwise, in situations where both material maxims and the formal law agree, the moral agent does not have to make a decision between obligation and his advantage, and therefore no decision in favor of duty is realized. An action in these circumstances, even though it conforms to duty, is not the product of a decision in favor of duty since one's material maxims and the moral law are in agreement, and therefore one's personal desires will be fulfilled by acting dutifully. One concludes that the moral man rejects the incentives of desire in favour of the demands of duty when he constrains certain material maxims because they fail to harmonize with the universal legislative form of the moral law.

It would seem, therefore, that there are many actions which may issue from autonomous deliberation, but which occur in circumstances in which the agent does not have to make a choice between following duty or obeying some more selfish tendency; actions in these circumstances, even though they are in accord with autonomous principles, do not precipitate a denial of self-interest. By way of illustration, one might

cite the example of the man who will autonomously reason to the proper conduct and follow that conclusion when the consequences are not inimical to his advantage, that is when material maxims and the formal law agree so that both incentives, duty and inclination, are fulfilled by the same behavior; but on the other hand, when he finds the consequences disadvantageous, that is when the material maxims and the formal law do not agree and the same action will not satisfy both demands, he fails to live up to his convictions. Hence, autonomous reasoning to one's rules cannot stand as a criterion for the renunciation of personal advantage; that self-interest is denied through an action, can only be ascertained through direct knowledge of the particular moral act itself, that is to say by knowing if the person in acting dutifully has had to deny his inclinations.

In the first chapter of the Foundations, Kant seems to assert this point in an example which is intended to serve as an illustration of dutiful conduct. The example presented is one in which a man acts charitably out of obligation, despite the fact that he is naturally disinclined to helping others. Kant says that this man gains moral worth, whereas others who engage in these actions because they find satisfaction in such behavior, realize no moral worth. Kant states: "...it is just here that the worth of the character is brought out, which is morally and incomparably the highest of all: he is beneficial not from inclination but from duty."[37]

To my mind, this remark underlines that where inclination is opposed to duty and one subsequently decides in favor of duty, then one has a true indication of moral character, and therefore of that behavior which is valuable because it is informed by a good will. However, though Kant here gives emphasis to this criterion of selfless motivation, one finds that in other parts of the Foundations he is taken with attempting to understand selfless motivation solely through a consideration of a particular characteristic of moral reasoning. In order to ascertain why Kant's thought took this development, one should consider the schema of the Foundations. The first chapter proceeds from consideration of the common aspects of moral action (duty and selflessness) to a derivation of the supreme principle of moral evaluation. However, in the second chapter, in which we find the principle of autonomy, there is a movement backward in which Kant attempts to illustrate moral behavior by way of his principle. This is corroborated by Kant's words in the Preface:

> "I have adopted in this writing the method which is, I think, most suitable if one wishes to proceed analytically from common knowledge to the determination of its supreme principle, and then synthetically from examination of this principle and its sources back to common knowledge where it finds its application." 38.

In other words, Kant's expressed purpose is to derive the moral law from a contemplation of ordinary moral behavior, following which, he endeavors to explain the fact of moral behavior from the moral law.

Nevertheless, though Kant begins with what he regards to be moral motivation, that is, a will which denies its own interests if they are countermanded by duty, he proceeds to abstract only a form or formula for moral evalution, the formal law of duty.

Now, the moral will, we argued, possesses worth or value because it will deny its own interests if they contradict duty; however, Kant seemingly disregards this incontrovertible criterion of selflessness because he has set for himself the task of explaining the critical denial of personal interest by means of his supreme moral principle. The fruit of this effort is the formulation of the moral law according to the principle of autonomy.

Against Kant's effort to identify the rejection of self-interest by autonomous deliberation, I have sought to argue that to deny incentives aimed at one's advantage means that one denies some definite advantage or advantages to oneself, for whatever reason. Hence, disinterested deliberation as to what is right cannot be equivalent to the denial of self-interest, for the rejection of personal advantage occurs when we deny ourselves that which is attractive to our appetite. However, proponents of Kant have contended that the principle of autonomy serves as a criterion of self-denial, not in the sense that it signifies the rejection of a definite inclination, but in the sense that egocentric incitements have not figured or entered into our calculations as to what is the right thing to do, and therefore, ipso facto, we have abnegated the claims of our desires, even if what duty dictates is in concord with our inclinations. The point that this sort of thinking neglects is that a man, even though he may disinterestedly

ascertain what is right, will still be aware of how the consequences of the proposed action will affect him. It is this awareness which allows for a moral option and the possibility of meritorious moral conduct. One can see that an awareness of how actions will affect us must unavoidably insinuate itself into our desire, both to follow duty and, when the consequences appear inimical, to refrain from duty. In the final analysis, the agent who obeys the proposals of duty when he is aware that the consequences of such conduct will imperil his interest, evinces an option for duty and a denial of egocentric concerns which cannot be matched by the agent who is motivated to duty only when he feels that the actions required by obligation will not be disadvantageous to himself.

At most, autonomous deliberation can only serve as a prerequisite to the denial of self-interest. Ultimately, the principle of autonomy provides for the possibility of the agent impartially determing or deciding what is right. The point is that acting upon a conviction is something distinct from formulating a conviction. Even though an individual may impartially reason as to what is right, he is still aware of how the possible consequences of an act may affect him, and this awareness must have an influence upon him. In other words, I do not believe it correct to claim that an individual who has acted upon a moral conviction when his selfish proclivities are in agreement, has really denied his own interests. What I claim is that the denial of personal concern only becomes the case when one is willing to adhere to one's disinterested

convictions, when one expects that those moral actions will be thwarting to one's"self-regarding" desires.

II.

The Command to Holiness

In this chapter I intend to provide some preparatory discussion before beginning a direct consideration of the summum bonum (highest good). The first topic considered will be how Kant makes a reasonable connection from the ideas of the Foundations to the positing of the highest good in the Critique of Practical Reason. In the latter work, Kant argues that moral volition seeks as its ultimate object this highest good which consists of virtue and happiness causally related. The following few pages should be considered as an introductory treatment examining the relation between this concept and certain salient ideas in the Foundations.

In the Foundations, as we saw, Kant attempts to assure us that the morality of our conduct should not be equated with the suitability or worthiness of our ends.[1] Although a moral act must have an end, the moral value of that act is not derived from those ends. Kant claims that the goodness or deficiency of various objects or circumstances, posited as the purpose of volition does not mean the moral goodness of volition; this can only be ascertained by the principles from which the act was willed.

According to this thinking, the entire question of moral value is related to the appropriateness of one's principles and is in no way dependent upon or concerned with the worthiness

or appropriateness of a man's ends: "...moral value therefore does not depend upon the reality of the object of action, but merely upon the principle of volition by which the action was done without any regard to the object of the faculty of desire."[2] This line of thinking, of course, is in direct contrariety to that of English utilitarians like Bentham and Mill. What Kant is saying is that when one talks about morality or moral value, the worth of one's ends is inconsequential, because the moral question turns upon the relation between one's principles and volition, not between volition and one's ends. Hence, in the Foundations no intimation is given that morality is primarily concerned with the ends men seek; the entire emphasis of Kant's analysis is upon the principles of volition without any regard to the value of the possible objects of volition.

The above statement appears to be corroborated in the "Preface" to the Foundations in which Kant sets out the purpose of his treatise. In the "Preface" he makes a distinction between the formal and material elements of moral action. The principles of volition are said to refer to the former while the actual act with its respective end is said to refer to the latter. The relevant study for the moralist concerns the formal element, the principles of volition, while research into overt physical behavior, the material or empirical element is reserved for the anthropologist.[3] "In ethics, however, the empirical part may be called more specifically, practical

anthropology; the rational part morals proper."[4]. According to Kant, the sphere of morality is only concerned with the a priori universal principles of reason and therefore, no moral insight can be gained from studying man's overt conduct, or the ends he proposes.

However, despite the fact that Kant, in the Foundations, limits moral enquiry solely to a consideration of the principles of volition, some philosophers have welcomed Kant's positing of the highest good in the Critique of Practical Reason as complementing the ideas of the Foundations. It is often said that the summum bonum completes the theory of the Foundations because it shows us what moral volition actually seeks to promote; in other words, it fills in the material of volition while the Foundations concentrates solely on principles of moral volition. Although this is often posited, I find it hard to reconcile the summum bonum as an altogether consistent addendum to the theory. In the Foundations, the only moral demand is that our principles be of a certain type, that is that they be capable of universal legislation. The moral law says nothing directly about which ends were to be preferred or what sort of achievement should be sought. As we saw, morality in itself does not prescribe any ends; it can only indirectly affect our choice of ends, through its demand that we refrain from those actions which can not be given consistent universal application.[5]. Hence, the problem which springs to mind is how one moves from a moral law which only makes demands upon the

suitability of one's principles, to the argument that the moral law or morality does in fact demand the promotion of a particular end. In order to answer this, I will enquire first as to the grounds upon which reason is said to propose the summum bonum. I believe this problem can be treated best if one refers to Allen Wood's book, Kant's Moral Religion.

Wood, who has devoted extensive study to this area of Kant's thought, brings it to our attention that practical reason is not content simply to derive a supreme principle of conduct unconditioned by practical needs, but also seeks to propose a final moral objective apart from non-moral objectives which are based on need or inclination.[6.] As practical reason gives us a principle of conduct which is distinct from pragmatic principles, so likewise it labors to establish a final end for all moral interests which is distinct from the ends proposed by desire, or prudence. Kant feels that reason is not content with simple obedience to principle, but further demands a single ultimate purpose in order to focus all our particular moral strivings. Allen Wood claims that Kant intended this need of reason to be compared to that which we find in the Critique of Pure Reason, in which reason strives to organize totalities into a unity of single principle. One concludes that it is along these lines of thought that the summum bonum is said to be required; for these lines of thought argue that the summum bonum is posited because of the need of reason to find an unconditional unity of the totality of ends of pure practical reason.

Wood cautions that the highest good is not to be conceived as a particular end, but rather as an unconditional unity of the totality of the ends of pure practical reason, "...which while not multiplying men's duties, yet provides them with a special focus for the unification of all ends".[7.] To express this more simply, one can say that the summum bonum is not a requirement posited in addition to the demands of the moral law, but rather is the unifying end for all particular moral strivings required by the law. This unifying of all purposes in this final purpose, is something which reason requires us to do, as we have seen. This analysis is corroborated by Kant's statement in the Critique of Pure Reason, that:

> "...as pure practical reason, it likewise seeks the unconditioned for the practically conditioned (which rests on inclinations and natural need); and this unconditioned is not only sought as the determining ground of the will, but even when this is given (in the moral law), is also sought as the unconditioned totality of the object of the pure practical reason, under the name of the highest good." 8.

Yet, this analysis has not given us a complete explanation to show that morality does command this particular end. Certainly it may be a demand of reason that our strivings be ordered and unified in a single purpose; however, a reader unacquainted with Kant would not immediately see how this must also be a moral prescription. As well, I have been arguing that the moral law as presented in the Foundations, only seems to concern itself with one's principles.

However, Kant would claim that a directive which can

be willed universally must be a moral directive, for the moral law requires that we act only from those principles which are capable of universal legislation. Clearly, the promotion of the highest good does fulfill this requirement, for Kant is claiming that this object is the unifying end which all moral men universally seek to promote, and therefore that it would be desired that all men universally further this end. Therefore, the highest good is proposed not because it is subjectively desirable, but because it is right that its objectives be promoted. If we define as right that which we would universally will to be the case, then it is clearer how the moral law might entail this object, for Kant will argue that in all forms of moral action (action in accordance with the categorical imperative) the moral agent universally wills this end. Kant's reasoning therefore is that just as the moral law approves these actions which can be willed universally, so also there is an end which can be willed universally by all moral agents.

Hence, the logic which says that the moral law requires the promotion of the summum bonum would operate according to the idea that the moral law gives approbation to the principle of promoting the summum bonum. It does so because such a principle fulfills the form of universal legislation. Kant would say that it is seen as necessary that all rational agents promote this end, because it is universally applicable. Hence, if one disinterestedly considers the principle of promoting the summum bonum, he will see that it is a universally valid principle and

therefore, that it should be obeyed.

However, if one follows the serpentine manoeverings of Kant's thought, one can perhaps agree that the moral law can legislate an end without having to deny that the moral law is solely concerned with the formal aspect of one's principles. However, I believe this can only be accepted if the moral law is understood somewhat differently from the interpretation which is conveyed in the Foundations. I believe it is quite clear that in the Foundations the moral law does not function prescriptively. As we have shown, the moral law is said to be a criterion for evaluating whether proposed maxims satisfy morality.[9] In this sense, its use would be not to tell us specifically what we are to do, but rather what we are allowed to do. Clearly the moral law did not require that we act upon every maxim which is found to be universally applicable; what the moral law demands is that the maxims which we do decide to follow should have this universal form of law. For example, the moral law may tell me that it is ethically acceptable to borrow money if I have the intention of repaying the funds; however, this would not mean that there is an immediate obligation to go out and borrow money. Obviously, all that the moral law has told me is that if I do decide to borrow money with these intentions, then this action will meet with approval. One concludes therefore, that if the moral law informs me that the principle of promoting the summum bonum is capable of

universal legislation, it seems somehow a mistake to say that the moral law demands the furtherence of the summum bonum. It would seem that all the moral law can say to me is that if I do make the summum bonum my end, this is allowable; however, it (the moral law), cannot be said to oblige or demand that I seek the summum bonum without one having to reinterpret the function of the moral law.

This is to say that one would have to see the moral law as legislating specific and definite requirements, such as we find in something like the Spartan military code, or in most civic constitutions referring to the obligations of citizens. Obviously, the moral law as presented in the Foundations, does not function to dictate specific demands, but only serves to indicate which sort of behavior would be moral and which immoral.

I think this argument can be used effectively against Kant's claim that the moral law demands that we pursue the summum bonum as our end. Despite this, however, I think a strong case can be made for a command to holiness, though I remain unconvinced that the supreme principle of morality can be said to command both virtue and happiness taken together as a whole in the highest good. I think holiness can be understood as a command according to the following reasoning. As we have seen, the categorical imperative says that every maxim we act from should be capable of universal legislation.

Indubitably, the moral law does make a demand, not a specific but a general demand, that all our actions should fulfill this formal requirement. Further, one can say that the man who in all his various and sundry activities lives up to this moral demand, should be regarded as a holy man, a man who never contravenes morality. On this interpretation, I think one can say that the essential command of the moral law is tautologically equivalent to a demand that we be holy, that is, that we always act morally. Though a tautology is often claimed to be an uninformative restatement of terms, it is also true that though two terms may denote the same thing, they may also have different connotations. With regard to ethical principles which are intended to exhort and urge, differing connotations can make a difference. Undeniably, the command to holiness conveys something which is not quite the same as that which is conveyed by the command of the categorical imperative. In the command to holiness, we have the idea of an excellence or perfection to be realized, which is not understood from the idea of unremitting, or unflinching commitment to the moral law. Hence, I think there is a command to moral perfection which can be derived from the moral law, and which is also meaningful.

The remainder of this chapter will be given over to an analysis of Kant's concept of holiness which is somewhat different from my understanding of it. I find it noteworthy that Kant thinks of holiness as an end to be striven for,

and in the following analysis I will scrutinize this idea and explain how I think it to be wrong. In concluding this chapter, I will attempt to show that the command to holiness can still be viable without the postulate of immortality, which means that such a command can be meaningfully followed even if one knows that human beings are incapable of complete moral perfection.

One may find it strange that I treat the concept of holiness before offering a detailed analysis of the entire summum bonum. However, I think a primary discussion of holiness is justified because, firstly, Kant claims that, "...complete fitness of intentions to the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good." [10]. In other words, in order for the agent to realize the highest good, it is necessary that he first assure his own virtue; hence, virtue is said to be the end for which the agent must strive so that the summum bonum may be attained. Secondly, virtue is asserted to be the supreme constituent of the highest good; Kant labels it the supreme good. For the above reasons, I think it important to effect some clarity about what holiness itself means, and further, what it means to attain holiness. This is necessary before entering into a consideration of its relation to happiness in the concept of the summum bonum.

According to Kant, virtue is the ideal of the moral law itself, and the ideal is itself commanded by the moral law. Kant states that the imperatives of morality require

that we seek perfection. In An Inquiry into the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals, he states: "Do the most perfect thing that can be done by you, is the primary formal principle of all obligation of commission and the proposition: Refrain from that whereby the greatest perfection possible through you is hindered, is the primary formal principle with respect to the duty of omission." [11.] To attain perfection in our willing is to fulfill the state of holiness; essentially, it means that our will is incapable of any maxim which could not at the same time, function as universal law.[12.] Specifically, this end which the moral law holds before us is said to be that of a self-sufficing intelligence whose"...choice is correctly thought of as incapable of any maxim which could not at the same time be objectively a law." [13.] The moral law which is regarded as a constraint upon our sensual or pathological affections always holds this ideal before us. However, in the apprehension of this prohibition, the moral law presents us with the ideal of a will entirely determined by moral law. Hence, with each moral directive felt as a restraint upon the inclination, we have also a concomitant awareness which is that of an absolute intelligence incapable of deviance from goodness. The motive for moral action would derive, first, from respect for the moral law itself, but also from the concomitant respect for and desire to imitate the paradigm of holiness which

that law presents. This positing of a conception of moral perfection seems to me to be reasonable. Certainly, an innate idea of perfection has been a recurrent motif in Western philosophy (E.g. Anselm, Descartes, Malebranche). That we ourselves possess a conception of moral goodness is something which most men who have thought about ethics or morals would probably agree upon. Therefore, Kant's argument that imperatives also present us with this model in order to inspire us to emulation, is something with which I have no fundamental disagreement. However, I believe that difficulties are inherent in the characterization of this perfection as the end of action, and in the additional meaning we are to give to the concept of striving for this end. Before more detailed investigation is given to this point, we should reach some clarity concerning the imperfection attributed to men, for we should be clear as to what perfection demands.

As we saw before, we are moral beings because we are rational beings.[14] This is because only rational beings are capable of acting out of the conception of the law, that is, out of the universal principle of morality. A wholly rational being, synonymous with a holy will, is incapable of acting contrary to the law since its behavior is entirely rationally determined; which is to say that such behavior is directed solely by the rational principles of morality. However, as finite beings, we do not possess a wholly rational nature.

Since we are also members of the phenoménal or sense world, we possess a sensual nature in addition to a rational one; it is due to the former that we suffer influences and inclinations which run counter to the dictates of rationality.[15] Hence, in addition to being subject to moral imperatives, we also suffer from sensual influences which can often run counter to moral dicta. It is the latter which tempt us and often overcome our more moral intentions. A more familiar statement of this condition is expressed in St. Paul's Gospel: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and between them ye can do nothing so that ye can not do the things ye would."

Hence, Kant's characterization of the finite moral agent is that of an imperfectly rational nature whose sensual nature prevents it from ever being totally determined by rational principles of morality.[16] The holy will, the ideal of the finite moral agent, is however, wholly rational and therefore incapable of being determined contrary to morality.[17] To state the case briefly, Kant's characterization of finite moral imperfection in Critique of Practical Reason is synonymous with the fact that we are not wholly rational creatures.

Kant, as we have shown, stated that the moral law always holds before our eyes the model of pure will, incapable of any maxim which could not at the same time serve as objective law. One cannot question that this model would serve as a

source of inspiration; however, there is still a problem with Kant's own representation of this goal, for it would seem that we could never achieve this state. This state of holiness would be unattainable because the attainment of holiness for a finite creature according to Kant's own definition, would be impossible. As Kant continually underlines, human beings are members of both the intelligible and phenomenal worlds. In the sphere of rationality or intelligibility, we are subject to morality; however, as phenomenal beings, we are affected by sensual desires and inclinations contrary to moral law. (Kant says that we suffer pathological affection).[18] It is the case that as members of the phenomenal world, we are always capable of evil for we always experience sensual inclinations; it is for this reason that the categorical imperative is usually felt as constraint upon the will. Given this, the command to attain holiness seems somewhat confused, since to possess holiness is to be incapable of evil. Obviously, there can be no way in which volition can change its essential self. We are irrevocably members of the sense world; such a transformation could not be brought about through our agency, but only through that of an omnipotent being. No matter how moral we strive to become, or do become, we will always be subject to temptation, for this is inextricably bound up in our nature.

This topic should be examined in more depth. What I think is obscured in Kant's analysis is the distinction

between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the finite and the infinite holy will. What I call the quantitative aspect might admit the possibility of parity between the finite and the infinite holy will; however, the qualitative difference irrevocably divides the finite and the pure will. The quantitative difference refers to the fact that the holy will always acts in accordance with the principle of morality, whereas it is rarely the case that a finite will is sufficiently moral to be always in adherence with the moral law. The qualitative difference, however, brings out the essential distinction; this distinction is that the holy will is incapable of any act contrary to the categorical imperative, whereas the finite will, regardless of how moral, is always capable of evil. Hence, whatever the degree of developed morality, one can never bridge the essential division between the finite and the pure will which consists in the latter's total incapacity

for evil (the essential qualitative aspect). Through moral progress, the finite will could only approximate the pure will in the quantitative aspect, — the latter's moral consistency.

Although this analysis is consistent with certain salient points of Kant's presentation in the Critique of Practical Reason, if one reads Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone, (hereafter shortened to Religion), one meets Kant's more mature thought, which provides a more sophisticated interpretation of moral imperfection. Specifically, certain of Kant's remarks in the former book manifest a certain ambiguity which is not explained until the latter book. In the Critique of Practical Reason, although he says we must strive for holiness, he admits at the same time that this is something we can not effectively attain.[19] Although he posits this ideal (holiness) as our end, he subsequently announces that this can not be the case, since this objective is not within our power. Rather, he says that the model

of holiness demands that we achieve virtue, by which he means "...the indefinite progress of our maxims toward this model."[20] However, in the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant leaves it unexplained why holiness is to be attained in progress towards this ideal (virtue). He states: "Only endless progress from lower to higher stages of perfection is possible to rational but finite creature. The infinite being, to whom the temporal condition is nothing, sees in this series, which for us is without end a whole comformable to the moral law; holiness."[21] However, moral progress, no matter how successful, can only achieve resemblance in the quantitative aspect; it can not remove temptation (pathological affection) to which a finite being is always susceptible. Despite the degree of moral development, a finite being is always capable of evil, and therefore, though fully virtuous, could not be equivalent to a holy being in this respect.

In Religion Within the Bounds of Reason, this ambiguity concerning our ends is cleared up. Here, it is manifest that Kant was thinking not that our end should be to take on the identical moral nature of an infinitely holy will, but rather to make our behavior resemble that of a holy will. Allen Wood, in his book Kant's Moral Religion, has drawn attention to the fact that in Kant's later work Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone, Kant has propounded that God confers righteousness upon us for the disposition to the good which we have adopted, that is, the virtuous disposition whereby we endlessly progress from perfection to perfection. Kant says that:"...a superior's decree conferring a good for which the subordinate possesses nothing but the (moral) receptivity is called grace."[22] It is by means of the conferring of righteousness that the gulf between virtue and holiness is bridged. Here, in Kant's conception, it is clear that he does not see this gulf bridged by a renovation of man's essential nature.

Kant's later work seems to preclude an interpretation which represents the command of holiness to be that of acquiring the actual moral nature of a Holy Being or the actual freedom from sensual inclination. Grace is conceived as efficacious because it redeems man from his evil,his failure ever to be wholly adequate to the law. By means of Grace, God is capable of "...supplementing out

of the fullness of his holiness man's lack of requisite qualifications therefore."[23] If grace is important because it somehow supplements for man's failings, Kant must have been referring to the actual fact of moral failure, that is, sensual inclinations. This is to say that moral imperfection is identified not with the fact that man is always capable of evil, but with a certain intrinsic quality of his conduct. Therefore, what is imputed by the term moral imperfection is the failure of our conduct to accord with moral principle. This could only be righted by bringing that conduct into line with those moral principles. The ideal is one in which our behavior would correspond to moral principle.

However, even given that our ideal is to make our actions adequate to moral law, Kant's remarks in the Critique of Practical Reason still leave us unenlightened as to how this end is to be pursued. The difference between a finite will and a holy will is here represented as the difference in nature between a partially sensual character which always suffers pathological affectation, and a wholly rational nature which always follows moral inclination. Logically, if we are to become holy, it would appear that our nature must be radically altered. However, in Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone, Kant conducts a more detailed investigation of moral evil. Here, it is underlined that human

evil is not generated by man's sensual nature but by a quality of human volition or choice. It is not due to the mere fact that we naturally possess this disposition (sensual inclination) that we are morally imperfect or fail in goodness; rather, it is due to our tendency to adopt freely in our maxims those ends which have their source in our lower nature. Although we possess these sensual inclinations they are not per se evil; rather man's inherent evilness is found in a propensity of choice whereby he prefers this incentive to moral consideration. In Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone, Kant labels this defect "radical evil".[24] He explains that the moral law and man's sensual nature are the source of two distinctive incentives, both operative in impelling a man to action. Kant says that men, even in the adoption of good maxims will incorporate both incentives; for example, a man will fastidiously fulfill the duties of his vocation both from a desire to be moral and with a view to his own financial remuneration. Kant realized that attention to self-interest insinuated itself into even some of the best aspects of human conduct. However, it is not simply due to this mixing of incentives that we distinguish man as failing in goodness; rather, the inherent moral deficiency is identified with the tendency to reverse the moral order of incentives. This is done when men make the incentive to self-love with its concomitant inclinations, the condition of obedience to the law. This

directly opposes the moral order, for properly, the moral law should be the condition for following self-love.[25.] This is the idea that men will only agree to do their moral duty if they are first assured that they will receive some benefit. Kant illustrates his point with a quote from an English parliamentarian who stated that "every man has his price". It is this which Kant wishes to designate as "radical evil". The above disposition manifests itself not only in the obvious case when we act from maxims which directly violate the natural law, but also, insidiously, when we in fact, follow the law. Kant says that its affect in the latter instance is to "corrupt the ground of maxims".

Kant concludes that radical evil is part of the concept of finite rational volition;[26.] it is inextirpable which is to say, it can not be removed. It is this "wickedness of the will" which is presupposed in all finite rational agents. Nevertheless, this does not mean that man in general is incapable of goodness or that he will always adopt evil maxims. Rather, it means this disposition is inherent in all human natures, and therefore, must always be struggled against. Since this liability is ineradicable, it appears that Kant disclaims the possibility of overcoming it by any single action. Rather,he sees a more gradual progress as he remarks, "...progress from one perfection to others."[27.] However, Kant comprehends that even in moral progress, there

is an awareness of failure, a knowledge of the distance between ourselves and our ideal; Kant characterizes it as "...that failure which is inseparable from the existance of a temporal being as such, the failure, namely, ever wholly to be what we have a mind to become."[28].

In his delineation of the concept of radical evil, Kant is explicit that man fails in goodness, not simply because of an uncontrollable accident of nature, but through his own free agency. Prior to this analysis, it appeared that the only means of overcoming our imperfection would be through a radical transformation of our own nature. However, it is clearly not the case that imperfection is due to something for which we have no responsibility: Kant has clarified that it is not due to our sensual nature that we fail, but to a propensity of our own faculty of choice. Since man is responsible for this evil through his own free choice, he must be capable of altering in part what he is responsible for, that is, his behavior. Hence, to become more perfect, we must strive to make our behavior accord with moral principle. Further, since radical evil is inextirpable, complete accordance of our behavior with moral principle is never totally attainable. What we must strive for is that progress to ever higher degrees of perfection.

In short, Kant's discussion of radical evil makes it clear that, firstly, moral imperfection is not identical

to our sensual nature, and therefore, moral improvement is not to be attained by eradicating that nature; secondly, that human imperfection refers to an intrinsic characteristic of human volition which infects our behavior. Since we are free agents, it is by altering our willed behavior that we are, to a certain extent, capable of overcoming this condition. In attributing moral failure to the will and not to one's sensuous nature, it becomes clear that it is through actions for which the will is directly responsible, that moral change can be brought about, and not by altering our nature for which we have no personal responsibility. Kant's idea is, I believe, that a person will improve morally as he forces himself to take on various worthwhile, moral actions to which he may be indifferent or disinclined.

However, the specific question raised by this discussion is how virtue is to be distinguished as an end. If we assert that our endeavor is to bring our conduct into harmony with the moral law, it is to be wondered whether or not it is correct to call moral improvement an end. Kant describes an end as a hoped-for result or effect of action.[29] If we speak of trying to improve morally, our moral improvement would seem to refer to our behavior itself, not to the results of that behavior. However, it appears, as we argued above, that Kant was thinking of moral improvement in the sense of a formed moral character, that is, a disposition

to act in a certain manner which is brought about by certain acquired habits of behavior. According to this conception, our moral character, our tendency to act in a certain manner, would be the result of a certain manner of acting which we have developed.

If we consider the idea of radical evil, it is evident that perfection demands that we overcome our propensity for the incentives of inclination rather than those of duty. Kant says that radical evil "...arises from the frailty of human nature, the lack of sufficient strength to follow out the principles it has chosen for itself, joined with impurity, the failure to distinguish incentives (even of well-intentioned actions) from each other by the gauge of morality." 30.

He says that it can be overcome by limiting and disciplining those sensual influences which militate against our moral feelings.[31] Kant does not believe evil to be generated by a lack of awareness or insight, for he holds that the transgressor, even in his transgressions, acknowledges the law. [32]

Since evil involves an acquiescence to these other propensities, development in morality would necessarily be effected through subsuming and disciplining that susceptibility. This discipline would be brought about by training ourselves to act against the inclinations which oppose moral demands.

Hence, the overall aim to which our particular moral acts are directed, would be that of achieving virtue, that

is, the acquiring of a disciplined moral character. Therefore, we are to regard our particular moral acts as being unified in this final moral objective. Supposedly, a parsimonious person who sees the error of his life and decides to obey the law and engage in philanthropic behavior, can regard the ultimate end of that behavior as that of conquering his parsimoniousness, and thereby developing his virtue.

Despite the fact that this is seemingly persuasive, an individual acquainted with contemporary analysis must feel that Kant has blundered into a conceptual confusion. If one subjects Kant's work to linguistic analysis, one realizes that conquering one's lack of generosity could never be the result of any number of philanthropic activities, and that such an intention could never be properly described as the end of such acts. Disciplining one's ungenerous spirit should not be looked upon as a result of generous activities, because correctly, it is identical to such activities. For example, if a parsimonious person were asked why he was suddenly engaging in frequent charitable behavior, he might legitimately answer "to become more generous". However, becoming more generous is not a state brought about by generous activity, but is in fact indistinguishable from such activity. This sort of error is primarily fostered by linguistic usage.

For example, we do say something like "so and so disciplined his slothfulness by taking on extra tasks in his leisure time". Hence, we are led to think that overcoming this propensity was the result of those activities, rather than acknowledging that the achievement is identical to those activities. To see this problem aright, one should understand that though it is quite correct to say that by behaving generously we discipline our lack of natural charity, this is an achievement, not as an effect or result of activity, but in the sense that this activity is the realization of that achievement. What we mean by the term moral character is usually designated by the term "will". What I am arguing is that the will can not be distinguished from the aggregate of human activities and is in fact, idential to these.

In speaking of a disciplined or moral character, we refer not to a state identifiable or separable from our disciplined conduct which is its realization. This further error arises from something Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein have devoted attention to, the confusion of thinking of the will as distinct from, and yet antecedently determining, our behavior. The point that has been made by Ryle and Wittgenstein is that the will is not a distinguishable faculty. Rather, the faculties of the mind which we refer to by the terms intellect and will, are identical to those

activities which are their expression.[33] Ryle has made his point by comparing the error made in this respect to that of a person who, after visiting all the colleges at Cambridge, continued to ask when he would see the University. Obviously, this person confusedly thinks of the University as a separate and identifiable entity, as each of the colleges is; this person has made a "category error" in failing to grasp that the University refers not to a particular entity but to the aggregate of functions, activities, and colleges denoted by the appellation "university".[34] Ryle believes the same error to be made by those who think of the intellect or will as distinct from those actions we call intelligent or those human movements designated as willed. What we refer to by the term will is simply the aggregate of activities a human being consciously undertakes. In addition, what we mean when we say, for example, that a person has a strongly disciplined or good will, is simply that this person exhibits these qualities in his behavior.

According to this logic, I deny that there is such a thing as volitional disposition existing somewhere behind the scenes and determining the events we call human actions. That Kant held some form of this belief is apparent. Kant defines the will as "...a kind of causality of living thing so far as they are rational."[35] By " a kind of causality",

Kant means a principle or law which determines certain events to occur (specifically, those events denoted by human actions.) [36]. Obviously, Kant would hold that this principle, which determines these events, is in some way immanent in a person's character. Hence, the will would be the antecedent condition of our character, which determines our actions according to a certain principle, either that of autonomy or heteronomy. I have argued that there is something wrong in this, that we do not have to posit something behind human action which is said to cause it. Rather, what is needed is an acceptance of the fact of human behavior sui generis without attempting to explain it by the assumption of factitious entities. Given this, that a moral disposition is identical to the moral qualities of our actions, moral improvement can not be an effect of activities, but rather can be no more than the improved activities themselves. Hence, the motive to better ourselves morally would not be an end of action, that which can be affected by our conduct, but must refer to that action in itself.

This analysis, I believe, reveals that there is something chimerical about the idea of moral improvement as an end. This has further implications concerning the postulate of immortality. If what we mean by the concept of a moral character is simply and entirely one's habits of action or

behavior, a developing moral character would be identical to one's developing behavior, the changes and modifications of one's behavior. With the denial of moral character existing independent of our actual conduct, one finds that the rationality which posits moral improvement as an end, collapses. Moral character does not folbw as a consequence of action, but simply refers to the fact that our behavior accords with moral principle. The struggle to moral perfection is therefore the struggle to make our behavior accord with moral dicta. As it turns out, the command to holiness asserts no more than the demand of the moral law that we obey moral dicta in all cases. What we are striving for is not a particular end, that which would be an effect of action, but the more strict correspondence of our behavior with the moral law.

One should subject this to closer scrutiny: one realizes that the incapacity to which Kant is drawing our attention, is associated with the distance between all moral agents and their ideal. Kant sees Man's failure as a result of the inherent radical evil, because of which, no man is capable of sustained moral behavior. Because of the tendency of self interest to dominate one's actions, no man is capable of being entirely morally motivated. On this basis, Kant sees holiness as an end for which we must

struggle, but yet one which will always elude us. However, according to my analysis, one can say that to be thoroughly morally motivated is our ideal yet it cannot be our end, for we cannot make ourselves possess a fixed moral nature. This is not due to the inadequacy of our strivings, for no possible behavior could ever be an appropriate condition for the attainment of holiness - simply because morality is not a state, but rather a quality of conduct. Since our moral character alters with our conduct, given the fact of human freedom, one can see that no particular act or action can ever ensure that our future actions will follow the same moral development. In this sense, we are never capable of making ourselves possess any moral character, we are only capable of determining the moral character of particular actions.

I propose that holiness should have been properly termed an ideal rather than an end. The term ideal is used in the same sense that complete fulfillment of the law is an idea. An end is clearly distinct from this; technically an end is regarded as an effect of an action. An ideal should not be thought of as an effect of action, as it refers to the action itself in so far as it is thought to fulfill or satisfy the ultimate criterion of law. In the Foundations, ideal moral behavior is that behavior which

fulfills the concept of law, and it is by comparing one's conduct with this conception that one tests the moral appropriateness of an act. It is significant that Kant delineates the consequences as being in no way relevant to the question of whether an act fulfills the concept of law. The important aspect to which Kant draws attention is that morality is not fulfilled through consequences or results, but to the degree in which the act itself satisfies the criterion of law. Briefly, this is how one would have preferred Kant to characterize holiness, that is, as a standard to be lived up to, not as something we might effect through action.

Nevertheless, one might object to representing holiness in this sense, simply because Kant defines holiness not in terms of particular actions, but as a disposition to action. However, at the risk of reiterating my previous statements, it suffices to say that this assertion is precisely what my statements have been opposed to; I have said that a moral disposition simply means that our actions are of a certain character, not that there are certain built-in tendencies to engage in particular activities. Accepting this, it would seem that to say that we possess a concept of holiness or perfection can only mean that we conceive a person who, in all aspects of his behavior, acts in complete conformity

with the concept of law. This conclusion draws attention to the fact that moral perfection, if it is to be achieved, is not susceptible to being attained as a single result, but rather will be fulfilled in each of our acts as they are said to satisfy the conception of law. What is therefore the essence of holiness is this idea of an ideal fulfillment of the law. When one is said to satisfy holiness, one has shown that his actions live up to the ideal, that of fulfilling law in every case.

This completes my separate discussion of the concept of holiness. In concluding this chapter, I will consider what application my analysis has to the postulate of immortality. Kant postulates immortality in order to resolve a specific problem which he felt to arise in relation to the command to achieve holiness. The following pages are meant to present that problem, and therefore, they will be mainly expository.

As we saw, the highest good can only be realized if we first achieve holiness. In my exposition, I have shown that man has an inextirpable tendency to prefer sensual incentives to moral ones, and therefore, though evil can to a degree be overcome, it can not be totally removed from the character of a finite being.[37] However, holiness is not incompatible with the idea of a human being, for my exposition has also made us aware that holiness can be gained

through endless moral improvement, which God regards as being equivalent to holiness. However, there is a final problem which Kant believes can only be resolved by the postulate of immortality. This problem arises because man knows himself only as a finite member of the sense world and thereby as a mortal. This indicates that if holiness is to be met in endless moral striving, man will never know holiness, for his existence, apparently, is only temporal.

Kant argues that the problem which presents itself, involves the fact that if one reasons from the appearances of man's existence, one can not avoid vitiating the command to holiness. If the agent, believes he exists only temporally, he must conclude that holiness is impossible, and this must have a debilitating effect on his commitment to holiness, for supposedly he can hardly commit himself to something which he believes impossible. Despite this, Kant argues that one can not simply give up one's efforts to promote holiness, for the command to holiness is contained in the command to pursue the summum bonum. On this reasoning, he asserts that the object of holiness must be possible because it is a command of the moral law.[38] Ultimately, there is a resulting contradiction between, on the one hand, the demands of the moral law, and on the other hand, the realities of the phenomenal world.

Kant resolves this problem by means of the postulate of immortality. However, he prepares the way for this postulate by an argument intended to show that it is not entirely certain that phenomenal existence is man's sole form of existence. Kant argues that whoever claims holiness to be impossible is basing his conclusion upon a cognition of man as he appears in the phenomenal world. Kant points out that this argument is grounded in an assumption, the assumption that existence in the sense world is the only mode of existence for a human being.[39] Though Kant is quite right to bring this to our attention, it does not immediately strike one that there is any data which might argue for an alternative existence. However, Kant proposes that from the fact of human rationality, we have evidence that man is not solely a member of the world of sense.[40] Kant argues from the fact of man's intelligence, that there is the possibility that man has existence in an intelligible world. Therefore, the possibility of an alternative existence must be admitted on the grounds of man's rationality.

This argument is seen to be important, at the very least, because it shows that the postulate of human immortality can be made without contradicting the facts of human nature. More generally however, this argument is intended to convey to us the idea that man as an intelligent being may very possibly exist immortally, apart from his existence in the mutable

sense world. Hence, Kant sought to show that postulate of immortality which is said to resolve this problem of attaining holiness, is not altogether an unreasonable assumption.

If we return to the moral problem, we can now appreciate how the postulate of immortality is meant to rectify that difficulty. According to Kant this problem has reference to the contradiction between what the moral law commands, and what the apparent reality of the phenomenal world implies. However, if one postulates man's immortal existence, one need no longer accept the implications of the appearance world as final. This would follow, for if the agent postulates a belief in his immortal existence, then endless moral striving is seen as a possibility, and thereby the achievement of holiness is also seen as possible.

Though Kant has shown to us that a belief in immortality is far from being unreasonable, I think we should enquire whether the reasons which are said to necessitate the postulate of immortality are as compelling as Kant believes them to be. Kant claims, first of all, that moral perfection must be possible because it is contained in the command to seek the summum bonum. In other words, this object (holiness) should be possible to attain because it is commanded by the moral law. Kant elaborates on this point, and attempts to explain what the impossibility of holiness would mean with reference to the moral law. Kant claims that if holiness is impossible,

then one will be hindered in "...the unceasing striving toward the precise and persistent obedience to a command of reason."[41] Kant argues that this must be the case, for upon realizing that moral perfection is unattainable, either the agent will relax and give up his devotion to moral principle altogether, or he will become fanatically given over to mystical ideas about the possibility of holiness here and now. One gathers that the latter possibility has reference to those dangerous instances when individuals imagine their will to be in accord with the holy will of God, thereby exempting themselves from the moral order of restraint and obedience. In any case, whichever course the agent will follow, the consequence will be the same, for the agent will forsake the persistent application to moral principle which is supposed to be every man's vocation.

Essentially, what is to be gleaned from this explanation is that if man's commitment to moral excellence is not to be undermined, the agent must believe that holiness can be achieved. It is according to this reasoning that Kant concludes that in order to sustain one's commitment to holiness, one must regard oneself as a member of the intelligible world in which one will possess an immortal existence. Hence, Kant asserts that the pursuit of holiness can only be maintained if the agent accepts the postulate of "...the infinitely enduring

existence and personality of the same rational being; this is called immortality of the soul." [42].

In considering this argument, the question which should be asked is whether the impossibility of holiness must necessarily force the agent to forsake his commitment to moral excellence. I believe that if holiness is represented as an ideal rather than an end, it is apparent that this conclusion has not the same cogency. According to the concept of an ideal, the command of holiness should be interpreted as the demand that we live up to the moral law in all our behavior. Now I believe that the fact that no one can expect to totally fulfill the law does not inexorably mean that the command to perfection cannot function as a directive. Human beings can still strive to approximate holiness, apply rules to regulate their conduct, and live up to the imperative as closely as possible. Kant saw that we suffered pathological affectation which made a perfect moral life unattainable; however, we still remain capable of degrees of success in overcoming these inherent tendencies. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that though holiness cannot be entirely achieved, we are still capable of governing much of our conduct by the moral principle. It therefore appears that the impossibility of perfection does not provide sufficient grounds to warrant a cessation of our striving to excellence, for clearly our efforts at moral regulation do meet with a definite degree of

success. Secondly, however, I do not think that a disparity between what the moral law demands and what is possible, should lead anyone to see a commitment to strive for moral excellence as absurd. There is no contradiction in holding that we are all called to perfection, and on the other hand, knowing that this is not totally attainable, (there are many theologians who have maintained and argued for this apparent contradiction.)[43]. Morality demands that we surmount our sensuous nature; while in all our conduct we are under constraint to do so, the fact that we never achieve total success should in no way affect our belief that it is necessary to strive for this. The question whether or not any human being can possibly fulfill the moral law in every particular case, can not alter the fact that in each particular case we are called upon to do so.

In order to explicate this point, one can argue that the artist, like the moral agent, attempts to realize a certain quality in all his endeavors, specifically that of beauty. However, the fact that artistic success is also accompanied by artistic failures would not make these endeavors absurd. Although the artist intends to succeed, at some time he will inevitably produce a world of substandard quality. However, this fact would not lead anyone to conclude that it was unreasonable for one to try and succeed in every case. Similarly, with regards to ethics, one can say that a moral man

will desire that he be virtuous in all aspects of his behavior. However, all men know that they will also be guilty of some moral failings. Similarly, we can say that no one will accept this as sufficient ground for giving up moral intentions.

This can be understood by analogy if one grasps the point that we evaluate the aesthetic qualities of every work of art individually, judging each according to the ideal. Failure to realize certain qualities in all cases would not diminish the qualities which have been realized. Hence, it is wholly reasonable for the artist to attempt the ideal in every case, despite the knowledge that he cannot succeed in every case. This argument applies equally to moral conduct. It should be emphasized that moral fulfillment is realized individually in particular actions and that the worthiness of each of these acts stands solely on its own merits. Though some of our acts will fail moral standards, this will not diminish the value of those acts which do realize moral qualities. As it turns out, each act will realize its moral quality individually, since its value can not be affected by other moral failures. One ascertains that it is worthwhile to attempt moral rectitude in all cases. The moral intention would not be absurd even given the necessity of some moral failure, for clearly our achievements will still

be of value despite our failings. One concludes that even though we are commanded to holiness, the unattainability of that ideal is insufficient to render moral obedience to this command of holiness, unreasonable.

Finally, it is not difficult to ascertain why Kant thinks that unless holiness is possible, a commitment to moral excellence can not be maintained. I believe Kant's conclusion can be derived from his mistaken conception of holiness as a volitional state which is supposed to result or follow moral action. Now basically, my argument has been that even if all human beings must inevitably fall short of perfection, their strivings are not in vain. Undeniably, their efforts at perfection will still be of value in those cases where they have succeeded in maing particular actions moral. However, I think it can be seen that if one agrees to Kant's conception of holiness, this fact will often be obscured. This is because Kant thinks of holiness as an end, a hoped-for effect of action. When one commits oneself to an end, one chooses and selects a course of action which one believes to be an approprite means to an end. Hence, when a particular action or behavior is deemed to be insufficient or inadequate in achieving the proposed end, one gives up or renounces that particular form or mode of behavior. This is incontrovertibly the rationale which leads Kant to conclude that adherence to the command of perfection could not be

maintained unless holiness is possible.

Nevertheless, one will not be beguiled into this type of thinking if one keeps in mind that holiness simply denotes that behavior which fulfills the law in all circumstances. If one attends to this fact, one sees that holiness is realized through particular moral acts, not as something distinct from moral actions. Given this, one must admit that failure to make all one's actions moral (to achieve holiness) cannot affect the value of those acts which do fulfill morality. Hence, it is reasonable and worthwhile to strive for moral perfection, for our particular efforts will be of value apart from whether any man can always be sufficient to moral perfection.

III

The Summum Bonum

In the last chapter, I gave a detailed analysis of holiness, and argued that a command to holiness was consistent with the theory of the Foundations, though I criticized Kant's representation of holiness as an end. In this chapter, I will consider the summum bonum taken as a whole, that is, as including both virtue and happiness causally related. I have already argued that it is not quite correct to say that the moral law demands the pursuit of the highest good; however, I believe the point has been made, and that it is not entirely worthwhile to overstate this argument. Hence, in this chapter, I will consider the question of whether or not the positing of the summum bonum affects moral motivation. This problem is essentially generated from the fact that, in the highest good, happiness is said to follow from virtue. This would seem to call into question whether or not purity of motivation can be maintained. This is an extremely moot topic which has been the basis of wide contention among Kantian scholars, both currently and in the past.

By way of background information, it will be remembered that it was stressed in the "Foundations of the Metaphysics of

Morals" that the moral agent undertakes action, not because his ends are desirable, but solely for the sake of the moral law.[1.] Hence, the consideration of the moral agent is not whether his ends are desirable, but rather whether the maxim (regardless of the desirability of its end), agrees with the universal form of the moral law. This position has led many people to assume that, for Kant, the moral agent should not be concerned with the achievement of happiness. It is therefore striking to such people that Kant, in the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason", asserts that practical reason demands that happiness follow from virtuous behavior. Kant nevertheless assures us that this move does not contradict his earlier statements; he believes one can still maintain that the moral agent can act for the sake of the moral law while believing that happiness must follow upon virtue. However, before looking into this question which I shall principally dwell upon, I shall give the substance of Kant's argument which claims that practical reason demands that happiness follow from virtue.

In the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason", Kant boldly states:

> "In the highest good which is practical for us, i.e., one which is to be made real by our will, virtue, and happiness are thought of as necessarily combined, so that one cannot be assumed by a practical reason without the other belonging to it." 2.

He states that an omnipotent being would see it necessary that this be the case;

> "For to be in need of happiness and also worthy of it and yet not to partake of it could not be in accordance with the complete volition of an omnipotent being, if we assume such for the sake of argument." 3.

After reading these statements, one can perhaps hazard a conjecture as to what transpired in Kant's mind between the completion of the Foundations, and the writing of the Critique of Practical Reason. In reading the Foundations, one is impressed by Kant's efforts to delineate principles of morality from principles based upon self-interest or principles which have the object of personal happiness. From this, one often concludes that the pursuit of moral perfection and the pursuit of happiness are antithetical concerns. However, between writing these two books, Kant must have arrived at the insight that it was unjust that those men who attain purity of will should be without happiness. By incorporating happiness into the summum bonum, Kant felt not that he was allowing for the pursuit of self-interest, but simply that he was allowing for the alleviation of that injustice whereby those who have proved their virtue find themselves unsatisfied in their personal happiness.

In order to remedy this state of affairs, Kant incorporates virtue and happiness (the satisfaction of inclination) into the concept of the summum bonum, arguing that this object

is the ultimate end of all moral strivings. One observes that in formulating this concept, Kant connects virtue and happiness in the form of cause and consequent:

> "In as much as virtue and happiness together constitute the possession of the highest good for one person, and happiness in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy), constitutes that of a possible world, the highest good means the whole, the perfect good, wherein virtue is always the supreme good, being the condition having no condition superior to it, while happiness, though something always pleasant to him who possesses it, is not of itself absolutely good in every respect but always presupposes conduct in accordance with the moral law as its conditions." 4.

Virtue exists in the highest good (summum bonum) as the supreme good (bonum supremum), but it is not the entire good (bonum consumatum), for reason demands the further object of happiness. However, while happiness is posited as the completing component of the highest good, its value still depends upon the concomitant existence of a good will; (as we saw, in the absence of a good will, other values become perverted). Hence, the attainment of happiness could only be regarded as part of the absolute good if the agent maintains a virtuous life.
It will be recalled that Kant, in the Foundations, enumerates particular values besides moral values, such as happiness and even wealth and honor, which, he says, can add to both well-being and contentment; however, he cautions that they are far from being good without qualification, "...for without the principles of a good will they can become extremely bad".[5.]

When one turns to the highest good, one meets with the same line of thought; Kant maintains that the summum bonum can only be held as good or valuable if the individual possesses a good will; in the absence of a moral disposition, value attributed to the highest good becomes perverted. It is therefore, in accordance with this insight, that Kant claims the highest good can only be realized if one first proves one's virtue. Hence, Kant sees virtue as the condition of one's worthiness to be happy and therefore, he claims that virtue is the condition for the possession of happiness, and the realization of the summum bonum.

It is noteworthy that Kant says that virtue, the supreme good, is the supreme condition for the realization of the summum bonum, for by means of this statement, Kant wishes to convey to us that this ultimate end of moral endeavor is not something to be gained by prudence. Rather, Kant is saying that only those men who have first proved their virtue, stand worthy to attain this object. Thus, he wishes to preclude anyone from thinking that in proposing that moral striving be directed to this end, he has denied the primary value of ethically principled behavior. Rather, Kant seeks to indicate that principled action is still the supreme good, and the condition for realizing other values. He is therefore asserting that this is no less the case when we promote the summum bonum.

We have seen that Kant believes justice would demand that happiness be included with virtue in order to complete this highest object of value. Further, since morality is held to be the prerequisite for personal fulfillment, Kant believes that when virtue and happiness are combined in this object (the summum bonum), happiness would relate to virtue as its consequent.[6] Kant theorizes that when reason combines two terms into a single concept, relating one as the consequent of the other, the second term must follow either as a logical consequent or as a real consequent.[7] His point is that there are only two possibilities for the connection of two substantives into a single concept; either it is an analytical connection or it is a causal relation. If it is the former, it is necessarily a logical unity according to the law of identity and the reason for combination is that the two terms are identical; and the latter possibility is a synthetic combination according to the relation of cause and effect.[8]

Kant observes that the ancients sought to solve the problem of bringing virtue and happiness into a harmonious relation by regarding these two constituents as identical. He interprets that there were two opposing schools of thought, both of which seized upon this method but with differing conclusions. One school, the stoics, said that consciousness of one's virtue

was equivalent to being happy; the other, the epicurean, said that furthering one's happiness was equivalent to exercise of virtue. Kant, however, rejects both efforts, arguing that the maxims of virtue and those of happiness are:

> "...heterogenous, and far removed from being at one in respect to their supreme practical principle; and even though they belong to a highest good...they strongly limit and check each other in the same subject." 9.

In short, virtue can not be gained by furthering one's happiness, for the maxims aimed at happiness are not necessarily the same as those maxims derived from the supreme principle. Kant says that in the same subject, maxims of duty and maxims of inclination strongly limit and check one another. Likewise, consciousness of one's virtue can not be equivalent to happiness, for happiness demands the gratification of certain definite needs, not simply the sense of satisfaction in our own virtue. Kant concludes: "happiness and morality are two specifically different elements of the highest good and therefore their combination cannot be known analytically." [10] What would fulfill virtue and what would fulfill happiness are distinct, and therefore, the relation between virtue and happiness can not be resolved in an analytic identity.

If we follow this enquiry to a consideration of specific issues, it becomes undeniable that the stoics and the epicureans were both wrong. The stoic, who realizes virtue

and effects a domination over his inclinations, can know a certain contentment which issues from an independence from one's desires. However, this contentment is more a negative comfort following from the cessation of that discontent or discomfort precipitated by desire, whereas true happiness denotes"...a positive participation of feeling".[11.] In short, exercise of virtue alone can not be actual happiness, that which is fulfilled by the satisfaction of definite and undeniable needs which we possess as finite creatures. Secondly, however, the answer of the epicurean is also inadequate. The successful pursuit of one's well-being cannot be virtue, for virtue consists not in satisfying one's innate desires, but in following the supreme principle of pure practical reason. Hence, the analytical identity is disproven, and what we must therefore expect is a synthetic identity, with virtue and happiness recognized as two essentially disparate elements joined according to cause and effect.

Now Kant's argument is that we must expect virtue and happiness related in just this sort of causal connection. However, as I argued earlier, in the beginning of the second chapter, I do not think there is much of a case for saying that moral conduct necessarily implies worthwhile ends.[12.] Equally, it does not seem that there is much truth in saying

that one would necessarily find the ends prescribed by morals, or the consequences of moral actions, as always being personally desirable. However, this is not the force of Kant's thinking. Kant's method here is not to study morality as an accomplished fact as he did both in the Foundations and in the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason; rather, in the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason, he is conducting a study from the point of view of the moral agent. Kant's point is, I believe, that the moral agent, whose behavior, above all, is in accordance with the dictates of rationality, must assume a rational context for his behavior. He argues that a rational context would have to be one in which happiness would necessarily follow upon virtue. In speaking of the necessary connection between virtue and happiness in the summum bonum, Kant says "...happiness is also required, and indeed not merely in the partial eyes of a person who makes himself his end, but even in the judgement of an impartial reason, which in general regards persons in the world as ends in themselves."[13] In other words, it would be contrary to a rational state of affairs for an individual who acts morally and thus realizes ultimate worth as a human being, to be, at the same time, deprived of happiness. Hence a moral agent who must regard his behavior as rational and therefore assume a rational context for that action, must regard happiness as the consequent of virtue. Hence, happiness

and virtue must be connected as cause and effect; this we have seen from Kant's argument that happiness cannot be related to virtue as a logical consequent.[14]

The logic, therefore, which posits virtue and happiness as concomitants, derives its force from the fact that an agent, if he is to accept moral motives, must assume a moral order in the universe; however, his confidence in the moral order would be imperiled if virtue were not rewarded with happiness. Hence, happiness must be seen as a consequent of virtue. This means, additionally, that if we posit a consummate end for which all moral agents are to strive, happiness must be included in this object. Happiness must be included for it would be contrary to justice or to the moral harmony of the universe for the virtuous to go unfulfilled. Therefore, the ultimate end which the moral law demands we pursue, is seen to comprise not only virtue but also happiness as a second component. Hence, the man who pursues virtue must also expect to attain happiness, for the moral order demands that they both be related together in the summum bonum.

However, I wish to bring to attention the fact that if we do accept this assumption, that morality demands that happiness follow from virtue, and therefore that the agent is to expect happiness from virtuous conduct, then I believe

the previous characterization of moral motivation in the Foundations is difficult to realize. In that characterization, Kant underlined that when acting morally, the agent is moved by duty and not by inclination.[15.] In a sense, we become aware of this moral motivation when, for its sake alone, we oppose the course urged upon us by inclination, to follow an alternative demanded by duty. However, if as Kant asserts in the Critique of Practical Reason, the course to the ultimate satisfaction of desire and the proper moral course of behavior, in fact, coincide, then the agent can not objectively realize his moral motivation. What I mean is that the agent can no longer be certain that he is acting for moral reasons, since that behavior which would realize moral motivation is the same behavior which would ultimately fulfill our desires. Hence, the moral test which entails whether or not we are willing to act morally, against inclination, has been lost.

However, in writing the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant anticipated such criticism. He therefore makes definite statements intended to assure the reader that in proposing the summum bonum, he has not abrogated his main ideas concerning moral motivation. Kant defends the inclusion of happiness in the highest good by asserting that this should not lead us to think that this object (the summum bonum) is the determining ground of the will. He points out that

the assumption of an object of volition which determines the will previous to the moral law, would result in heteronomy.[16] Kant claims that with regard to the highest good, this would not be the case, since the moral law is given before the highest good is derived.[17] Kant conceives that the moral law functions both as the a-priori determining ground of action, and the further ground for assuming the highest good.[18] Therefore, while the moral law remains the sole motive of action, in addition, it is said to legislate the highest good as an end. Thus, the highest good is only assumed upon the prior assumption of the moral principle.[19] What Kant is saying is that the moral agent does not first set up the summum bonum as his goal and then act ethically in order to gain that end; rather the highest good is sought only because it is first required by the moral law. Hence, in so far as one promotes the summum bonum out of obligation to moral principle, one's motivation will be dutiful and not self-interested. Further, if one does advance the highest good, not because this action is legislated by law, but out of a desire for the end itself, then heteronomy will result, which contravenes the moral principle. This would mean that one's behavior would no longer be moral, and, ipso facto, that the highest good could not be realized, since the pre-condition for its attainment is that one assures one's virtue. Kant states:

> "Consequently, though the highest good may be the entire object of a pure practical reason, i.e., of a pure will it is still not to be taken as the determining ground of a pure will; the moral law alone must be seen as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion the object of the pure will... For one sees from the Analytic that when we assume any object, under the name of good, as the determining ground of the will prior to the moral law, and then derive the supreme practical principle from it, this always produces heteronomy and rules out the moral principle." 20.

However, one questions how one would know that one is acting solely from moral principles rather than self-interest. Kant is saying that the incorporation of happiness into the summum bonum is justified because we are motivated solely by the moral law, and therefore, we are acting according to the demands of moral principle. In other words, Kant is saying that the pursuit of the highest good (in which happiness is a constituent) should not effect one's motivation if one acts for the end solely because it is legislated by the moral law. This, however, is just the issue; how would we know that we are acting solely from the moral principle rather than self-interest.

My first objection stems from what was said in the first chapter. In that chapter, I argued that an option for duty as against self-interest is achieved when one conforms to the law, even when one's interests will be denied.[21] If that argument was seen to be cogent there, it must certainly be relevant here. It was argued there that a moral agent is one who limits his material maxims by the

formal law of duty. The formal law, as was presented, functioned to limit or restrain a man's conduct in accordance with its requirements. One would necessarily conclude, therefore, that conformity to the law would not be singularly meritorious or establish a priority for duty under circumstances in which one would be liable to benefit from such conduct. In such circumstances, disciplining one self to duty's dictates would not involve the denial of self-interest and hence, one can not realistically say that the agent has chosen between the demands of duty and those of selfish inclination.

However, this is, in fact, the state of affairs Kant presents us with; he makes that conduct which would satisfy virtue identical to that which satisfies one's selfish desires, by making happiness the consequent of virtue. In other words, adherence to the formal law does not really demand any constraint or limitation on that obvious end which we would naturally purpose. A man unregulated by moral concerns exercises limits on his inclination only so he can gain that maximum satisfaction by which we further happiness, that natural end proposed by the faculty of desire. The man who seeks the summum bonum is in an analogous position; he does not really have to limit his desire for personal gain, for developing in virtue is the soundest form of prudence he could practice.

For example, it is very likely that men engage in actions with more than one reason for doing so. One can think of good examples in which men have done things from a sense of duty and with the expectation of and desire for happiness; to illustrate: a man may seek to take up a good profession, both because he thinks it is the right thing to do and because he feels that he will be happy with that particular kind of work. Now, it is very unlikely that he will be able to distinguish clearly which consideration motivates him, since it is obvious that both do (this being unavoidable), and if one were to press him, asking whether he would do this for the sake of duty alone, even if he were to be unhappy in his job, surely he would be quite unable to answer decisively. He would be unable to do so because he would not have made his decision in the light of a situation of this sort. In short, he has not been confronted with a situation in which he has had to choose between duty and happiness.

It would seem that it is impossible for one to state precisely what one would do in a given situation until one has actually been confronted with similar or identical situations; on thebasis of these past actions, one can conjecture as to what one would probably do in the future. For example; Stephen Daedalus questioned whether he could make himself save a drowning man, as his friend Mulligan did. Like most of us, he had never found himself in such

circumstances, and like most of us, he wondered whether he would carry through and do the noble thing, or ignominiously refrain out of fear for his own safety. When one speaks of more prosaic examples, such as whether the average man would do his job for duty alone if he knew that he might be unhappy in it, the same conditions apply. Probably, the individual has not met with this type of problem, and hence, a-priori, he can not predict as to what he would do, though he would like to believe that he would do what is right. What is being said, in regard to Kant's theory, is that the positing of the summum bonum does create an almost identical situation. If the moral agent must expect happiness to follow from virtue, then he can never prove or substantiate a moral motivation which will act from duty alone, even if inclination is opposed. The man who expects happiness to eventually follow from moral living is like Stephen Daedalus, for he can only make predictions about whether he would choose duty over inclination. In his ordinary behavior, the agent is never confronted with the necessity to decide between duty or happiness, for by believing in the summum bonum, he accepts that, ultimately, happiness will follow from whatever virtuous efforts he makes.[22]

What I believe, is that acceptance of Kant's argument, that the agent must expect the summum bonum, would affect a necessary conviction about the moral conditions which gives

meaning to one's moral behavior. What I claim, is that the person who ascribes to a belief which says that happiness must follow from virtue, has correspondingly abnegated a belief in the common facts of human experience. The known facts of the human condition are that happiness does not necessarily follow from virtue. This is important, for what is conveyed by Kant in the Foundations, is that the moral agent is worthy of esteem or respect because he will act morally, rather than conform to the contingencies of the world, which promise happiness or the satisfaction of desire. My point is that the agent who expects a future happiness from present virtue, is in a way exempting himself from the ordinary conditions of life, in which happiness does not necessarily follow virtue. Such an agent can not be regarded with quite the same esteem or value, for in acting morally, he clearly does not have to decide between morality and the alternative course which promises happiness. This is because his convictions furnish him with the luxury of believing that happiness must follow morality, and therefore that he can act morally with the expectation of consequent happiness.

My conclusion is that such a belief must denigrate the value attributed to principled behavior. Certainly, not all principled action is valueless if it does not cost the agent something, however, if principled behavior could always be achieved without any self-sacrifice, then one would not regard it in the same way. One can certainly see that the

agent who believes in the summum bonum would, in a sense, conform to the latter condition, for he can never believe that morality limits his self-interest. This point is apposite, for I argued in the first chapter that the strength or extent of moral commitment can only be known when one chooses duty when one's personal desires oppose that course of action. The problem with Kant's positing of the summum bonum is that it undermines this possibility. Kant makes happiness follow from virtue, and accordingly, there is nothing by which to check that he, who purports to act from duty, would do so if this behavior did not also further his self-interest. This means that one can never be able to unconditionally substantiate for oneself the extent to which one is attached to disinterested principle.

Other philosophers have found fault with Kant on similar grounds, among them Schopenhauer. Allen Wood, in his book, Kant's Moral Religion,has taken note of such criticisms and has sought to provide an interpretation of finite volition which shows that Kant's introduction of happiness into the Summum Bonum does not vitiate the principle of acting for duty's sake alone. Wood claims that criticisms of Kant's inclusion of happiness are founded upon a confusion of motive and end. He says that they (the critics) assume that because

Kant makes happiness a component of the ultimate objective, then happiness must be the motive of such action. He states that to make this assertion means that one has confused the terms motive and end.[23.] In explaining, he argues that the motive of a moral act is established by Kant in the principle of maxim from which we act, and not in the consequences of the act (the intended end). Kant's remarks, as understood in context, give one to conclude that, by the term "end", he denotes the consequences or results which the agent intends to achieve by means of his actions, and therefore not necessarily the consequences which actually come to pass, or other expected but ancillary results of the same act to which one might be indifferent. For example, he states:

> "Where-in then, can this worth lie if it is not in the will in relation to its hoped for effect? It can lie nowhere else that in the principle of the will irrespective of the ends which can be realized by such action." 24.

Now the crux of what Wood is saying is that, in moral action, it is the universal legislative form of the maxim which determines our action, not its material content, that is, the results (ends) it requires us to promote. [25.] Therefore, the intended results or hoped-for effects of behavior are not what has incited our behavior; the incitement issues from the requirements of the law. Now Wood argues that if this is the case, the motive to moral action can not be affected by the desirability of proposed ends, for the act is decided upon, solely on the basis that the maxim can be applied universally.

In other words, it is put forth that the reason a moral agent performs an action is that he sees that it is lawful; whether the consequences are desirable is not his concern; hence, if the consequences are in fact desirable, his motivation will be left unaffected.

Part of this argument derives from the observation that an immoral and a moral act may apparently have the same end, and yet be actualized out of different motives. This led Kant and Wood to assume that a motive is something different from an end, and therefore that one can alter one's ends without necessarily affecting motivation. However, it seems to me that though an immoral and a moral act may <u>apparently</u> have the same end, they cannot, <u>in fact</u>, have the same end. To illustrate: two rich people, for wholly different reasons, decide to donate large sums of money to various charities; one does this because he feels it proper and right that he should aid less fortunates, the other to aggrandize his own reputation. Kant and Wood would say that they act from different principles and motives; however, they have the same end, which is giving unfortunates the amenities. On the contrary, they do not have the same end. One man (the moral one) engages in his action with the actual end of alleviating the deprivations of the poor, the other, the less moral, follows the same

behavior with the actual end of enhancing his own esteem; alleviating poverty is only the means to this end.

I think this argument holds true in all cases. In all cases in which one compares examples of the same behavior realized from different motives, one notices that the agents purposed different results by that behavior. This is not to say that in the case of moral behavior, the action was undertaken for the sake of one's ends. The moral agent will have undertaken to pursue these ends for the sake of the moral principle, yet the ends he pursues will necessarily be distinct from those a less moral man would purpose by the same action. For example, the moral law could be said to demand that we alleviate human suffering, and therefore the alleviation of human suffering would legitimately be the end and what we commonly call the motive of the moral agent's behavior. A more corrupt man whose motives were not moral might undertake the same behavior; however, his end would not be the simple alleviation of human distress, but rather the gaining of a tax rebate, enhancing his self-esteem, or whatever.

These illustrations from ordinary discourse give prima facie evidence that when one speaks of two actions having different motives, this means that the

agents purposed different ends. Though one could present further examples, I believe that if one reflects, one will have to admit the above statement to be the case. As against Kant and Wood, I believe this argument to reinstate that one's motives have to do with ones ends, and that motives are indicative as to one's ends; if we say that two people have different motives, we mean that they intend different ends. Further, it follows (and I believe it to be true) that we evaluate and judge a person's motivation by the objectives and designs he seeks to promote by his actions. To put the case simplistically: we call a man selfishly motivated if he is in the habit of always seeking ends which are to his advantage; on the other hand, we call a man morally motivated if he is in the habit of pursuing objectives which are conceived to agree with moral priorities.

Ultimately, Wood's defence rests upon the contention that the command to pursue happiness comes from the impartial legislation of pure practical reason, and not from the faculty of desire. This is an argument which attempts to say that this command is the product of disinterested deliberation; therefore, the basis of disinterest is not undermined. However, I believe that there are two aspects to what we call selfless behavior. The one aspect is un-

deniably this disinterested deliberation, but the other concomitant would seem to be the actual pursuit of ends which are not in my self-interest, and which are sometimes inimical to it. I believe that there is this division between reasoning, whereby we come to some sort of conclusion about a particular action,(for example, whether it is moral, prudent, and so on), and the motive of an action. As I understand it the motive usually means the end or objective actually decided upon. We usually say that a person has disinterested motives when he is distinguished as acting for and purposing ends which are not directly beneficial to himself. This is because it is one thing to speak of the reasoning whereby we come to decide what is right, and it is another thing to carry out our conclusions. The ultimate and unavoidable criterion of selflessness is whether one will carry out what one has reached by objective consideration, when such action is opposed to one's advantage of even dangerous to one's welfare. In the final analysis, this selfless devotion to principle only becomes a reality when we force ourselves to follow its demands, even when we personally have nothing to gain. The man who pursues the summum bonum can never actually realize this motivation, for the ends he pursues are always ultimately in his self-interest. Even though his end is legislated by impartial reason, the man who promotes the

summum bonum never substantiates his selfless, dutiful motivation, for he pursues no course and initiates no actions for which the objectives or consequences are ever finally inimical to himself. From this analysis, there follows what we have said, that such a man has not really decided for duty as against the furthering of personal satisfaction, for in following duty he has not been forced to forsake the ends which will bring happiness.

Ultimately, I find that the inclusion of happiness into the summum bonum makes impossible the sort of moral motivation demanded in the Foundations. There, it was said that moral motivation involves deciding to follow duty rather than inclination; however, as I have sought to show, the possibility of deciding meaningfully is lost if happiness is expected to follow from virtue.

Though we commonly speak of a person as being unselfishly motivated, by referring to the fact that his behavior is principled, this is because a man who adheres to principle inevitably will come up against situations, in which, in following his principles, he will be forced to abrogate some personal concern, and for this reason such an individual is looked upon as self- denying. However, if one disassociates moral action from its normal context (in which principled behavior often leads one to pursue ends which are thwarting to the promotion of one's

personal advantage), then one does not have the right to conclude to a person's unselfishness from the fact that his actions are done in accordance with principle. What one finds, therefore, is that Kant has severed the phenomenon of principled conduct from the normal context in which it is realized and which gives it meaning. A disinterested deliberation of one's principles is meritorious, because it is often realized in the promotion of objectives which are indifferent or even dangerous to one's interests. This is unquestionably why men of moral disposition are deemed as worthy of respect. However, if personal rewards are always commensurate with virtue, then the ordinary circumstances would have somehow been lifted, this is to say, the ordinary circumstances in which virtuous behavior often checks the promotion of our personal satisfactions. In this eventuality, one would not give quite the same meaning to the fact that one acted in accordance with moral principles simply because adherence to principle would not have involved a definite denial of self-interest.

What one concludes is that action from principle could only possess worth in the normal context in which it is followed. The normal context is one in which devotion to principled action is often realized in the pursuit of ends which thwart the promotion of some of one's selfish

affectations. As we have seen, Kant seeks to argue that action, in accordance with principle, could still have moral value even if the consequences of one's behavior were different from normal experience with regard to one's happiness. However, our point has been that action from principle could only be thought of as having value if realized in the circumstances of common experience, in which adherence to principle has meant denial or limitation of the selfish desires and objectives men usually entertain.

IV.

The Antimony of Pure Practical Reason

This final chapter will be devoted to an understanding of what Kant labels the, "antinomy of pure practical reason". In the course of this study, I shall enquire whether the ideas presented in the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason", with reference to the antinomy, are consistent with one of the central propositions of the Foundations. Further, I shall consider whether the ideas expressed in the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason" modify or change moral motivation as it is presented in the Foundations. However, this question will be left untouched until the latter part of the chapter. The problem at hand is to appreciate and understand how the antinomy is provoked and what it means.

In the last chapter, I sought to discern what effect on motivation would result if the agent were to act morally with the expectation of happiness. This question was seen to arise because Kant argues that justice demands that happiness be related causally to virtue.[1] Kant argues that virtue and happiness must be joined together by this synthetic connection (cause and effect) in the object of the highest good. However, there is a difficulty in this which I did not discuss in the last chapter. Kant asserts that a problem must be forthcoming

because no such relationship is exhibited in nature. This is incontrovertible, for one must acknowledge that virtuous acts in this world do not apodictically bring happiness to their agent. Since morality is said to demand this relation, one therefore finds an apparent contradiction between the demands of morality and the reality of the phenomenal situation. Kant says this conflict must affect our regard for the moral principle itself, for morality is said to posit this relationship.

Kant concludes that this problem can not be left unresolved, for if one accepts the implication of the antinomy, one must also accept that ethical principles are unreasonable. Kant argues that this must follow for if one admits that the highest good is unattainable, then one must admit the moral law to be "...fantastic, directed to empty imaginary ends, and consequently inherently false."[2]. The logic behind this is that since the moral law demands the promotion of the summum bonum, the impossibility of this end must mean that the moral directive is absurd, for what it requires us to do is impossible. Kant states:

> "Since, now, the furthering of the highest good, which contains this connection in its concept, is an apriori necessary object of our will and is inseparably related to the moral law, the impossibility of the former must prove the falsity of the latter also." 3.

In any case, Kant reasons that what is demanded is that nature be brought into harmony with practical principles.

Since we are not the cause of nature, however, we are not capable of creating this harmony. Hence, to maintain moral principles, we must postulate a supreme cause of nature, which alone would be capable of setting right this relationship.

> "Therefore also the existence is postulated of a cause of the whole of nature, itself distinct from nature, which contains the ground of the exact coincidence of happiness with morality." 4.

However the mere existence of an omnipotent creator is not enough to ensure that this being will be disposed to act according to moral intentions and make happiness coincidental with virtue. "Therefore the highest good is possible in the world only on the supposition of a supreme cause of nature which has a causality corresponding to the moral intention."[5.] As we saw, a being who acts from moral intentions must be a rational being, for to act morally is to act from laws authored from reason alone. Further, a being which is able to bring about effects from rational considerations must possess a will, for Kant defines the concept of will as "...a kind of causality of living things so far as they are rational."[6.] In order to maintain the possibility of virtue and happiness as concomitants and thereby, the reasonableness of the moral law, we must postulate the existence of an omnipotent creator possessing an intellect and will; in short, a being which possesses the attributes which we associate by the term God.

Kant maintains that this postulation, like the other two, freedom and immortality, is assumed purely for the sake of moral law. They do not extend our speculative knowledge, but they are assumed in order to maintain the moral law. They are said not to extend our speculative knowledge, because though clearly we can conceive such ideas, we have no direct experience or intuition of their objects.

> "For nothing more has here been accomplished by practical reason than to show that these concepts are real and actually have (possible) objects, but no intuitions of them are hereby given (and indeed none can be demanded)." 7.

One notices that this problem is analogous to that which we found in the second chapter, when holiness was found to be impossible according to the reality of the phenomenal world. In this case, the difficulty encountered involves the fact that the laws of nature are not constructed in such a way that a moral act brings happiness to the moral agent; the other problem derived from the temporality of one's existence. However, one notes that Kant labels the apparent difficulty associated with the possibility of attaining happiness, "the antinomy of practical reason"; one conjectures that he does this because the antinomy has reference to the possibility of the summum bonum taken in its entirety, for it involves the causal relation which is supposed to join virtue and happiness in this single concept.

However, the above adumbration is only intended to impart a general understanding of the antinomy and its critical resolution by the postulate of God. Having now gained the requisite acquaintance with the basic issue, it would seem imperative that one proceed to analyse this problem in greater depth. We have shown that the moral law is said to command the summum bonum, but on inspection it appears that the summum bonum is not attainable in this life. There has been some contention between two of the more prominent Kantian scholars as to what this fact implies, and therefore, as to how the antinomy should be explained. In order to do justice to the analysis, it is necessary that we give an account of this scholarly altercation.

Louis White Beck in his book, A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, has argued that the unattainability of the entire summum bonum represents solely a theoretical problem and is in no way a moral problem. By this he means that the "antinomy" only threatens the consistency of theory; it does not call into question the possibility of moral behavior. Beck argues that reason, in so far as it is practical, "...issues no declarative statements; it only requires, inspires, guides, and judges actions which may not be real but are always possible."[8] Beck argues that since practical reason is not engaged in issuing statements of fact, the contradiction between what the

moral law demands and what appears to be possible which throws doubt on the truth of the moral law, cannot be a problem for practical reason, for it is a question involving solely truth and falsity. Hence, the antinomy is only a problem for reason in so far as it is constructing a consistent theory. Beck states: "The illusions are theoretical illusions about morality not moral illusions. The moral illusion which is heteronomy has already been exposed in the "Analytic"."[9] Hence, for Beck the reason why the unattainability of this end is a problem is because it implies that the moral law is false, thereby making our moral theory false.

However, Allen Wood in his book, "Kant's Moral Religion", has challenced this interpretation. Specifically, Wood denies that the unattainability of the summum bonum could be a threat to the veracity of the moral law.[10] Wood argues that the moral law has already been substantiated theoretically in the "Analytic" and therefore if the impossibility of the summum bonum represented a theoretical threat to the categorical imperative, surely its solution would have been included there. In addition to this analysis of textual organization, Wood uses quotations to support his position. His chief quote is from "Lectures on Philosophical Theology," in which it is said: "Our moral faith is a

practical postulate, through which anyone who denies it can be brought ad absurdum practicum. An absurdum logicum is an inconsistency in judgements. There is an absurdum practicum however, when it is shown that if I deny this or that I would be a Scoundrel (Bösewicht)."[11] In Wood's exegesis, he notes that Kant does not say that the denial of the practical postulate results in an reductio ad absurdum logicum, that is, an argument leading to an unwelcome inconsistency in judgements; rather, he says that it is a reductio ad absurdum practicum, an argument leading to an unwelcome conclusion about oneself as a moral agent. The import of Wood's remarks is that the impossibility of the summum bonum must clearly result in moral consequences, for the stated consequent of the antinomy is that we will be forced to regard ourselves as scoundrels. Wood contends that the denial of the summum bonum cannot shake our belief in the moral law, but rather it precipitates sophistries which can make us disbelieve in the reasonableness of following its demands. According to Wood's thinking, one who commits himself to pursuing something also commits himself to the belief that whatever it is, it is at least possible of attainment. Hence, Wood argues, the man who commits himself to follow the moral law and to pursue the summum bonum, also commits himself to the belief that at the least it is possible to achieve

this end. To deny this possibility and abnegate this necessary belief would leave us no choice but to desist from moral action.[12] For Wood, it is this secondary belief which is called into question and not the moral law. This would explain the unwelcome conclusion that"I am a scoundrel", for if I am led to regard moral demands as unreasonable, I become a man unregulated by moral sanctions, which is what is usually meant by the term "scoundrel". This therefore has been Wood's argument: The dialectic in no way calls into question the theoretical truth of the moral law; rather, we are led to look upon obedience as unreasonable. Hence, the postulates are required in order that we can see obedience as reasonable and thereby avoid being misled into giving up the moral struggle and becoming scoundrels.

In summing up, these two divergent opinions can be sketched as follows: The impossibility of the summum bonum means for both Beck and Wood that to pursue the summum bonum would be absurd. However, what they conclude from this fact marks the essential difference in their interpretations. Wood says that what is affected is a necessary belief which must accompany all actions, which is the belief that the end is possible to achieve. Contrariwise, Beck thinks that the impossibility of the summum bonum does not obstruct action, but rather leads us to theoretically doubt the moral law. In theory, if the moral law directs us to this end,

its impossibility would indicate that the moral law directs us falsely and is thereby itself false. For Beck, the reasonableness of following moral demands is not in question; rather the problem is that of theoretically substantiating the truth of the moral law.

In order to refute Beck's interpretation, it can be maintained that Kant does not think that the problem remains solely within the bounds of theory, for clearly Wood's quotation from "Lectures on Philosophical Theology" says that the unresolved antinomy results in an absurdum practicum, that is, a moral conclusion about the agent himself.[13]. It seems obvious that if Kant has stated that an effect of the antinomy is the cessation of ethical restraint, this must preclude a conclusion that the problems of the antinomy are purely theoretical. However, one can equally say if one looks to the statements of Kant, which Beck underlines, that Wood must also be wrong. Wood claims that the veracity of the law is not in question; however, there are undeniable statements in the Critique of Practical Reason which corroborate Beck's assertion that the veracity of the law is in doubt. [14].

Despite this, I believe that the dialectic and the antinomy it engenders are clearly moral problems, for otherwise Kant would not have spoken of the resulting absurdum

practicum. I think it is therefore best to attack the antinomy from this moral point of view. In doing so, I will first scrutinize Wood's position and attempt to discern whether his interpretation is a satisfactory explanation of this moral implication. I should say that I do not find Wood's position tenable, though I do have more affinity for Wood's interpretation, since it attempts to explain the antinomy as a moral dilemma. I shall proceed to explain why I believe Wood to be wrong.

Wood is claiming that if I believe my end (the summum bonum), to be impossible, this must lead me to forsake moral principles, since what they command can not be realized. However, what this thinking neglects is the fact that the highest good is not the immediate object of a particular act, but rather the ultimate object of all moral strivings. This point, if not emphasized, will lead one to Wood's conclusion, which is definitely wrong if applied to the impossibility of the summum bonum.

By an immediate object of volition, I primarily mean the particular individual and distinct end which each moral act seeks to achieve. For example, if I act charitably, my immediate end might be to alleviate the condition of less fortunates, or if I act kindly, my end might be to make another person happy, and so on. If one ascertains that this particular, immediate end which one is intending,

is in fact impossible, then the only reasonable course is to refrain from the action. For example, if the categorical imperative tells me that it would be moral to attempt to save a drowning woman, but I realize that I can not swim, then it would be absurd for me to follow this command, since it is entirely impossible that I might achieve the rescue of the drowning woman. Clearly, it is absurd to obey a moral imperative which commands an immediate end which is impossible to achieve.

Now the reason why it would be ridiculous to attempt an action if the immediate object of that action is unachievable, is simply because it is impossible that the action can be "brought off". One can say, according to Austin's terminology, that the attempt will inevitably "miss-fire".[15] The act will be said to "miss-fire" because the immediate object of an action is inextricably tied up in one's concept of the action. For example, when one talks about murdering a man, rescuing a man, or electing someone, one sees that in this idea of performing the action is the idea of achieving the intended end. Therefore, if it is known that the end is impossible, then the action can not be performed. Applying this argument to the sphere of action governed by moral imperatives, one can see that if morality requires one to promote an immediate end which is impossible, then the command de facto can not be obeyed.

This would follow, because one acknowledges on the above analysis that if the end is impossible, the action can not be realized, and the command can not be fulfilled. This is why the agent would be justified in concluding that obedience is unreasonable, for in apprehending that the immediate end is impossible, he sees that the act cannot be carried out (performed).

However, when one turns to consider the summum bonum, one sees that this reasoning is not quite applicable. This is because the summum bonum is not immediate, but an ultimate end. What I mean by this is that no particular moral act has the highest good as its immediate object. For example, a particular charitable act seeks the immediate ameliorating of someone else's circumstances, not the achievement of perfect virtue and happiness, (the highest good). This latter object (the summum bonum), is something which is supposed to result, not from any particular act, but from all one's particular strivings. Therefore, the summum bonum is not an immediate, hoped-for effect, but rather something which we hope will eventually be generated from all our moral efforts. This means that the idea of achieving the summum bonum is not inherent or immanent in the concept of any particular moral act. This can be put in another way by saying that when we credit a person with performing a particular moral act, we do not necessarily

credit him with achieving the summum bonum. In order for a man to successfully fulfill an individual ethical action (for example, a charitable act) it is not requisite that he also realize the highest good. We would not claim that an individual failed to act charitably if, in performing a charitable act he did not bring into existence perfect virtue and perfect happiness. This indicates that the fulfillment of particular moral activities would not be thwarted if the ultimate end of those activities (the summum bonum) was impossible.

Now Wood's argument was that if the highest good is not achievable, this signifies that the agent can not look upon moral imperatives as reasonable, for in order to commit himself to an imperative, the agent must believe that he can realize the object which the imperative proposes. However, my contention is that, firstly, the summum bonum should be apprehended and understood as a final, not an immediate object of volition. Hence, even if this ultimate object (the summum bonum) is unrealizable, the agent is yet able to commit himself to working for this immediate moral end: derived from the formal principle of duty. Since particular moral acts are defined by their ends (for example, helping a neighbour, rescuing someone in distress,) the impossibility of the highest good can in no way be viewed as an impediment to living up to the demands of ordinary ethical behavior. Hence, one must unquestionably assert the reasonableness of pursuing these ordinary, particular moral ends

and activities required by principle even if the ultimate end of moral striving is impossible.

Since Wood's analysis cannot be correct, it is necessary to look for some other explanation. It should be mentioned, however, that I have neglected to give an extensive criticism of Beck's position, because I believe it to have already been refuted by Kant's statement that an absurdum practicum is the consequent of the unresolved antimony. Greater consideration has been given to Wood's analysis also because I believe it more interesting to study the problem of the antimony from the aspect of the resulting absurdum practicum. However, in the explanation of the antimony which I shall propose, I will attempt to do justice to several of the points which Beck makes.

Ultimately, I believe that the agent would only give up moral behavior if he believed the highest good to be impossible, if he had become convinced of a logic of value associated with the concept of means and ends. This is to say that when one thinks of something as a means to something else, one thinks of the means as only possessing value derivitely from the end. This signifies that the means will only be viewed as worthwhile or valuable if it is appropriate to its end; if the chosen means are inappropriate, they are looked upon as useless, and the agent refrains from using or following them. I believe that this is how the antinomy

should be understood. To express this idea, one can say that since the agent has set the highest good as his goal, the inappropriateness of moral behavior to the achievement of that end renders such behavior unnecessary or useless; hence, it is not reasonable to engage in such activities.

This arguement differs from Wood's explanation. Wood says that the agent cannot commit himself to acting morally if he believes in the impossibility of fulfilling the final requirement of the highest good. I have said however that this is not sufficient, for he(the agent) can still believe in the possibility of fulfilling particular moral imperatives. What I claim therefore, is that the moral agent, in order to view all moral action as absurd, must see particular moral actions as worthwhile or commendable only in so far as they further the achievement of the summum bonum. According to the logic I propose, each moral act, however successful in itself, would be rendered worthless if it did not contribute to, or further, the achievement of this highest good. To see this distinction, one should consider the example of seeking public office. In essence, one must see the highest good as an end in the sense that seeking public office is an end. Looking at this example in detail, one can conjecture that the unsuccessful candidate will have performed numerous different actions, all with this one objective in mind. Some of these acts will have been successful in themselves (perhaps

he won over several wealthy supporters); nevertheless, if the ultimate object went unachieved, all his efforts and work have been useless. Similarly, in order to see moral behavior as useless if the highest good is unreachable, one would have to see moral behavior as having utility only in so far as it promotes this end. Hence, the summum bonum must be looked upon as an end in the analogous sense that seeking public office is an end. This means that no particular moral act can be successful, or realize any value in itself, if it does not act to advance one's final goal.

Clearly, Wood fails to make this point, for all that he has said is that if the summum bonum is impossible, we can not commit ourselves to realizing the summum bonum. This is quite true; however, it remains that we can still commit ourselves to realizing the particular ends required by the moral law, for the possibility of their fulfillment is in no way in question. One therefore can not deny that my argument is more explanatory of the resulting absurdum practicum. I have argued that the moral action could be not seen as futile or senseless because the agent must see any particular moral act as failing in value if it can not promote the attainment of the highest good. Therefore, on the impossibility of the summum bonum, all moral activities are shown to be insufficient to their end, and all will be looked upon as futile. One can say, therefore, that

even though there is still no question as to whether or not a particular moral act can be fulfilled, such acts are still to be refrained from because they have no utility.

In order to decide whether or not this interpretation is fully comprehensive, I believe one should return to consider the arguments raised by Beck. We are well acquainted with the resulting absurdum practicum stressed by Wood. I believe that the above argument quite adequately explains this fact; however, something also should be said with reference to what Beck has stressed. Beck takes his position from Kant's statements which claim that the impossibility of the highest good must issue in the falsity of law. Though Wood unequivocally denies Beck's position, I believe that there is unassailable textual evidence which supports the main point Beck makes, which is that the impossibility of the summum bonum makes the law false.[16.] Hence, I believe one must become convinced that Kant held both that the unresolved antimony would ramify with the consequences of the absurdum practicum, and also with the imputation that the law is false. It is therefore imperative that an interpretation of the antimony attempt to explain both these statements.

Therefore, the matter at hand is to see if the above interpretation I have offered, can do justice to Kant's statements which claim that the implication of the antimony is to lead one to doubt the veracity of the moral law.

Now on my interpretation, I think one can account for this point. I have argued that if our ultimate aim is unobtainable, moral conduct would be absurd, only if we valued moral actions solely as they functioned as a sufficient means to the desired end. If one agrees to this understanding, one would have to see morality and all various moral endeavours as absurd. This sphere of human undertaking would be absurd or fantastic because apparently all ethical conduct is directed to an engaged in advancing something which is impossible. This means not only that moral regulation is not worth the effort, but additionally, that one is led to question the basic grounds of moral law. Clearly, if the moral law is exhorting us to do things which are futile and worthless, then one can hardly have much faith in the legitimacy of such a principle. This, I think, is why Kant says that we must come to doubt the veracity of the supreme principle itself.

Ultimately, I conclude that Beck or Wood's opinion, which ever is maintained, rests finally upon an interpretation of Kant's classification or organization. Obviously, one is free to accept either interpretation; but I think it is more reasonable to see that each one has seized upon part of the truth. From the statements Kant has made, it is incontestable that Kant holds that both the moral principle is made false and moral conduct is

suspended. Hence, I believe that the above explanation of the antinomy which I have offered, is the correct one, for it more adequately accounts for both these facts. This explanation does justice to Kant's statement that the unresolved antinomy results in an absurdum practicum, found in Lectures on Philosophical Theology, and his statement in the "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason", that the unresolved antinomy renders the moral law false.[17] Therefore, I put forth that my exposition is the right one (that is, as far as Kant intends the antinomy to be understood), since it is more explanatory with regard to the remarks and conclusions Kant gives us.

While I have defended this interpretation as being the one which Kant wishes to convey, this does not mean that I find it to be correct in itself. This is to say, that I do believe that Kant does in fact hold this view, though I myself am not in agreement with his thinking. I have argued that a resulting absurdum practicum can only follow from the unobtainability of our ultimate end if we attribute value to our actions only in so far as they function as a means to this end. I am saying that Kant himself must have accepted this reasoning, for only if an agent becomes convinced of this sort of logic, would he see moral action as pointless when his final objective is unachievable. Nevertheless, I think this logic of value

is not representative of moral action. To see that this is the case, one need only imagine moral conduct as it occurs in reality. If one is honest, one will apprehend that even if morality is said to posit some consummate end, the feasibility or unfeasibility of this undertaking could not affect the value we attribute to ethical behavior. For example, even if we admit that the object of morality is perfect virtue and perfect happiness, and further admit that neither could ever be realized, we would still feel obligated to refrain from malicious conduct toward others, to attempt to act honestly, etcetera. Clearly, whether this ultimate objective can ever be fulfilled or not, we would still regard moral behavior as worthwhile and obligatory.

In order to develop this point, I shall return to the argument of the second chapter. In the second chapter, I argued that the command to strive for moral perfection is a viable directive, because our particular moral successes (particular moral acts) would still be of value even if we could never completely satisfy the criterion of holiness.[18] At the foundation of this argument was a claim that each moral act is valuable in itself, like each work of art.[19] From this premise, I argued that even if we could not successfully make all our behavior moral, the effort at perfection would be still worthwhile, because of the

immanent value of the ethical behavior we do achieve. What was implicitly communicated by this idea, was that the intrinsic or immanent value of a moral act could not be diminished or augmented by other actions which may or may not have been of moral value. The corollary of this would be that whatever has intrinsic value (such as a moral act or an artistic work), can not have that value affected by a relation to something external to itself. For example, a particular moral act would still possess value, even if the unforseen consequent of that act was deleterious; or a particular work of art would still maintain its value even if its creator never produced another work of quality. Equally, that which possesses goodness in itself would not have that value denigrated because it was an inefficient means to some end.

Further, I believe that the idea of ethical conduct having inherent value would follow from the principled nature of such action. In the Foundations, Kant underlines that moral value has its genesis in moral principle.[20] By this statement, Kant is expressing that morally principled conduct realizes a value which is independent of such factors as the desirableness of actual consequences, or the worth of intended ends.[21] Clearly, Kant is saying that action which springs from moral principle, possesses an inherent goodness which is unaffected by whatever relation it bears to things external to itself.

If one concurs on this conclusion (that principled behavior is intrinsically valuable), one has to see that Kant's presentation of the antinomy is spurious. According to the antinomy, moral behavior would be looked upon as worthless if it did not function as an appropriate means to the summum bonum. In order to avoid concluding that ethical action is absurd, the agent must assume the possibility of the highest good, and therefore the postulate of God. I have said that one can only accept this reasoning if one holds that moral conduct possesses only derivitive value, so far as it is a sufficient means to the consummate end. One can see now, that this directly contradicts the idea that principled acts have value in themselves, apart from what they promote or achieve. It remains that in order for one to implicitly conclude that the unreflecting acceptance of the antinomy would throw doubt upon the worth of morally principled behavior, one must give up the idea that moral conduct is to be respected solely because it proceeds from principle. One would have to deny that principled conduct has inherent goodness which is distinct from questions of utility or lasting achievement. This means also that one would have to regard moral behavior as something good and commendable, only in as far as it functions usefully and pragmatically to bring about the establishment of the desired goal.

I conclude that if one agrees with Kant, that morality demands that the summum bonum at least be possible, then the acceptance of this proposition involves the acceptance of a logic of moral value which in no way agrees with that found in the Foundations. This is a logic of value which regards moral behavior as absurd because it can not bring about a final ultimate achievement. It denies that moral behavior has value in itself as obedience to law, apart and distinct from whatever lasting achievements it brings about. In the Foundations, it was seen that moral action was valuable because of the principles of that action, not the consequences. I contend that Kant has not maintained this position; had he done so, he would not have conceived the moral law to be endangered if the far-ranging objective of the summum bonum was not achieved.

Further, such a view must also influence motivation. Unquestionably, if we esteem moral behavior not because it is principled, but only as it services some end, this must result in a motivation based not upon principle, but upon the proposed end. This is to say that we could only see the moral law as doubtful if the summum bonum were not achieveable, if we acted not from the supreme principle, but from the expectation of achieving this incommensurate goal. This obviously contravenes one of the basic concepts of the Foundations, that moral conduct is engaged in for the sake of principle, not for one's ends.[22.]

I argued that in Kant's representation of the dialectic of practical reason, the value attributed to morally principled actions is seen to be denigrated or abnegated if those actions do not function to promote the consummate object of value. I think one must see that when something is accepted as valuable only as it is a means to something else, this primae facie indicates that the individual is attributing primary worth to the proposed end. Further, the man who above all values the goals and intended consequences of his behavior must (as Kant shows in the first section of the Foundations) be motivated by those ends.[23] Clearly, if the agent is ready to desist from ethical action when the unifying aim of that ethical life is unachievable, then inexorably that highly regarded aim must be what stimulates or incites his action.

In summation, what can we conclude from this analysis concerning the general nature of the antinomy and concerning the entire question of the summum bonum? First, I think it can be seen that Kant's treatment of the problem of the antinomy can not simply be characterized as a piece of theoretical tidying-up as Beck seems to do; neither can it be viewed as an attempt to solve a moral sophistry as Wood concludes. I say this because the problem of the antinomy, while presented as contradiction to be worked out and resolved, is also the vehicle by which Kant advances a stronger claim for the summum bonum. Previous to his treatment of the antinomy, and his representation of the dialectic of practical

reason, Kant argues that impartial reason demands that we promote certain circumstances consisting of virtue and felicity.[24]. However, in the "Dialectic", Kant concludes that moral action would be rendered absurd if the antinomy were to remain unresolved and the summum bonum thought of as impossible. Surely this must be recognized as a much stronger claim than the simple assertion that reason demands that we unify our efforts to advance a single end. One sees that the argument of the "Dialectic" presented in the form of an antinomy seeks to convince us that not only does reason posit a final end, but also more importantly, that moral volition itself must be pointless or worthless if that end is categorized as unattainable.

This move intended to strengthen the position of the summum bonum indicates, to my mind, a change in Kant's emphasis. I have said that the renunciation of morality could only follow from the impossibility of the summum bonum if one's ethical motivation is ultimately determined by that end. It would therefore seem that Kant, in claiming that ethical existence would be unreasonable if the summum bonum were impossible to attain, obviously must have thought disinterested principle in itself to be insufficient. Clearly, in the "Dialectic", Kant is saying that without the incitement promising the possibility of the highest good, an ethical commitment can not be maintained. Even though Kant continues

to theoretically affirm the incommensurate value of action derived from principle, the insinuation of the whole "Dialectic" is one which reverses the order of Kant's hierarchic conception of values. Kant, by insinuating that principled conduct would be worthless if the summum bonum were unrealisable, is making the worth of principled conduct secondary to its appropriateness in affecting the valued consequent. Further, since one's motivation is inextricably connected with what one values or esteems, one sees that Kant is concomitantly switching the motivational emphasis from principle to proposed end. Kant is saying that without the possibility that one might achieve this consummate object of value, moral motivation, on the strength of principle alone, can not be sustained.

Hence, I believe that the central claim of the "Dialectic", that morality demands the possibility of the highest good, is significant of two things: first, that the emphasis of value has moved from principled conduct to the ultimate end of that conduct; second, that motivation is now based upon this proposed end (the summum bonum) and not the principles themselves.

This first conclusion indicates to me that Kant had come to believe that the meaning of morality must be teleological or purposive, and concomitantly that the value of morality is to be derived from this goal which it is designed to serve. We have seen that Kant never explicitly admits

to such a belief for he continues to uphold his previous statements concerning moral value. Hence, overtly Kant affirms both the primacy of action from principle and the position that principled action has an ultimate worthwhile purpose. Nevertheless, my interpretation appears to be corroborated, for in reading the "Dialectic" one sees that the worth attributed to principled behavior has surreptitiously been made subservient to that value attributed to the purposed goal.

The second conclusion is intimately related to this first. In coming to the view that morality has its value in its purpose or goal, Kant would have had to see moral motivation as dependent upon the possibility of realizing this purpose or goal. This would explain the conclusion Kant reaches, which is that if this goal is unattainable, a moral commitment can not be expected. Hence, by placing value in the ultimate end of moral striving, Kant concomitantly sees that the possibility of achieving this goal must exercise a greater influence on motivation than disinterested principle. Kant sees that the purpose which gives morality its significance, must also be the dominant motivating factor.

Finally, one should take note that the argument of the "Dialectic" says that unless happiness completes this valued object, moral commitment can not be maintained. Hence an addendum to the conclusion that morality is directed to the possibility of achieving a worthy end would be the conclusion that happiness is a required value and incentive for

this moral purpose.

This is important because it reinforces the argument of the last chapter (that the positing of the summum bonum makes it improbable that we can realize an action motivated by duty alone.)[25]. The investigations of this chapter indicate that in positing the summum bonum, not only has Kant made action from duty alone unrealizable, but also the argument of the "Dialectic" would convey that happiness must be part of the goal of moral life and that it is necessarily a valued incentive to such a life. Surely Kant came to conclude, like Bishop Butler, that "...when we sit down in the cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it is for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it."[26]. Though I know there will be less than overwhelming support for this reading, I believe that an implicit conclusion of this sort came to dominate and direct the explicit literal conclusions at which Kant arrived. Surely this is manifest in the logic of the antinomy in which we are told that unless we believe in the possibility of a highest good, in which happiness is included, moral obedience is to be looked upon as absurd.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Kant, The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. Louis White Beck, Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1949), P. 55, (In subsequent footnotes the Foundations of Metaphysics of Morals is denoted by abbreviation F.M.M.)

2. F.M.M., P. 56.

3. F.M.M., P. 58.

4. F.M.M., P. 55.

5. F.M.M., P. 54.

6. F.M.M., P. 60.

7. F.M.M., P. 59.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. F.M.M., P. 53.

11. Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason, trans. Louis White Beck, Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1949), P. 133 (In subsequent footnotes The Critique of Practical Reason is denoted by abbreviation P.R.)

12. F.M.M., P. 60.

13. Ibid.

14. P.R. P. 136.
C.F. Butler, "Sermon XI", British Moralists, ed. Selby-Bigge. It is noteworthy that Butler, unlike Kant, felt that even with regard to rational creatures, there was a distinction to be drawn between pursuing certain ends out of passion, and pursuing one's ends out of self-love. Butler explains his distinction by stating that self-love in pursuing an external object never seeks the object for

own sake, but only as a means to happiness or good, whereas particular affections rest in the external thing itself; as Butler says, "...affection, the idea itself means resting in its object as an end." (Butler, "Sermon XI", British Moralists, P. 227) What Butler had noticed was that though gratification (happiness) proceeds from satisfaction of particular passions, these affections per se have as their end the simple object of passion. The point taken is that though inclinations or passions bring about gratification or felicity, men, in acting to satisfy a passion, do not necessarily have this selfish expectation in mind. Kant does not acknowledge this point for he assumes that all actions intended to satisfy an inclination manifest a desire for the ensuing residual called happiness.

15. F.M.M., P. 61.

16. F.M.M., P. 59.

17. F.M.M., P. 61.

18. F.M.M., P. 62.

19. F.M.M., P. 61.

20. F.M.M., P. 62.

21. F.M.M., P. 63.

22. F.M.M., P. 64.

23. C.F. Paton, Moral Law, (London: Hutchison and Co., 1964). P. 22. "Yet as the formula itself shows, there is no question of deducing particular moral laws from the empty form of the law as such. On the contrary, what we have to do is examine the material maxims of our contemplated actions and to accept or reject them according as they can or can not be willed as universal laws - that is, as laws valid for all men, and not as special priveleges of our own."

24. See P. 14.

25. F.M.M., P. 59.

26. F.M.M., P. 64.

27. Ibid.

28. F.M.M., P. 90.

29. See Pgs. 10, 11.

30. F.M.M., P. 74.

31. F.M.M., P. 90.

32. Ibid.

33. F.M.M., P. 100, P.R., P. 146.

34. F.M.M., P. 90.

35. F.M.M., P. 89.

36. See P. 14.

37. F.M.M., P. 60.

38. F.M.M., P. 55

CHAPTER II.

1. F.M.M., P. 61.

2. Ibid.

3. F.M.M., P. 51.

4. Ibid.

5. See Pages 13, 14.

6. P.R., P. 213.

7. Kant, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), P. 5. (Subsequently, denoted by abbreviation Rel.)

8. P.R., P. 213.

9. See Page 14.

10. P.R. P. 225.

11. Beck, op.cit. P. 283.

12. P.R., P. 144.

13. Ibid.
14. F.M.M., P. 103.
15. P.R., P. 143.
16. P.R., P. 144.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. P.R., P. 226.
22. Rel., P. 75.
23. Rel., P. 70.
24. Rel., P. 32.
25. Rel., P. 31.
26. Rel., P. 23.
27. Ibid.
28. Rel., P. 61.
29. F.M.M., P. 61.
30. Rel., P. 32.
31. Rel., P. 43.
32. F.M.M. P. 64.
33. Ryle, The Concept of Mind., (London: Hutchinson's University Press, 1951) PP. 62-76. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960) PP. 7-8, 40-43.
34. Ryle, op.cit. pp. 16-18.
35. F.M.M., P. 101.
36. F.M.M., P. 102.

37. See Pages 17, 18.

38. P.R., P. 225.

39. P.R., P. 218.

40. P.R., P. 219.

41. P.R.,P. 226.

42. Ibid.

43. C.F. Teale, Kantian Ethics, (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), P. 224.

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1. F.M.M., P. 61.

2. P.R., P. 217.

3. P.R., P. 215.

4. Ibid.

5. F.M.M., P. 56.

6. P.R., P. 215.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. P.R., P. 216.

10. Ibid.

11. P.R., P. 222.

12. See Pg. 35.

13. P.R., P. 215.

14. See P. 82.

15. F.M.M., P. 59.

16. P.R., P. 214.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. P.R., P. 214.

21. See Pages 26-33.

22. P.R., Pp. 215,217.

23. Wood, Kant's Moral Religion, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), P. 49.

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1. P.R., P. 216.

2. P.R., P. 218.

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4. P.R., P. 228.

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9. Ibid.

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17. P.R. P. 218.

18. P.R., P. 218, Wood, op.cit. P. 29.

19. See Pages 70-74.

20. See Page 72.

21. F.M.M., P. 61.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid, see pages 89-100.

24. P.R., P. 214.

25. See Pages 89-100.

26. Butler, op.cit., P. 240.

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