

REASON AND MORALITY IN THE
KANTIAN MORAL SYSTEM

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN REASON AND MORALITY
IN THE KANTIAN MORAL SYSTEM

By

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ABSTRACT

It is the aim of this thesis to begin to sort out the relation between reason (as a "higher" mental faculty) and the moral system that Kant develops. This is done through an investigation of the Kantian conception of reason and an investigation of Kant's moral system itself. The idea of the unconditioned, as a necessary condition for the possibility of morality, is identified as being that which connects the two terms.

The first part of this thesis deals with Kant's conception of the faculty or function of reason (as opposed to the faculty of the understanding), and this is centered around two main elements: syllogistic thinking and the subjective maxim to find the condition for all conditioned cognitions. From this, and given what I call the "ambiguous" nature of the pure concepts of the understanding, I begin to trace the development of the idea of the unconditioned. This idea of the unconditioned, I claim, belongs solely to pure reason.

In the second part of my thesis, starting from what I take to be Kant's basic presuppositions about morality, the most basic being universality of moral rules, and from the Kantian notion of the will, I attempt to reconstruct, in a systematic way an argument leading to the formation of

particular moral laws or categorical imperatives. Along the way, the various notions of the unconditioned are noted (e.g., the unconditionally good will, the unconditionally good object), and these are linked to the idea of the causally unconditioned, viz., freedom.

In the third and final part I make explicit, though in no comprehensive way, the relation between the idea of the unconditioned (and thus pure reason) and morality.

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NOTE

Because of the frequency with which I have made use of the following texts, they appear in my thesis in the following abbreviations.

Primary Sources

The Critique of Pure Reason

Either as "K.d.r.V." or as the "First Critique"

The Critique of Practical Reason
trans. L.W. Beck,
(Bobbs-Merrill, 1978)

"K.p.v." - pg. numbers will follow the pagination of the Beck translation.

Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals
trans. H.J. Paton
(Harper and Row, 1964)

"Groundwork" - pg. numbers will follow the pagination of the Paton translation.

The Critique of Judgement
trans. J.H. Bernard
(Haffner, 1951)

"K.d.U."

Secondary Sources

L.W. Beck, A Commentary on Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason"
(University of Chicago, 1960)

"Beck, Comm."

L.W. Beck, "Apodictic Imperatives", "Beck, "Apodictic" "Studies in the Philosophy of Kant,"
(Bobbs-Merrill, 1965)

H.J. Paton, The Categorical Imperative,
(University of Pennsylvania, 1971)

"Paton, The C.I."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I PURE REASON	7
II MORALITY IN GENERAL - THE PRESUPPOSITIONS	34
III THE WILL	43
IV KANT'S VOLITIONAL VOCABULARY	51
V THE REJECTION OF MATERIAL MAXIMS AS PRACTICAL LAWS	69
VI THE FORMULA OF THE PRACTICAL LAW	92
VII THE CONNECTION BETWEEN REASON AND MORALITY	136

INTRODUCTION

The key-note of Kant's moral or practical philosophy, as has been well-noted in the literature, is the Rousseauian conception of liberty. As Rousseau states in The Social Contract,

. . . moral liberty, which alone makes [man] truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty.¹

In this passage we find the two senses of freedom and, corresponding to these, the two senses of the will which provided the underlying, fundamental insight of Kant's moral theory - that freedom (and therefore morality) is only possible through both the spontaneity of the will (its freedom from empirical conditions) and the autonomy of the will, insofar as it gives itself its own law. That is, Kant's (and Rousseau's) insight was that freedom is possible only through self-prescribed laws.

It was my original intention in this thesis to show in precise, logical terms, the connection that existed between reason and morality in the Kantian moral theory. While this is, more or less, still my intention, it was necessary in the midst of preparing for the writing of this text to reorient my approach to this problem. I took as my original starting point a comment by Kant from his Groundwork: "Since moral laws have to hold for every rational being as

such, we ought rather to derive our principles from the general concept of a rational being as such, and on this basis to expound the whole of ethics." (p. 79) From this I gathered that from the concept of rationality - and I took this to refer to reason - and so, therefore, from the concept of reason, the complete foundations of morality could be analytically derived. I expected, after a careful analysis of reason, to see morality just sitting there, grinning, exposed as it were to the fine logical light. To my dismay the grin was that of a Cheshire Cat's.

The next step to take was, naturally, to sort out whatever connection that did exist between morality and reason (specifically pure reason) in the Kantian theory of morality. In order to do this, expositions of the moral system and of reason needed to be provided. Thus the aim of this thesis is threefold: (1) to provide a basic exposition of the Kantian moral theory, working from the basic presuppositions up to the particular practical laws or categorical imperatives themselves; (2) to provide an analysis of the faculty of reason (and in so doing provide the basic Kantian framework in which the moral theory would be fitted); (3) to sort out, as I have said, the place or role of reason (viz., pure reason) in the theory of the moral system.

Here one must be careful to make a distinction between three related but different questions. The first question, and the one which will concern me in this thesis, is, "How

is (pure) reason practical?" (or, "Granting that (pure) reason is practical, how is it practical?"²). What would be the necessary conditions for reason to be practical, and, conversely, what characteristics of (pure) reason are required for morality to be possible? These questions refer to the mere theoretical exposition of morality, and must be distinguished from the question, "Is (pure) reason in fact practical?". That is, do the conditions found to be necessary in answering the first question actually exist - do we actually possess these conditions? Obviously an answer to the first (theoretical) question is prior to an answer or an attempt to answer the second, but the methodology used in answering this second question must be different from that used in answering the first. I will not attempt to deal with the second question in this thesis. Between the two of these lies a third question: "Is it possible that (pure) reason be practical?". Here, in brief, a resolution to the third antinomy must be given in order to show that it is in fact possible that (pure) reason be practical. However (and I shall not be elaborating upon this), since such resolution depends ultimately upon the distinction between the phenomenal world (the world of appearances) and the noumenal world (the world of transcendental objects)³, the second question posed above can never, in principle, be answered by us with any certainty. Such is admitted by Kant on a number of occasions.⁴

As a preliminary definition of pure reason in its practical use (which, as the main notion under consideration, runs, whether implicitly or explicitly, throughout this thesis), we can say that it refers to something (a rule or an idea) given by pure reason which is used to regulate action, and that that which is given by pure reason for this purpose must come uniquely and solely from reason.

A secondary contention of this thesis is that it can be argued that Kant has not developed a purely formal moral theory. In fact, an ethics that was purely formal would suffer from one of two defects. First, such an ethics could not have particular moral rules or laws at all, and so would be useless for directing action. One can say that it is only by acting in a certain way that one's action could be considered according to moral predicates, but still one has to determine those particular actions, deeds, and intents (as opposed to other particular actions, deeds, and intents) which allow one to act in this certain way. Second, there could be no ethics which treats the content of its moral rules with complete indifference, for this would allow all actions (even an action such as murder) providing that the action was performed in a formally correct way. There must be some reliance on considerations of content (though perhaps only from a formal point of view). This opens the question concerning the nature of the connection between form and matter of practical (or moral) rules - viz., given a certain

form, what matter or content can take on that form, or, in somewhat unsophisticated terms, be put into that form?

In discussing especially the notion of the object of particular practical laws, one must keep clear the distinction between moral theory and its exposition, and casuistry. The latter is limited to the exposition and judgement of what is right and wrong in particular situations, and thus is limited to the specific characteristics of the situation. This forms the main concern of the calculation, and, of course, already presupposes a moral theory. It is, in some cases, easy enough to fall into casuistry when trying to provide an exposition of some aspect of a moral theory. Careful attention must be paid to the theoretical moral point being made, in order not to merely beg the question by simply presupposing some moral element in solving a particular situational problem. The use of examples in demonstrating or working out a theoretical moral problem is, of course, admissible. Further, it is often necessary to perform casuistical calculations to discover problems or contradictions which weren't apparent in purely theoretical considerations. It is sometimes the case that only when you do look at particular situations can you find specific problems with some element in your theoretical framework.

ENDNOTES

¹Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract and Discourses, trans. G.D.H. Cole, (J.M. Dent and Sons, 1973), p. 178.

²This kind of approach is used by Kant in his ethical works. cf. for instance, 'Problem 1' and 'Problem 2' in K.p.V., p. 28.

³cf. Beck, Comm., p. 26 - "This dualism [between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds] is a necessary presupposition of Kant's ethical theory."

⁴i.e., cf. Groundwork, p. 74 - "In actual fact it is absolutely impossible to establish with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action in other respects right has rested solely on moral grounds and on the thought of one's duty."

CHAPTER I

PURE REASON

My intention in this chapter is relatively straightforward, though by no means an easy one to carry out. I wish to set out, with careful attention to the text of the First Critique, the nature of reason for Kant. One of the aims of this thesis is to begin to develop a grasp of the workings and nature of the entire Kantian "system" or "architectonic". For this reason, this chapter, and in fact the entirety of this thesis, must be viewed as a tentative first step and not as a definitive exposition and evaluation. As more and more of the whole is synthesized and understood, each of the parts themselves develops, becomes more complete, and takes on dimensions and subtleties possible only from the greater viewpoint. If, through this chapter, I can but provide a basic conceptual analysis of reason, this will prove sufficient for my task. Having given my apology, let me move on.

As far as I will be looking in this thesis, for Kant the question concerning what reason (and, to generalize, the 'mind') is, is a question concerning function. What reason is, is what reason does. For Kant (that is, again, as far as I need be concerned here) the mind is to be thought of as

a faculty or a set of faculties which deal with and manipulate in various characteristic ways the given. The emphasis is on the functional nature of these faculties, and so primarily on the activity of the mind, and not on what is so active. (However the question, "What is active?" is inevitable, and it pushes us into an inquiry exceedingly complex and difficult, but one which, in the end, must be attempted, though such an attempt will not be made in this thesis.)

It is crucial, in terms of Kant's basic framework, to make a distinction between understanding and reason. These are two distinct (though not absolutely distinct) faculties of the mind or, in the case that one disapproves of talk of separate 'faculties', two distinct functions of Reason. This distinction, in addition to the fundamental distinction between sensibility and the understanding (and thus between sensibility and reason), forms a large, if not the main, part of the basic framework of Kant's philosophy.

The most primordial given is a "manifold of sensation" (or "sensuous manifold") which, according to Kant, is the result of the faculty of representation (the sensibility) being affected by 'something' somehow 'outside' it though in 'contact' with it. This in fact forms one of Kant's most basic presuppositions; that a diremption exists between the thing in itself and the world that appears to us which is yet, in some manner, grounded upon the thing in itself.

Sensibility somehow subsumes this manifold under the pure intuitions of space and time, and through this giving of basic form to the manifold, spatio-temporal intuitions emerge. These intuitions in turn form the material of the faculty of the understanding which, again somehow, assembles these intuitions into objects of experience. In all of this, it would seem that the most difficult question to answer concerns an explanation of the actual process of giving form to the absolutely formless manifold of sensation; however, once it has spatio-temporal form (however it managed to acquire it), the process of turning these intuitions into objects of experience would seem for that reason to at least admit of plausible explanation (cf. the "Transcendental Deduction", the "Transcendental Schematism", and the "System of Principles" in the "Transcendental Analytic" of the First Critique). It should be noted, though, that the categories of the understanding do not deal with the sensuous manifold itself, but only with intuitions.

The understanding has a dual function: it is (as I have just mentioned) concerned with the object qua object of experience, and it is the faculty of knowledge. In the understanding are to be found all categories of thought - that is, all thought is to be subsumable under some category or combination of categories of the understanding. In its logical use the understanding is the faculty of immediate inference. Reason likewise has a dual function: it is

concerned with checking by means of a critique the 'pretensions' of pure understanding to go beyond intuition in applying the categories and claiming knowledge, and it is concerned with the theoretical completeness and unity of experience and thought. In reason's logical use, it is the faculty of mediate inference, or syllogistic reasoning. It is from this basic framework that Kant will work out his metaphysical claims, that is, concerning the justification of synthetic a priori judgements. It is within this framework that morality must be placed as well, and this will be my task in the final chapter of this thesis.

All philosophy, Kant says, is either knowledge arising out of pure reason (and this is pure philosophy), or knowledge obtained by reason from empirical principles (which is empirical philosophy). The former is called "metaphysics", and it is broken down into the theoretical/speculative employment of pure reason (metaphysics of nature) and the practical employment of pure reason (metaphysics of morals). The former of these "contains all the principles of pure reason that are derived from mere concepts (thereby excluding mathematics [which is derived from pure intuition]), and employed in the theoretical knowledge of all things".

(B868-9)

Kant says of pure reason that, so far as principles of its knowledge (and I use this term loosely for the moment, for the epistemic status of the products of this faculty or

function we will judge of shortly) are concerned, it is a separate, self-subsistent unity. (BXXIII) It is the faculty or function, Kant says, which supplies the principles of a priori knowledge, that is, it contains the principles whereby we know anything absolutely a priori. (B24) A principle, Kant says, is a synthetic judgement derived directly from concepts. (B356ff.) Principles, once derived, must be known a priori, in themselves, directly. They must be apodictic. Finally, principles are that which make possible (in a basic way) something else - they are the most basic foundations of things, whatever those things might be. The term "principle" can allow of a relative sense as well. Kant says that, "all universal propositions, however, may be spoken of as 'principles' in a comparative sense". (B358) In this case, the pure concepts of the understanding in their schematized form (i.e., as the principles of pure understanding) are not principles in the strict sense, for though they do make possible experience (and the concepts themselves make possible thought of objects) in a fundamental way, experience in turn is the very ground of proof of these principles. Therefore they can only be principles in a relative or comparative sense, viz., they are principles only relatively to the cases which can be subsumed under them, and can only be known given experience. All of this will serve as a preliminary to the characterization of pure reason.

Kant sets up knowledge as having essentially

a relational character. Knowledge, Kant says, comes necessarily from the combination of two fundamental sources of the mind:¹ (1) Receptivity for impressions (or the capacity for receiving representations). Through this, Kant says, the object is given to us. It must be noted that Kant is using the term "object" in a rather loose manner here. He should more properly be saying that through this receptivity for impressions, the material for objects is given to us. (2) The power of knowing an object through these representations (and this, Kant says, involves spontaneity of concepts).

The object is thought in relation to that given representation (which is a mere representation in the mind, and therefore to be distinguished from a determined representation). And so Kant tells us that, "intuition and concepts constitute, therefore, the elements of all our knowledge, so that neither concepts without an intuition in some way corresponding to them, nor intuition without concepts, can yield knowledge". (B74) This is a fundamentally important presupposition of Kant's, that knowledge demands both concepts and intuition, and that without some intuition or perception available there can be no knowledge. As Kant says at B87, "in the absence of intuition all our knowledge is without objects, and therefore remains entirely empty". That intuition which gives content to knowledge is sensible intuition, for, "our nature is so constituted that our intuition can never be other than

sensible; that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects". (B75) I should now like to speak briefly of the understanding.

The functions which make up the faculty (or the general function) of the understanding are as follows. At its most basic level the understanding provides exhaustively the forms of judgement. Since all knowledge (in the strict sense) is a matter of verifying judgement, then the understanding can be known alternately as the faculty of judgement or the faculty of knowledge.² "All judgements," Kant says, "are functions of unity among our representations." (B93) The mere form of judgement, then, is concerned with synthesizing, or bringing together, some manifold (i.e., a manifold of concepts or, in understanding's real use, a manifold of intuitions) into a unity. Kant states that, "we can reduce all acts of the understanding to judgements, and the understanding may therefore be represented as a faculty of judgement". (B94) If all this is the case, then, "the functions of the understanding can . . . be discovered if we give an exhaustive statement of the functions of unity in judgements". (B94)

The forms of judgement are then translated into the forms of thought about objects. These are the categories or pure concepts of the understanding (to justify this link and the next jump from the forms of thought of objects to the understanding making possible and constituting actual objects

of experience through the concepts of the understanding requires a fairly careful look at most of the argument contained in the "Transcendental Analytic". This obviously cannot be done here.). Thus, besides being the faculty holding all form of judgement, the understanding is that faculty or function "which enables us to think the object of sensible intuition". (B75) Finally, the understanding has the function of actually putting together or synthesizing intuitions so as to constitute objects of experience. The same forms of thought about objects are the forms which will be used in 'assembling' objects out of the data given it (though, again, it is not the "raw" data of the sensuous manifold), that is, of intuition (which is already in a spatio-temporal form). Again, the whole mechanism of the constitutive function of the understanding, while puzzling and difficult to grasp, is not conceptually implausible. It is only the mechanism that produces spatio-temporal intuitions out of this completely raw sensuous manifold that seems to suffer from fundamental conceptual unclarity. But to sort out these problems and difficulties does not affect our task, and so we must assume that Kant's arguments concerning these basic matters are successful. Our concern instead is to identify and examine Kant's notion of reason (that is, the faculty of reason as distinct from the faculty of understanding, or the function of Reason which is called reason as distinct from that function called understanding).

The rest of this chapter will be divided into three main parts. In the first part I intend to explore the logical use of reason, insofar as it leads us to the notion of the unconditioned, which will be my main concern in finding a connection between reason and morality. The second part I divide into three sections. The first section will deal with the ambiguous nature of the categories. The second will speak briefly of reason in relation to these categories, and the third section will deal with the notion of transcendental illusion which arises because of the ambiguous nature of the categories. The third and final part will outline reason in its real use, which, in part, is an extension of its logical use.

Reason in its logical use is the faculty of mediate inference. (cf. B359-61) An inference of reason is required if, besides the knowledge contained in the primary proposition (in this case the major premise) still another judgement is needed to yield the conclusion. A syllogism - a mediate inference - is needed to link together the primary proposition and what is to be derived from it or subsumed under it. This is opposed to the operation of the understanding which operates with immediate inferences (e.g., with conclusions or judgements that can be directly derived from premises (other judgements) - i.e., from "All men are mortal" is directly derived "Some men are mortal" or "Some mortals are men") and spontaneity of judgements. In every syllogism:

- (1) think a rule (which is universal in some sense) - the major premise - through the understanding (e.g., "All men are mortal")
- (2) subsume something known under the condition of the rule by means of judgement - the minor premise - (e.g., "Socrates is a man" - thing subsumed under the rule is "Socrates")
- (3) what is thereby known (something about Socrates) I determine through the predicate of the rule (e.g., ". . . are mortal"), and so a priori through reason (the conclusion - "Socrates is mortal") (cf. B360-1 for these three points)

The principle of the function of reason in its logical use is thus, that, "in inference reason endeavours to reduce the varied and manifold knowledge obtained through the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions) and thereby to achieve in it the highest possible unity". (B361)

Thus, given this principle, reason, insofar as it thinks syllogistically, always tries to bring out the conditions of the conditioned, and in this capacity looks to the rule or major premise itself to see if it as well is conditioned, and what its conditions are. Thus reason is continually transforming, under the principle or idea of complete unity, the condition into a conditioned. That which reason finds necessary to postulate as providing this complete

and highest unity (which is otherwise impossible in a mere infinite logical progression from condition to conditioned) is the unconditioned as a principle of reason. Thus, in order to fulfill its interest concerning this series, reason must end the series in the unconditioned. This principle (the unconditioned) is synthetic insofar as it unifies the entire series within itself. This principle of the unconditioned, it must be noted, is solely a product of reason, for the understanding is not concerned with the total and complete unity of series of conditioned objects, but merely, through the categories in their immanent use, with the object of experience as such (and so is productive only of the infinite series).

Since reason, through its inferential function, thinks the unconditioned, the form of its thought must be some category (for, as we have noted, the form of all thought comes from the understanding). However, the idea of the unconditioned can in no way be thought by the understanding by itself, and yet the form of the thought of the unconditioned must have its source in the understanding. As Kant says, "we must recognize that pure and transcendental concepts [viz., reason's idea of the unconditioned] can issue only from the understanding. Reason does not really generate any concept. The most it can do is to free a concept of understanding from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience, and so to endeavour to extend it

beyond the limits of the empirical, though still, indeed, in terms of its relation to the empirical". (B435-6) This, I think, points to the ambiguous nature of the pure concepts of the understanding, that from the point of view of the function of the understanding they can be used only immanently (that is, in reference only to objects of experience), but from the point of view of the function of reason they can be used in a transcendent manner (beyond, or, in the extreme (but illegitimate) sense, breaking, the limits and conditions of possible experience).

It is this ambiguity built in, as it were, to the pure concepts of the understanding, that permits reason (or the function of reason) to use these same concepts in an unconditional mode. Let us see more precisely how this might be possible.

Kant says that:

We demand in every concept, first, the logical form of a concept (of thought) in general, and secondly, the possibility of giving it an object to which it may be applied. In the absence of such an object, it has no meaning and is completely lacking in content, though it may still contain the logical function which it required for making a concept out of any data that may be presented . . . Therefore all concepts, and with them all principles, even such as are possible a priori, relate to empirical intuitions, that is, to the data for a possible experience. Apart from this relation they have no objective validity." (B298 - emphasis mine)

That a concept has no objective validity, but that something remains if no intuition is given to or of a concept is our clue in understanding how reason can use the pure

concepts of the understanding as the ideas of the unconditioned. Kant says:

But if, on the other hand, I leave aside all intuition, the form of thought still remains - that is, the mode of determining an object for the manifold of a possible intuition. The categories accordingly extend further than sensible intuition, since they think objects in general, without regard to the special mode (the sensibility) in which they may be given. But they do not thereby determine a greater sphere of objects. For we cannot assume that such objects can be given, without presupposing the possibility of another kind of intuition than the sensible; and we are by no means justified in so doing." (B309 - emphasis mine)

Just before this passage Kant denied the possibility of any knowledge of any object if the thought is removed (which is obvious enough). But here Kant states that, when intuition is removed, something still exists - that is, the concept or form of thought itself (though from this nothing can be said about what might be thought in terms of just these concepts). But the important point made in this passage is this. For purposes of knowledge, for thinking concretely, for determining a "sphere of objects", the understanding requires a connection between concepts and intuitions (recall the necessary relational character of knowledge). But, since the categories or pure concepts refer only to "objects in general", they are not in themselves constrained to sensible intuition (though "intellectual intuition", the only other kind of intuition Kant speaks of, is not available to us). Thus the possibility remains that they can be given content through a different kind of intuition, despite the

fact that, given our nature, we can never put them to such use. From this Kant says:

But none the less we are unable to comprehend how such noumena [the positive sense of noumena, viz., objects of intellectual intuition] can be possible, and the domain that lies out beyond the sphere of appearances is for us empty. That is to say, we have an understanding which problematically extends further, but we have no intuition, indeed not even the concept of a possible intuition, through which objects outside the field of sensibility can be given, and through which the understanding can be employed assertorically beyond that field. The concept of noumenon is thus a merely limiting concept, the function of which is to curb the pretensions of sensibility." (B310 - emphasis mine)

An important side point emerges from this passage. Taking the concept of noumenon as a "merely limiting concept" points out one of the valid functions of reason. This function of reason concerns the restriction of what in general might be called "speculative folly", that is, in taking as possible knowledge of noumena and in not realizing that this concept's function must be purely a limiting one.

It is the case, therefore, that the ambiguity of the pure concepts of the understanding that I have pointed out unfortunately leaves open the way to "transcendental illusion" which is the illegitimate or invalid use of the concepts of pure understanding or of the principle or idea of the unconditioned. However, before I proceed to provide an explanation of what such illusion amounts to, it is important to realize that, for Kant, reason's entire use does not end up in the illegitimate or invalid use of these concepts or principles (and that Reason's entire valid use be concerned

only with objects of experience, that is, in thinking and knowing them and constituting them for experience). Kant emphasizes in the Third Critique that reason's use of these concepts, while "transcendent for our theoretical faculty of cognition . . . are not therefore useless or to be dispensed with. For they serve as regulative principles . . . and partly to lead it [reason or Reason] to the consideration of nature according to a principle of completeness - although it can never attain to this - and thus to further the final design of all knowledge." (K.d.U., Introduction, p.3)

There are, I will argue, two kinds of transcendental illusion, both being due in some way to the nature of the concepts of the understanding. The forms of thought (viz., the categories of the understanding) as we saw, themselves extend further than sensible intuition, and thus are taken to apply to objects themselves (objects in general). It is only through the notion of the noumenon (in the negative sense³) that such application is remedied. This use is, in a way, a natural occurrence resulting from the ambiguous nature of the concepts of the understanding, though such a use cannot be permitted (except, as Kant indicates at B594, for analogical purposes⁴). This, then, is the first 'kind' of transcendental illusion, and it is concerned with the over-extension of the application of the categories in such a way that they are applied as determinations to noumena (which would require the positive sense of noumena and thus non-

sensible or "intellectual" intuition). While this kind of application is not self-contradictory, it is not possible for us, given that the only kind of intuition available to us is sensible. Thus no a priori knowledge of noumenal objects is possible, for the intuition required for such knowledge must be intellectual.

The second 'kind' of transcendental illusion is, in a sense, the reverse of the first. In its simplest form, transcendental illusion occurs when we "take the subjective necessity of a connection of our concepts, which is to the advantage of the understanding, for an objective necessity in the determination of things in themselves". (B353) Here, objective knowledge is claimed of the unconditioned, that principle which fulfills the "subjective necessity" of reason (or the function of reason) to secure the complete unity or totality of series. But, as we will see, no phenomenal object can be given of the unconditioned (precisely because all of the phenomenal world is the conditioned). Again, this illusion is due to the ambiguous nature of the concepts of the understanding themselves for, in a sense, they extend to both empirical and transcendental objects (the transcendental object being represented by reason's idea of the unconditioned). But, as we have noted, since no intuition is available for transcendental objects, we can have no knowledge of such objects, though we can at least think them (but, again, since no intuition and therefore no content is available for the

concepts, we can think them in no definite way). Enough has now been said of transcendental illusion so as to indicate its nature, and to indicate that it is reason itself which uncovers the illusion (though it can never remove it). I wish now to look at reason in its real (and valid) use.

Reason's real use is to be derived from reason's logical use. As we saw, the maxim of reason in its logical use is, "to find for the conditioned cognition the unconditioned which completes its unity". (B364 - Schwarz translation, p. 111) As we saw as well, it is the idea or principle of the unconditioned (this is also called the "transcendental idea" and the "Idea of reason") which provides the complete and absolute unity or totality of the series. The idea of the unconditioned is what allows reason to synthesize the series of conditions into a whole. How is a series of conditioned objects completed? A series of conditions given by the understanding is, by itself, open-ended at both ends (i.e., . . . $\rightarrow x \rightarrow y \rightarrow z \rightarrow . . .$). What the series requires for completion and therefore totality and unity is, obviously, something to start it off and something in which it terminates or ends, in some sense of "ends". This something is thought through the idea or principle of the unconditioned. For example, at one end, to account for and unify the conditions (in antecedentia) to some given conditioned when the relation between conditioned and condition is a causal one, freedom, as the idea of the unconditioned (an uncaused cause),

must be posited. At the other end of the series, the idea of an unconditioned being such as the ens realissimum or divine being is found by reason to be necessary.

The logical maxim, Kant states, can only become a principle of pure reason if it is assumed that when the conditioned is given, the whole series of subordinate conditions is given as well, as contained (I take it, implicitly, though necessarily) in the given object (or concept of the given conditioned object). Since the concept of the conditioned is related analytically only to the concept of a condition, but not to the concept of an unconditioned, the fundamental proposition of pure reason is a synthetic principle (viz., the concept of the conditioned can only stand in a synthetical relation to the concept of some unconditioned object).

Kant says that such a maxim, "is merely a subjective law for the orderly management of the possessions of the understanding, that by comparison of its concepts it may reduce them to the smallest possible number." (B362) It must be noted that by "subjective" Kant does not mean arbitrary or contingent - " "subjective" means dependent upon the nature of the subject, and this can be interpreted either a priori or a posteriori". (Beck, Comm., p. 256) Thus this maxim or principle of pure reason is one that pertains to reason alone, and manifests a purpose held only by reason, and which can be fulfilled, if at all, only by

reason. Hence the idea of the unconditioned is something only reason can make use of - it is, in fact, precisely this maxim and this idea of the unconditioned which characterizes reason (or this function of Reason). This notion would appear to be what Kant is getting at when he says that, "reason never applies itself directly to experience or to any object, but to understanding, in order to give to the manifold knowledge of the latter an a priori unity by means of concepts, a unity which may be called the unity of reason, and which is quite different in kind from any unity that can be accomplished by the understanding." (B359 - emphasis mine) The understanding, as is revealed by Kant in the examination of this faculty in the "Transcendental Analytic", is concerned with a unity that is essential for the very experience of particular objects. The pure concepts of the understanding are, in fact, merely the rules of an "original transcendental unity of apperception", or, more properly, the rules through which such a unity is possible and is accomplished. Reason, on the other hand, takes the objects of experience for granted in their existence and thereby as well their fundamental unity as objects of a single experience. Reason seeks instead a unity which brings all such objects and their concepts under a single principle, so as to achieve the highest unity and order of experience and thought possible. This, as we have seen, it attempts to do through the principle of the unconditioned. Further, Kant

seems to be saying that these (the thinking done by the understanding and the thinking done by reason) are two different ways of thinking. Kant says further on, that "reason thus refers to the use of the understanding in order to prescribe to it the direction toward a certain unity of which the understanding has no concept, and it aims at uniting all acts of the understanding in respect of every object in one absolute whole". (B383) Reason is certainly doing a different kind of thing than the understanding does or can do - does this mean, however, that these are two disparate ways of thinking? At any rate, I will say a bit more about this aspect in the conclusion to this thesis.

As we have seen, reason's idea of the unconditioned has its source in the pure concept of the understanding, though it is removed from the conditions of the immanent use of it and employed in a different manner (though, again, due to the ambiguous nature of the concepts themselves, it is not clear that it is a radically different manner - it may be the case, however, that precisely because of the concepts' nature, a radically distinct way of employing them is possible). Thus, to carry the synthetic unity found in the category up to the completely unconditioned (cf. B383-4) is to have the idea of that which performs the synthetic function of the category, but is not itself the result of any previous synthetic activity.

Reason's relation through the idea of the uncondi-

tioned to the understanding is laid out in two passages. At B362 Kant says that,

. . . multiplicity [manifoldness] of rules and unity of principles is a demand of reason, for the purpose of bringing the understanding into thoroughgoing accordance with itself . . . But such a principle (maxim) does not prescribe any law for objects, and does not contain any general ground of the possibility of knowing or of determining objects as such.

At B380 Kant says,

[t]he concepts of pure reason - of totality in the synthesis of conditions - are at least necessary as setting us the task of extending the unity of the understanding, where possible, up to the unconditioned, and are grounded in the nature of human reason. These transcendental concepts may, however, be without suitable corresponding employment in concreto, and may have no other utility than that of so directing the understanding that, while it is extended to the uttermost, it is also at the same time brought into complete consistency with itself.

The two phrases that are important for my purposes concern the notion of reason, through its idea of the unconditioned, either bringing the understanding into "thoroughgoing accordance" or "complete consistency" with itself. I find from these phrases three initially plausible interpretations of the role of reason and the use it makes of the idea of the unconditioned.

(1) The understanding lacks "thoroughgoing accordance" or "complete consistency" with itself only insofar as reason, through a subjective law, demands of the understanding complete unity. The understanding is itself productive only of infinite progressions of conditioned objects, and has no capacity to place these in an order which allows

for complete comprehension of each conditioned object. Thus, from the standpoint of reason, the understanding itself lacks consistency or thoroughgoing accordance with itself. This reason provides, though only from a theoretical point of view, through its idea of the unconditioned.

(2) This interpretation contains much the same as interpretation (1), except that the idea of the unconditioned is taken as having an influence in the constitutive role of the understanding. While it is the case that the ideas of reason themselves have no objective reality (such a possibility was ruled out by reason itself in its uncovering of the transcendental illusions), and that they are not laws which directly influence the constitution of the objects of experience as such, the possibility is still left open that the Ideas influence objects of experience through their influence on the faculty or function of understanding itself. This is suggested by the words "directing the understanding", and by Kant's comments later in the Critique concerning the idea of teleology.⁵

(3) This final interpretation asserts that it is Reason itself that is brought into 'thoroughgoing consistency' with itself. How this might be so can be stated as follows. In its function as understanding (that is, Reason in one mode of thought), it necessarily conceives of each event as having a cause, and cause and effect relations as thus necessarily extending indefinitely (for understanding does

not even look or think of that which might end and unify such a series); however, in its (Reason's) function as reason, as seeking a certain and unimpeachable ground for the unifying and complete comprehension of such series, it posits the unconditioned as performing this function. Thus inconsistency or contradiction in Reason is created, for, on the one hand (in the one mode of thinking), Reason posits that every event necessarily has a cause, and on the other hand (in another mode of thinking), an unconditioned (that is, an event (a cause) which has no cause) is posited as necessary. Reason, in its function as reason, resolves the contradiction by the use of the same Idea that brought itself into contradiction, viz., the transcendental idea or the idea of the unconditioned (which, given reason's maxim or principle, it must necessarily think), by viewing the unconditioned as belonging to a different order of things than the one in which the conditioned objects and series belong. Reason is led, by virtue of the nature of syllogistic thinking, to seek the highest condition for what is presented in and through the function of the understanding, and, in order to remain consistent with itself in its efforts at attaining in thought this highest condition, is led to postulate the idea of a different way or mode of being. Thus, from one standpoint or mode of thinking, a separate world (the noumenal or transcendental world) is thought of as grounding experience, and from another standpoint or mode of thinking,

no such world is or can be thought at all.

We can reject the second interpretation for the following reason. It is not exactly clear how the Idea of reason could influence the constitution of objects of experience at all, for to do so the Idea would have to somehow be always present in the mind, as are the categories. They would need to be spontaneous concepts, as are the categories. However, it is clear from what Kant says that the Ideas are not spontaneous but rather purely discursive concepts. If at all, the concepts of reason are obtained only through inference. Since reason frees the categories from the conditions of their immanent use by the understanding in order to employ them for purposes which follow only from syllogistic thought, then reason must relinquish the spontaneous nature of the categories (for this is one of the conditions of their immanent use, in being constitutive of objects of experience). Thus, if the Ideas did influence experience in any way, it could do so only in a discursive manner (though I am not sure what this would amount to exactly - it would, regardless, not be anything like the manner in which the categories constitute experience), and could occur only when we began to make sense of the world around us, or in thinking about what we do when we try to make sense of the world.

My first interpretation gains further justification when Kant says of the Idea of reason (viz., the idea of the

unconditioned) that it is "only a heuristic, not an ostensive concept. It does not show us how an object is constituted, but how, under its guidance, we should seek to determine the constitution and connection of the objects of experience".

(B699) And earlier Kant identifies the Idea of reason as, "only a logical precept, to advance towards completeness by an ascent to ever higher conditions and so to give to our knowledge the greatest possible unity of reason". (B366)

My third interpretation of the role of reason and the use it makes of the idea of the unconditioned finds, amongst other passages, a measure of confirmation in a general discussion Kant gives of the antinomy of pure reason:

The entire antinomy of pure reason rests on the dialectical argument: when the conditioned is given, the whole series of its conditions is also given. Now objects of the senses are given to us as conditioned, consequently, etc. Through this conclusion of reason, whose major premise seems so natural and plausible, as many cosmological ideas are introduced as there are different conditions making up a series in the synthesis of appearances [cf. B436]. These ideas postulate the absolute totality of the series and thereby place reason in an unavoidable conflict with itself. (B525 - emphasis mine)

What needs to be done, however, is to show in greater detail the argument that leads from the idea of the unconditioned as being used by reason to unify the understanding and thus leading to contradiction within Reason itself, to the idea of a transcendental nature or world where this unconditioned must be thought as 'situated'.

Unfortunately, due to the need for brevity, this

first chapter may have sacrificed some degree of clarity in presentation. Despite this almost unavoidable drawback, this chapter will suffice for my purposes as an exposition of the nature of reason as seen by Kant. The main point made is that reason must be characterized in connection to its 'creation', through syllogistic thought, of the idea of the unconditioned, and its use of the unconditioned merely to think about the understanding and what it produces. Reason has therefore a regulative and not a constitutive function, and as long as it is cognizant and stays clear of the dangers of transcendental illusion, this function is a perfectly valid one.

ENDNOTES

¹K.d.r.V., B74.

²cf. B137: "Understanding is, to use general terms, the faculty of knowledge. This knowledge consists in the determinate relation of given representations to an object; and an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united."

³cf. Kant, the First Critique:
"If by 'noumenon' we mean a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition, and so abstract from our mode of intuiting it, this is a noumenon in the negative sense of the term. But if we understand by it an object of a non-sensible intuition, we thereby presuppose a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual, which is not that which we possess, and of which we cannot comprehend even the possibility. This would be 'noumenon' in the positive sense of the term." (B307)

⁴"But once we allowed ourselves to assume a self-subsistent reality entirely outside the field of sensibility, appearances can only be viewed as contingent modes whereby objects that are themselves intelligences represent intelligible objects. Consequently, the only resource remaining to us is the use of analogy, by which we employ the concepts of experience in order to form some sort of concept of intelligible things - things of which as they are in themselves we have yet not the least knowledge."

⁵i.e., cf. B721: ". . . if the most complete purposiveness cannot be presupposed in nature, viz., as belonging to its essence, how can we be required to search for it . . . ?", and, "[t]he regulative principle describes that systematic unity as a unity in nature . . .".

CHAPTER II

MORALITY IN GENERAL - THE PRESUPPOSITIONS

Kant begins with some fundamental and essential characteristics of a moral system per se. These are, for the most part, drawn from the commonly-held general notions of morality.¹ These characteristics are extremely important, for they orient the entire Kantian moral argument itself. They prove to be, in effect, the basic starting points of the moral system. I shall be brief in presenting these points.

First, it is Kant's intention to conceptually separate morality from mere prudence (however systematically constructed sets of prudential concerns may be). If the concept of morality is to have its own distinctive content, it first of all must be clearly distinguished from prudence (viz., the concern for and pursuit of pleasure and happiness). That which determines one to moral action must be something different from the mere desire for pleasure and happiness, which may manifest itself in a variety of ways.² In contrast to prudence, morality is concerned with the practical principles themselves, and not so much with actions. It must be the reasons connected to decision-making that interest us in morality, and not interest in actions and their outcome. As Kant states (though in language which we will with some care

examine),

. . . the practical maxims which follow merely as a means from the concept of the good never contain anything good in itself as the object of the will but only something good for something else. In this way the good would only be the useful, and that for which it is useful must always be outside the will, in sensation.
(K.p.V., p. 61)₃

It may indeed be the case that there is no such uniquely moral ground of action, and hence no morality. This, however, remains to be shown, and if it is in fact shown that morality is simply illusion, then at least progress will have been made.

Second, morality is concerned with the notion of an unconditionally good will. As Kant stresses, such a will must be good and must be valued completely and absolutely independently of anything besides itself. It is good without qualification. It is good independently of its context, independently of desires we may have concerning it, it is good independently of its results (viz., the consequences whose origin is the action(s) whose cause is such a will). The good will is good "without limitation or qualification or restriction". (Paton, The C.I., p. 34) The worth of such a will proceeds from itself alone, and is independent of any conditions. As Kant says;

But the idea of a will which is absolutely good - good without any qualifying condition (namely, that it should attain this or that end) - there must be complete abstraction from every end that has to be produced (as something which would make every will only relatively good). (Groundwork, p. 105)

To claim that a will is good only insofar as its object is

good is to commit a fundamental error which, Kant states, is destructive of morality itself (we shall see more specifically why this is so later). Besides, one could never claim that a will which is unconditionally good is dependent for its goodness on the goodness of its objects (which themselves may only be conditionally good), for in this case such a will could only be conditionally good. However, even this claim requires further discussion (see Chapter 6).

Third, morality is concerned with duty (that is, "the objective necessity to act from obligation is called duty". (Groundwork, p. 107)). Kant states three propositions he finds basic to ordinary knowledge of morality. They are:

(1) A human action is morally good, not because it is done from immediate inclination, and not because it is done from purposes of self-interest, but because it is done for the sake of duty.⁴

(2) "An action done from duty has its moral worth, not in the purpose to be attained by it, but in the maxim in accordance with which it is decided upon; it depends therefore, not on the realization of the object of the action, but solely on the principle of volition in accordance with which, irrespective of all objects of the faculty of desire, the action has been performed." (Groundwork, pp. 67-8)

(3) "Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law." (Groundwork, p. 68)

The whole Kantian moral argument, I think, in one

way or another, revolves around this - that a good will (viz., a will that is unconditionally good) - under human conditions - is one which acts for the sake of duty. (cf. Paton, The C.I., p. 47) Moral value is arrived at by acting purely from duty - an action has moral worth only so far as it is done for the sake of duty, so far as it is done out of reverence for the moral law.⁵ What does it mean to say that only if duty is the determining factor in one's conduct does one's conduct (and one's will) come to have genuine and uniquely moral worth? It is this 'acting for the sake of duty' which gives to a will under human conditions its moral worth (its unconditional goodness), and since this is the case, we must explore what it is that we do when we act for the sake of duty.

Fourth, since the good will (and thus a morally good will) is good unconditionally and without limitation or restriction, morality (in the form of particular moral rules or laws) must be universal.⁶ If it is not, then distinct sets of 'moral laws' must exist. But such laws can be different only insofar as there are contingent differences between rational agents. Hence those agents acting in accordance to duty (but according to different sets of laws, whose difference is dependent upon the contingent conditions differentiating between the agents) will have wills which are only conditionally good, for such good would be context-dependent and would rely upon conditions outside the will

itself.

Fifth, morality must be concerned with unconditioned obligation. I can choose to be obliged only insofar as I choose to have or possess something. Then, in a sense, I am rationally obliged to carry out the means which lead to this thing which I have chosen to possess (this is, in fact, the logical form of all hypothetical imperatives, though this is to anticipate). But if I relinquish this desire or choice, I am no longer so obliged or bound to carry out those actions which constitute what I take to be the means to this object. Kant says that in a case like this, "we can always escape from the precept if we abandon the purpose". (Groundwork, p. 87) The question then may be asked, 'Are there any obligations which are independent of such conditions as my desire or arbitrary choice?'. Such unconditioned obligation is precisely moral obligation. How might this kind of obligation be constituted?

Sixth, is the very experience of moral constraint itself, that is, the phenomenon of conscience. Kant defines conscience as the "painful feeling caused by the moral disposition, empty in the practical sense since it cannot undo that which has been done". (K.p.V., p. 102) It is, however, unclear what place in the systematic working out of Kant's moral theory this experience has, especially given the fact that in the Groundwork's metaphysical exposition of morality no explicit mention is made of conscience. At any rate, if

this phenomenon is to be taken as a starting point of the moral theory, it must be that in 'pre-philosophical' experience, whenever one transgresses what he takes, at that time (for there is no clearly formulated or rigourously worked out morality), to be a morally binding rule or law, certain feelings of pain accompany that action. Further, the only way such feelings (and the constraint one imposes upon oneself to avoid such feelings) can be characterized must be in a moral way, distinct from the criteria of mere prudence.

As Kant says:

He who has lost at play may be vexed at himself and his imprudence; but when he is conscious of having cheated at play, even though he has won, he must despise himself as soon as he compares himself with the moral law. This must therefore be something else than the principle of one's happiness. For to have to say to himself, "I am a worthless man, though I've filled my purse," he must have a different criterion of judgement, than if he approves of himself and says, "I am a prudent man, for I've enriched my treasure." " (K.p.V., p. 39)

No matter the reasons one gives oneself or to others so as to excuse his presumed immoral action, such a person finds "that the advocate who speaks in his behalf cannot silence the accuser in him when he is conscious that at the time when he committed the wrong he was in his senses, i.e., he was in possession of his freedom". (K.p.V., p. 102)

Finally, there is this last starting point, though it might better be typified as being a kind of evidence for morality than being a fundamental starting point for the moral argument. Presupposing the teleological principle

that in an organized (living) being each organ is well-adapted to its end⁷, and since reason in its practical side doesn't seem to be much good in prudential matters, its true function "must be to produce a will good not as a means to something else such as happiness, but good absolutely and in itself".
(Paton, The C.I., p. 44)

ENDNOTES

¹As Paton says, Kant, "is not attempting to introduce any new principles of morality but merely to formulate with precision the principle actually at work in the moral actions of ordinary men". (The C.I., p. 140) See also Kant - "A critic who wished to say something against that work [the Groundwork] really did better than he intended when he said that there was no new principle of morality in it but only a new formula. Who would want to introduce a new principle of morality and, as it were, be its inventor, as if the world had hitherto been ignorant of what duty is or had been thoroughly wrong about it. Those who know what a formula means to a mathematician, in determining what is to be done in solving a problem without letting him go astray, will not regard a formula which will do this for all duties as something insignificant and unnecessary." (K.p.V., p. 8, n. 5)

²"In the doctrine of happiness empirical principles constitute the entire foundation, but in the doctrine of morality they do not form even the smallest part of it." (K.p.V., p. 95)

"The principle of personal happiness [as fitting to serve as a ground for moral laws] is, however, the most objectionable, not merely because it is false and because its pretence that well-being always adjusts itself to well-doing is contradicted by experience; not merely because it contributes nothing whatever towards establishing morality, since making a man happy is quite different from making him good and making him prudent or astute in seeking his advantage quite different from making him virtuous; but because it bases morality on sensuous motives which rather undermine it and totally destroy its sublimity . . ." (Groundwork, pp. 109-10) See also Beck, Comm., p. 112 - "An ethics which does not acknowledge the sharp and radical distinction between prudence and morality and which thereby makes morals heteronomous, simply leaves unexplained, or explains away, certain obvious characteristics of moral concern."

³cf. Keith Ward, The Development of Kant's View of Ethics, ". . . if one believed that one would be more happy by being more moral, then happiness per se would become the end of moral action. This, Kant thinks, would reduce morality to prudential self-interest - moral conduct would be for the sake of one's own greater happiness. And this is the proposition which the whole Groundwork so strongly contests." (p. 89)

⁴Taken from Paton's commentary on Kant's Groundwork, pp. 18-19.

⁵cf. Groundwork, p. 107 - "We have . . . shown . . . how neither fear nor inclination, but solely reverence for the law, is the motive which can give an action moral worth."

⁶Morality (viz., particular moral laws) must also be necessary. Given these two characteristics (universality and necessity), the moral law must be a priori - "Necessity and strict universality are thus sure criteria of a priori knowledge, and are inseparable from one another". (K.d.r.V., B4) As Beck says in "Apodictic Imperatives" (p. 179), "moral imperatives, whether strict or loose, are necessary As necessary they are products of reason, which (in its logical use) is the faculty of apodictic knowledge".

⁷cf. Paton, The C.I., p. 44 -

(1) An organic being is a whole adapted to a purpose or end, viz., life.

(2) That in such a being every organ is also adapted to a purpose or end which is an element in the total purpose or end.

(3) Every such organ is well-fitted, and completely adequate to attain its end or purpose.

(4) Happiness cannot be the end of reason because it is in fact ill-fitted in attaining this end.

CHAPTER III

THE WILL

I shall attempt to be as brief and clear as possible in examining Kant's conception of the will. My discussion of Kant's conception is necessarily a limited one - for instance, the important and difficult distinction between Willkür and Wille (representing, respectively, spontaneity and autonomy of the will), the precise notions of freedom, etc., will not be dealt with here or at any length in this thesis. Thus, while my treatment of the will in this chapter is admittedly somewhat pedestrian, it will suffice for my stated purposes. To start, let me quickly review some of the definitions given of the will by Kant. Kant says that the will, "is the faculty . . . a being has of causing, through its ideas, the reality of the objects of these ideas". (K.p.V., p. 9) Later in the Second Critique Kant calls the will, "a faculty of determining their [rational beings'] causality through the conception of a rule," (K.p.V., p. 32) and the will as "the causality of a rational being with respect to the reality of the objects, merely through the thought of the universal validity of its own maxims as a law". (K.p.V., p. 46) Again, the will, "is a faculty either of bringing forth objects corresponding to conceptions or of determining itself, i.e.,

its causality to effect such objects (whether the physical power is sufficient to this or not)". (K.p.V., p. 15) Kant says in the Groundwork that, "only a rational being has the power to act in accordance with his idea of laws - that is, in accordance with principles - and only so has he a will," (p. 80) and, "the will is conceived as a power of determining oneself to action in accordance with the idea of certain laws". (p. 95) In the Critique of Judgement, Kant says that, "the will . . . is in fact one of the many natural causes in the world, viz., that cause which acts in accordance with concepts Here, in respect of the practical it is left undetermined whether the concept which gives the rule to the causality of the will is a natural concept or a concept of freedom," (Introduction, 1, p. 8) and that, "pure reason, as a practical faculty, i.e., as the faculty of determining the free use of our causality by ideas (pure rational concepts) . . .". (p. 304) Silber adds to these definitions that, "the will is the power of a rational being to act in accord with its own idea of law rather than in mere conformity to law".¹

From these passages it is clear that the will is a 'kind of causality'² possessed only by a rational being. It is a kind of causality insofar as it causes or brings forth objects "in accordance with", "through", or "corresponding to", ideas or conceptions. These ideas or conceptions, then, are a sort of efficient cause, through the active medium of

the will, of the reality (or 'actuality') of objects. This phenomenon of bringing forth an object in accordance with a certain conception one has of the object, or to act corresponding to some idea one may have, holds particular significance for Kant. Precisely because one acts 'in accordance with' or 'through' conceptions and ideas one is no longer merely a part of a naturally-determined causal chain of events, in which there is mere succession of appearances or events according to a rule. Notice that something essential changes when we speak of some succession of appearances according to (or, more properly, caused by) the idea of a rule. Deliberation and calculation, action from what are thought to be sound reasons, lifts one out of what is mere seriality of occurrences. Such liberation is known as practical freedom in general. For Kant there is a difference between finding or determining the objective reasons (or causes) for why some event occurred and having reasons oneself (viz., a subject having reasons for himself) for causing something to occur. In this latter situation it is not the case that certain actions merely follow, according to a rule, certain ideas or conceptions of objects or rules. Rather, there is an essential difference between acting according to one's idea of a law of causality and functioning according to some causal law, so that your activity is only describable by such a law, but the law itself played no part in causing you to act as you did.

The will in its most general sense, then, is that faculty which is determined³ only by the idea or concept of some object or rule. The acting person (the 'agent') takes this idea as a reason or ground for his particular decision⁴.

In the First Critique Kant makes the following distinctions. The sensuous will (the arbitrium sensitivum) is to be distinguished from a holy will. A will is sensuous when it is pathologically affected by sensuous motives (viz., by feelings of pleasure and pain). A holy will is a will not so affected - that is, it is a non-sensuous will. There are two kinds of sensuous will to be distinguished. An animal will (the arbitrium brutum) is, in fact, a will only in name. It is a 'will' pathologically necessitated by sensuous impulse (and not by the ideas of such impulses). What occurs in the case of the arbitrium brutum are simply events. Such a 'will' is typified by the causal relations of a stimulus-response mechanism. The will of a finite, rational being, or a human being's will (an arbitrium sensitivum but liberum) is one in which sensibility does not necessitate (though it does influence) its action. It is in this case that the agent can be said to act, rather than simply being an element in some event.⁵

Thus Kant can state in the Second Critique, that, "the will is never determined directly by the object and our conception of it; rather the will is a faculty which can make an object real". (p. 62) That the mere conception

of an object cannot, by itself, directly determine the will is a restriction that will be more fully explained in a later chapter (see chapters 4 and 5). Were a will to be so directly determined, it would be operating only as a stimulus-response mechanism, and thus be a will only in name.

There are two things to note before proceeding. First, much hinges on what one makes of the rather vague notion of causality 'through', 'corresponding to', 'in accordance with' (etc.), ideas. Second, and connected to this first problem, one must somehow deal with Kant's question posed in the "Canon" of the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the First Critique, that is, "whether reason is not, in the actions through which it prescribes laws, itself determined by other influences, and whether that which, in relation to sensuous impulses, is entitled freedom, may not, in relation to higher and more remote operating causes, be nature again . . . ?". (B831) How this affects the whole notion of practical freedom in general needs careful thought, and is, of course, part of the larger problem concerning freedom (a problem not dealt with in this thesis). However, if it were the case that we had, in fact, only an arbitrium brutum and not a will in the strict sense at all, then, Kant would admit, morality would simply be an illusion. There might still remain, though, the somewhat sticky problem of explaining away the fact (the "sole fact of pure reason" -

cf. K.p.V., pp. 31, 44, 50) of the 'given-ness' of the moral law, and the phenomenon of that kind of restraint which can only be called moral.

It is apparent from all this, then, that no obligation or command (an imperative) can be derived directly from an analysis of the concept of a rational will. Any obligation or imperative must be joined in a synthetic manner to the (notion of the) will, as a concept coming from without the concept of the will. Yet, as Kant states, the practical law which commands the will of a finite, rational being as a categorical imperative, must be necessarily connected to the will of a rational being (though, as I have just stated, not analytically derivable from the mere concept of a rational will), and so must be a synthetic a priori proposition. As Kant says in the Groundwork, practical laws are principles, "which must have an origin entirely and completely a priori and must at the same time derive from this their sovereign authority". (p. 93) Thus some third term must be found to, "establish a necessary connexion between a subject and predicate [that is, must justify the judgement concerning the connection between the concept of a rational agent and the moral law (and the particular practical laws/categorical imperatives)] which is not contained in the concept of a subject. This 'third term' we shall find to be the Idea of freedom". (Paton, The C.I., p. 128) However, this latter point is a rather complicated

issue and, as I have stated, is not an issue which will be dealt with in this work.

ENDNOTES

¹John R. Silber, "The Copernican Revolution in Ethics: The Good Reexamined", Kant-Studien, Fall, 1959, p. 86.

²For this phrase, 'kind of causality', cf. Ground-work, p. 114.

³See Chapter 4 for what 'determination of the will' amounts to.

⁴cf. Beck, Comm., p. 130. At this point we needn't concern ourselves with the notion of transcendental freedom.

⁵For the above distinction, cf. K.d.r.V., B561-2 and B829-830.

CHAPTER IV

KANT'S VOLITIONAL VOCABULARY

I wish now to examine and to make as clear as possible the basic volitional terminology used by Kant. Kant himself uses these terms somewhat loosely at times, but while this does make for some confusion, it should not be an impediment in our systematic structuring of the Kantian moral argument.¹ The diagram on the next page of this thesis (fig. 1) presents in an hierarchical manner the basic terms used by Kant, and is an attempt to present these terms in a simple genus-species structure.

The highest member of this volitional hierarchy is the genus of practical propositions. These "assert an action, through which, as a necessary condition, an object becomes possible".² Beck claims from this definition that practical propositions

refer to all sorts of rules of action Any proposition which is effective through being entertained in deliberation on action is a practical proposition, even though its content may be the same as that of a theoretical proposition expressing mere knowledge without direction for use Not every theoretical proposition, has a practical counterpart; a practical proposition concerns only what is possible through the will, and it states what, in some sense, ought to be done instead of what is done. (Comm., p. 77)

Practical propositions are in the most general sense those conceptions or ideas Kant referred to when defining

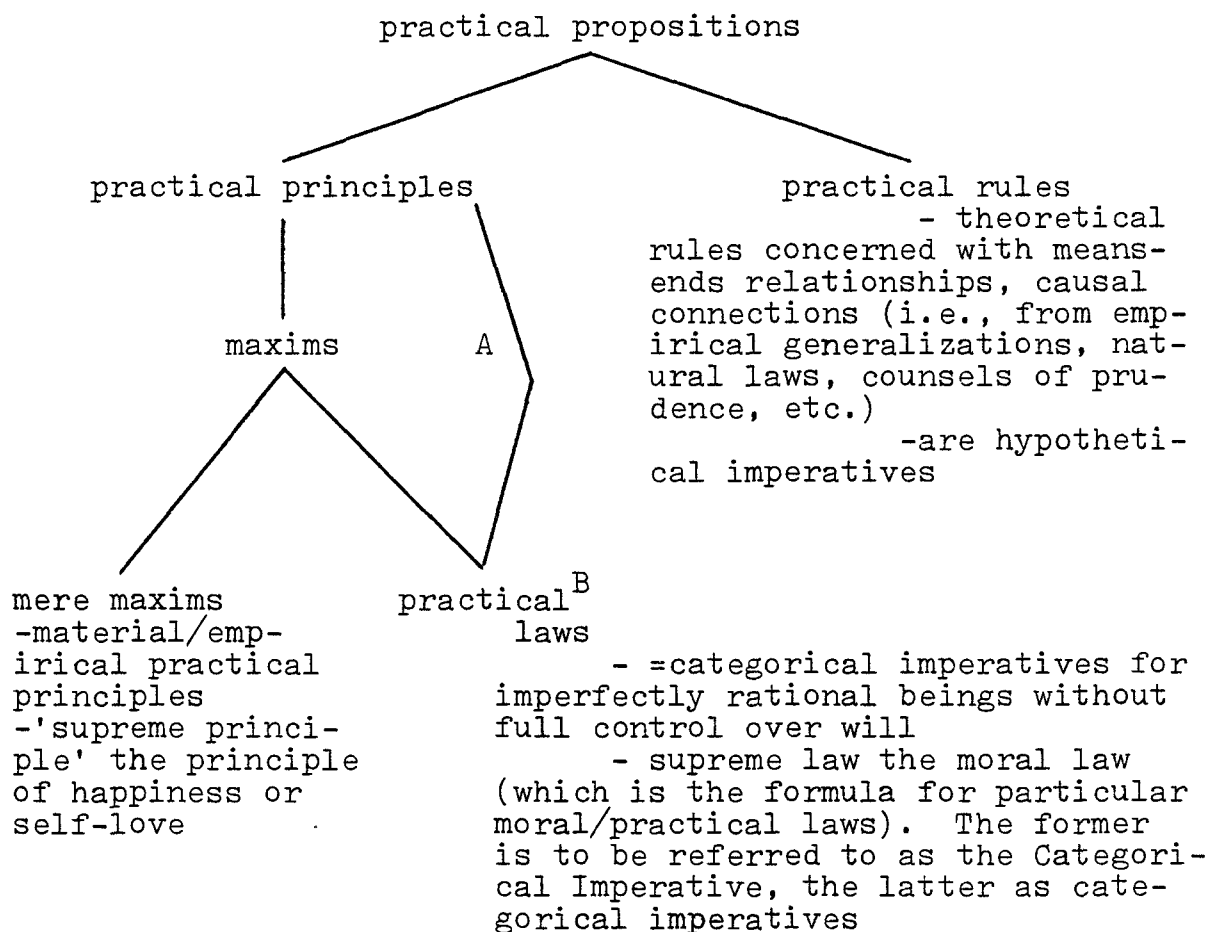


Fig. 1

A(a) It is possible that, among the practical laws which exist, if any do in fact 'exist', some are never motives for choice or action. That is, it may be the case that there are practical laws which oblige us, but which are never actually maxims of our will. This must be distinguished from (b) in which it may be the case that, while practical laws exist and do indeed oblige us, none may ever be (or be known to be) motives for our action. This is implied in the First Critique, in the section of the "Antinomy of Pure Reason" entitled "Explanation of the Cosmological Idea of Freedom in its Connection with Universal Natural Necessity" (B570-585). See also Kant's comment in the Groundwork that, in regard to the imperative of morality,

. . . it is impossible to settle by an example, and so empirically, whether there is any imperative of this kind at all: we must rather suspect that all imperatives which seem to be categorical may none the less be covertly

the will (see chapter 3). These are fundamental propositions or assertions (and as such they are judgements) which, through an alteration in their mode of presentation (their Vorstellungsart), are linked to practice. This link can loosely be called a causal one: these propositions are necessary (and in fact are the essential) elements in rational action. As Kant implies when he corrects the improper usage of the name "practical propositions" in mathematics or natural science (such propositions being properly called "technical"), practical propositions have some part in determining the will. (K.p.V., p. 25, n. 1) Precisely what part they do have will depend upon the kind of practical proposition in general.

hypothetical . . . we cannot with any certainty show by an example that the will is determined here solely by the law without any further motive. (pp. 86-7)

^BBy themselves practical laws are objective, necessary laws. But insofar as they are actually practical in individual cases they are also maxims (conversely, maxims (which are actually practical in specific, particular individual cases) can be, at the same time, objective practical laws (viz., categorical imperatives)). So while they are objectively and subjectively necessary for a perfectly rational being who has complete control over his inclinations and sensuous impulses, they are objectively necessary but only subjectively contingent for an imperfectly rational being who does not have complete control over his inclinations. Insofar as the categorical imperative is a necessary, objective imperative for an imperfectly rational being whose reason does not completely control his will, the idea of it (as a practical law) can be 'used' subjectively as the motive or ground to determining choice and action in the individual. In this latter case, it is a maxim, though not a mere maxim. I shall say more about this in the remainder of my text.

The genus of practical propositions divides into the species of fundamental and non-fundamental practical propositions (cf. Fig. 1). Those propositions which fundamentally determine the will are called "practical principles", and those which presuppose some more fundamental determination of the will (but which still have a part in determining the will, though in a secondary manner) are "practical rules". To carry on into the next species, those fundamental propositions which are valid only for the individual are "mere maxims", and those fundamental propositions which are universally valid are "practical laws".

Kant defines "practical principles" as "propositions which contain a general determination of the will, having under it several practical rules". (K.p.V., p. 17) What will need clarification are the concepts "contain", "determination of the will" (and the related concepts of a "determined will" and the "determining grounds of the will"), and "a general determination of the will". When Kant speaks of some x determining the will, he means that this x (a conception - a practical proposition) is used in determining the will to make a specific choice among possible actions. (cf. Beck, Comm., p. 70) So far as we are yet concerned with the will, it can be considered as the faculty of choice, and the conceptions and ideas which were spoken of before in regard to the will (as a causal power) are those factors which determine a particular choice (and this is equivalent

to determining the will). Since they are what determine the will (though, strictly speaking, one would have to say, "since the will uses them to determine itself in a particular direction . . .") they are the reasons for, i.e., this particular choice and action. They are not just the causes that would be discovered upon investigation, but they are the reasons or rational premises that the agent would (and does) give himself for choosing and acting as he did. The determining grounds of choice or the will are, in the full sense, precisely the reasons I would put forth as explaining my conscious, deliberative action. Another way of considering this is to see the determining ground of the will as the motive for choice (however, some caution must be used in this understanding of the phrase in question, for reasons which will be made clear later in this thesis. In some sense, however, the notion of a motive as an 'original moving cause' is useful in explicating 'determination of the will' - the motive is that which moves the will to make the choice it does).

Beck states that the essential point in the 'general determination of the will' (with, I take it, the emphasis on the general aspect of this determination) is "that the practical fundamental principle must contain or express a lasting policy or settled disposition of the will, not a capricious resolve or a variable rule of thumb". (Comm., p. 78) That a practical proposition "contains" a general

determination of the will means, again in Beck's terms, that "the practical proposition formulates what the determination of the will is, gives expression to it, and does not merely refer to it. It is a proposition the knowledge or entertainment of which is itself a factor in the will's decision". (Comm., p. 78) Since the will is determined by grounds which are conceptions or ideas, and these grounds are properly called the reasons of the agent (and not merely the causes of the particular actions (or events, as they would then have to be called)), then the proposition literally contains a determination of the will. The proposition is the conception or idea with which the will chooses in accordance, and hence ultimately it is that with which the agent acts in accordance. By stating that the practical proposition 'expresses' or 'gives expression to' the determination of the will, Beck seems to be indicating that the real determining ground of the will is something apart from the proposition itself (considered as a reason for choice and action) and that this determination is expressed conceptually by some corresponding practical proposition. This is clearly not Kant's meaning, for then the will would not be a power of causality from conceptions or ideas, but would seem to be approaching that of the arbitrium brutum in its true nature. It is, however, not totally clear that Beck's intent is this (he would certainly reject the notion that the will in question is an arbitrium brutum) - he

states that the practical proposition 'does not merely refer to the determination of the will' but 'gives expression to it' (he could, unequivocally, be given the above interpretation had he said 'gives an expression to (or 'of') it'). Further, just before this statement Beck says that the translation of enthalten must be "contains" rather than "asserts", for the latter translation he claims would "disjoin the proposition too much from the determination of the will and make it merely theoretical". (Comm., p. 78) Note, however, that Beck conditions this statement by the phrase "too much", implying perhaps that the proposition does need to be disjoined from the determination of the will to a degree, though not in such a way as to separate it from having any practical import at all. At any rate, the concept of the practical proposition 'containing' a general determination of the will is now clear enough for our purposes.

The ground of choice or volition is to be distinguished from the ground of action, the former being that which determines choice, that is, that (some conception or idea, viz., a practical proposition of some kind) which determines or causes or, more precisely, is a reason for choosing x rather than y. The latter is the actual choice for x rather than for y (the grounds of action may also include other factors, such as the physical or psychological possibility of the action).

Practical principles are, as I have indicated,

fundamental practical propositions. As we saw in my analysis of pure reason in the First Critique, principles (Grundsätze) are basic propositions, presupposing no other propositions, but rather making possible and grounding, in a basic way, something else.³ As Beck states, "principles must be basic, not derived from more fundamental propositions". (Comm., p. 77) A practical rule, as a non-fundamental practical proposition, is "concerned with the empirical contingent character of action in specific situations, given the general determination expressed in the principles". (Comm., p. 79) In general, rules express means-ends relationships (cf. Fig. 1), and are thus products of reason as theoretical propositions. For some theoretical proposition to be a practical rule, it must presuppose some practical principle. Otherwise, no rule could possibly serve to guide the will and action, for no means of isolating and selecting rules would be available (and such means are only given on the determination of the will).

Practical principles consist of mere maxims and practical laws. Notice that there is an important distinction between maxims and mere maxims (cf. Fig. 1 - I shall use this particular distinguishing terminology throughout my thesis). Practical principles encompass both mere maxims and practical laws, while maxims encompass all mere maxims but only some practical laws (as Kant points out, it is possible that no practical law 'is' a maxim - cf. note A to

Fig. 1). The distinction between practical principles and maxims might first loosely be put thus: practical principles are principles which have the potency to determine the will, while maxims are those principles which actually do determine a particular, individual will. A maxim is every principle which actually determines a particular will, viz., if I actually make some practical principle the determining ground of my will, then it is a maxim. In fuller terms, it is my maxim, and thus it is in a sense a subjective principle of my choice or volition, though, as we will see, it is not thereby a conditioned principle, and therefore only subjectively valid. Thus the expression one frequently encounters in Kant's writings, 'to make this principle the maxim of my action'.

Mere maxims, on the other hand, are distinct from practical laws (while maxims may 'be' those practical laws which actually determine my or some other particular will). Kant makes this distinction abundantly clear in the Second Critique⁴. A mere maxim is a principle that holds only for myself and is not an objective law. In Kant's terms, a mere maxim is subjectively valid, that is, it is a determination of my will and cannot be held to be the determination of any other will (though it may, as a matter of fact, be a determination of another will). Put simply, it is possible for only one will to be determined by a particular mere maxim, but it is not possible that only one will (or just

some wills) be obligated by a particular practical law (though, of course, it is possible that only one or just some wills be actually determined by a particular practical law). Obligation is attached to all wills from a practical law, insofar as they are wills that are rational and subject to sensuous motives (and are in this sense 'imperfect').

Kant states in the Groundwork

A [mere] maxim is a subjective principle of action and must be distinguished from an objective principle - namely, a practical law. The former contains a practical rule determined by reason in accordance with the conditions of the subject (often his ignorance or again his inclinations): it is thus a principle on which the subject acts. A law, on the other hand, is an objective principle valid for every rational being; and it is a principle on which he ought to act (p. 88, note)

The most important point to be gained from this passage is the connection that Kant makes between the "conditions of the subject", which are particular to him, though others may share the same kind of conditions (though, obviously, not the same numerically nor in detail). Thus mere maxims are condition-dependent. They depend upon certain conditions being present (though this does not detract from their being fundamental propositions, for no other principle or proposition is logically or existentially prior to them). Because of this dependence on conditions which, Kant says, serve to distinguish one rational being from another, they are only subjectively and not objectively valid. Practical laws, on the other hand, are not condition-dependent.

There are two things to note about this passage quoted directly above. First is that here Kant does not strictly distinguish between maxims and mere maxims. A maxim is, properly, the principle on which a subject acts, and is, as I have stated, inclusive of both mere maxims and practical laws, if any of the latter are indeed practical. In other words, a practical law, if actually practical (that is, if it is actually the ground of a determination of a will) is a principle on which the subject acts as well. Kant says in the Second Critique that,

only in the case of subjective practical principles is it expressly made a condition that not objective but subjective conditions of choice must underlie them, and hence that they must be represented always as mere maxims and never as practical laws. (p. 26)

Second, Beck interprets the distinction as being that, "a maxim states how we do behave and a law prescribes how we ought to behave". (Comm., p. 81) To say that a maxim "states how we do behave" seems to imply that maxims are part of a descriptive explanation that could be given about some action. However, this is to forfeit the internal viewpoint that is essential in understanding practical principles as reasons the subject uses himself in determining his will and which he would give in explaining his own action. And even if we mitigate Beck's statement in the way suggested, it still fails to point out clearly the distinction between mere maxims and practical laws.

Practical laws, Kant tells us, must have an objective

and not just a subjective necessity. They must be known a priori by reason instead of by experience, no matter how empirically universal (cf. K.p.V., pp. 25-6). "Every practical law," Kant says, "represents a possible action as good and therefore as necessary for a subject whose actions are determined by reason." (Groundwork, p. 82) As noted before, if I actually make a practical law the determining ground of my individual will, then it is a maxim (however, the relation usually goes the other way in Kant's investigations - it is usually asked whether a maxim can serve or function as a practical law) and thus is a subjective principle of my choice or volition. It is not, however, a conditioned principle when it is a maxim. It retains its objective necessity (that is, it would be done by a perfectly rational being having complete control over his will and faculty of desire), though, on the subjective level, since I can ignore it or choose not to make it the determining ground of my will, it is merely subjectively contingent. Only in the case of such a perfectly rational being is the law both objectively and subjectively necessary (see Fig. 1 for further comments on practical laws).

In general, a practical rule is a practical proposition given by reason which states means-ends, causal relationships. As bona fide practical, rules take the form of imperatives for imperfectly rational beings. Since, however, rules depend upon some prior condition for them to

be actually practical and thus imperatives, they can only be hypothetical imperatives. As Kant states, they are subsumed under a general determination of the will which is contained in a practical principle. Such rules, as hypothetical imperatives, are the cognitional element in any volition stemming from a mere maxim. They are imperatives and objective (expressing a natural relation between means and ends), while mere maxims are neither imperatives nor objective. This is so because rules have their source wholly in reason, whereas mere maxims have their source in the lower faculty of desire, which source is a purely empirical one (this faculty will be discussed at length later). Mere maxims are purely subjective, being a matter of what the lower faculty of desire finds associated with pleasure, and thus not a matter of a connection formulated by reason. Hypothetical imperatives state, 'If (or 'since') you would accomplish this end, you ought to do such and such as means to this end' - but this end is, in a sense, merely recommended to you. It is a statement that there is some chance that by doing this, you will achieve happiness or produce (or enjoy) pleasure.

Mere maxims do not command, as do imperatives. From the mere maxims that I happen to have, no command can be derived. But for imperfectly rational beings, insofar as some of our mere maxims are overpowered by passion, or in cases where we simply don't do what we think we should do to

be happy (perhaps we allow our will to be determined by some other strong sensuous impulse though we are nevertheless fairly certain that, in the long run, happiness will not be the result), it seems possible to treat mere maxims as imperatives of some sort. However, in the first case, no maxim is possible, for here a sensuous impulse must be bypassing the will, and thus there can be no question of any control here⁵. This is simply a mechanistic occurrence. In the second case, whatever it is that we 'irrationally' choose will be our mere maxim and a set of rationally chosen practical rules will form the means to this end. It would be irrational were we to will (how we come to will the object is of no consequence) some object and yet reject the means to this end.

However, there is a certain complexity about this whole business of the determination of the will by such practical propositions in which we can get endlessly and needlessly involved - for our purposes it is enough to make the basic distinctions that have been made. There is, however, one more thing that might be said. Kant distinguishes, among hypothetical imperatives, between pragmatic/assertoric imperatives and technical/problematical imperatives⁶. Now, given that my maxim or policy is to pursue x as a means to happiness (the principle of happiness or self-love being the 'supreme principle' of all empirical or material principles or maxims) and given that my reason tells me that to

pursue x I must (or ought to) do z, then my maxim can be reformulated as a hypothetical imperative in the form of a pragmatic/assertoric imperative, 'Since I want happiness, I ought to do or pursue x'. The rule involved in pursuing x comes out as a technical/problematical hypothetical imperative, 'If I want x, then I ought to do z' - for though I do not always want x as a means to being happy, presumably I always want happiness.

Further, it must be noted that in the introduction to the Critique of Judgement, Kant refers to hypothetical imperatives only as being technical imperatives.⁷ In this case mere maxims would never be hypothetical imperatives, such a function being reserved only for practical rules which assert causal means-ends relationships (though it must be remembered that these rules are still attached to particular mere maxims - for instance, it may be my maxim to increase my wealth by whatever safe means I encounter. There will be attached to this mere maxim a set (or perhaps different sets) of rules or hypothetical imperatives which will determine my action as to how I actually do in fact go about increasing my wealth).

A practical law is what necessarily determines the will of a perfectly rational being who is in full control of his will and faculty of desire, given the relevant situation. For such a being the law (which serves as his maxim) never produces or takes the form of an 'ought' or an obliga-

tion to act in a certain way. There is simply no reason available to act in any other way for a being whose will is completely determined by reason. To be a fully rational being is just to act in this way. The practical law becomes a categorical imperative (and thus it is essential to distinguish between a law and an imperative) when it is taken up by the will of an imperfectly rational being who does not have full control over his will and desires. To such a being whose will is influenced by inclination and sensuous impulses and for whom therefore there are reasons ('it gives me pleasure', 'it causes me pain') to act other than according to the practical law, this law becomes a (moral) 'ought' and produces obligation. In this situation the law is only subjectively contingent and may not be the maxim the being adopts. In the first case the practical law necessarily determines the will; in the second case, the corresponding categorical imperative unconditionally necessitates the will (though it may not actually determine the will). As we have seen, hypothetical imperatives also necessitate the will, though only in a conditional way.

Thus we have seen two things. First, that a practical law (which is, as a law, objective and necessary) must be distinguished from the particular categorical imperative that corresponds to it. Second, that what distinguishes a categorical from a hypothetical imperative is not the form of the imperative itself (which would seem to be suggested

by the very terms 'categorical' and 'hypothetical'; taken from the Table of Judgements in the First Critique), but rather the imperatives' mode of commanding⁸. A hypothetical imperative issues a conditioned, non-necessary command, whereas a categorical imperative issues an unconditioned, absolute, necessary ("apodictic") command.

ENDNOTES

¹As Beck says in his Commentary, p. 78 (and in other works), "it has been said of Kant that he succeeded in being technical without being precise."

²Kant, Vorlesungen über Logik, quoted from Beck, Comm., p. 76.

³See pg. 11 of this thesis.

⁴cf. K.p.V., pp. 26 and 25. This distinction is also implicit in Beck's discussion (for instance) in chapter 8 of his Commentary; "The [moral] principle must be a law and not a mere maxim . . . but the law must be capable of being a maxim, i.e., of being an expression of the actual condition of a will". (p. 116)

⁵The possibility of the determination of the will and thus the possibility of maxims themselves implies control. However, this is another (not unrelated) issue, and will not be dealt with here.

⁶cf., for instance, Groundwork, pp. 82-3.

⁷K.d.U., Introduction, p. 8 - for instance:
"For if the concept which determines the causality of the will is a natural concept, then the principles are technically practical . . .", and "All technically practical rules (i.e., the rules of art and skill generally, or of sagacity regarded as a skill in exercising an influence over man and their wills) . . .".

⁸cf. Groundwork, p. 82; "All imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically . . .", and p. 99; "That there were practical propositions which commanded categorically . . .".

CHAPTER V

THE REJECTION OF MATERIAL MAXIMS AS PRACTICAL LAWS

Now that I have set out the basic terms and important distinctions in Kant's volitional vocabulary, we can move on to presenting in a systematic way the Kantian moral argument.

As we have just seen, the will has available to it, in terms of practical principles, empirical practical principles (or "material maxims") and practical laws. As we have also noted, morality is also concerned with practical laws, but why precisely this must be so needs a more complete explanation than has so far been offered (i.e., that the universality offered by practical laws meets the requirement of universality demanded by morality). Empirical practical principles, that is to say, principles connected with what Kant calls the "lower faculty of desire", cannot, by virtue of their very nature, be practical laws (and cannot, then, be moral laws - let us assume for the moment that the connection between morality and practical laws has been established, though, again, this will come later). Kant provides five main reasons in the Second Critique why empirical practical principles cannot be practical laws and thus must serve only as mere maxims. I shall, as clearly as I can, state those reasons in the following pages. But by way of preparation for this task I will first briefly discuss the

nature of this lower faculty of desire (and its distinction from a higher faculty of desire), the nature of empirical practical principles, and provide the Kantian definitions of pleasure and feeling.

Two kinds of pleasure must be distinguished - "contemplative pleasure", which is concerned with the experience of pleasure without antecedent desire, and "practical pleasure", that is, pleasure which is the goal and reward of action.¹ "Both kinds of pleasure may be defined by reference to the subjective state of the person. Pleasure is the consciousness of the causality of an idea to keep the subject in the state in which he is having this experience."² As well, "pleasure is present when there is harmony or facilitation of function" - in essence, pleasure 'is the feeling produced by agreement of an object or an action with the subjective condition of the person (desire)'.³ Kant defines "feeling" as "the faculty or capacity for experiencing pleasure and pain Feeling is one species of the general affection of the sensibility, the other species being sense proper".⁴

Why must empirical practical principles (or material maxims) be only mere maxims and not practical laws? If Kant can answer this, then he will have established that there can be no empirically-founded morality.⁵ This would open the way for an argument showing that morality must be a matter of pure reason, and that only from pure reason could

the proper moral principles or laws (viz., practical laws) have their source, insofar as such laws (qua laws and not qua imperatives) are synthetic a priori.

First, what is an empirical practical principle or material maxim? Kant says that such a principle is always connected with the lower faculty of desire (I shall treat this in a moment). It is a principle which, as suggested by the term "material maxim", determines the will by its matter (or object or content). Briefly, if the determining ground of choice is found in the feeling of pleasure associated with the conception of an object, then it (the determining ground) is empirical, and the practical principle which contains such a determining ground (cf. K.p.V., p. 20; ". . . which has it [such a determining ground] as a condition . . .") is empirical. This association is an expectation of pleasure to be found in the actualization of the object. This is the reason (the "determining ground") for choosing and subsequently acting in such and such ways. Such an association is wholly dependent upon what Kant calls the "lower faculty of desire".

Whether I find pleasure or displeasure associated with any idea whatsoever (whether in fact pleasure is associated to any idea by me) cannot be known a priori. It must be empirically discovered. This association of feelings of pleasure with the idea of the object is not part of the object (is not objectively valid) but is only a contingent

relation between a subject and an object. It just happens that I presently desire x rather than y.

Thus there is only a contingent connection between the conception of an object and pleasure (and the expectation of pleasure). One might attempt to formulate a practical law (or, more precisely, a categorical imperative) out of an empirical practical principle - i.e., "I ought (always) to do x (given the appropriate and well-defined situations)"⁶, but the only reason why I did x before (and why I ought to do it now) was because I thought that x would provide me with pleasure, or was an element fitted into an entire, pragmatically-calculated prudential 'package'. However, it is possible that (a) x, when it was actualized (when I 'got' x or 'did' x), did not in fact provide me with pleasure, (b) it did in the past, but I don't think it will now (I no longer associate it with pleasure), or (c) it did provide me with pleasure in the past, and I think it will now, but I simply don't want (or crave) it now for some reason (for instance, that I now desire y for its expected pleasure (which is different from x's pleasure, and I just seem to crave y-pleasure instead of x-pleasure now), or for the fact that I simply don't want pleasure now, though the opportunity is present. All of this indicates the contingency of the connection of an object and pleasure, and points out that the association might in fact be disappointed and thus be an incorrect association (though I did in fact associate

pleasure with the conception of the object).

Kant is saying that the only reason one could have for grounding one's choice on the object of the principle is that the idea of the object is associated with pleasure. Can there be any other reason? What exactly does it mean to ground one's choice (viz., to determine the or one's will) by the object of the principle such that it can be said that its association with pleasure is the only way in which it can determine the will? However, even if there were other ways than the idea of the object's association with pleasure in which the object of the principle could determine choice, such ways would have to be empirically discovered, and thus could only yield empirical practical principles. But could such a way be known of a priori, and if it were so known could it also determine the will in a necessary, unconditioned way? Or could such a way only yield further contingent connections between the object of the principle and the will?

It is the function of desire in general to provide an object or end for which we strive, or to which our deliberate action aims. Since all practical principles (and all actual volition) contain an object as the material or content of the principle (or volition)⁷, that is, all action from practical principles is concerned with attaining or making actual some object (whether the object be some state of affairs, an activity, or some actual object of

experience (e.g., a house)), then some object must be desired. The statement, 'I desire object x', is somehow involved in all practical principles. In mere maxims (that is, empirical practical principles), 'I desire object x' is the determining ground of choice. In practical laws (or for imperfectly rational beings, categorical imperatives), 'I desire object x' is not the determining ground of choice, yet it must be present all the same since, as practical laws are practical principles and end in particular volitions, they contain some matter or object or purpose (this is the content of the principle or maxim). Therefore, some relation must exist between the object and the subject whose will is determined by the idea of the law. Now Kant says that, "purely formal laws of the will . . . determine it [viz., a higher faculty of desire]". (K.p.V., p. 21, 'Corollary') Formal laws of the will can only determine choice if they determine the object of choice (if they determine what I am to desire (or what I am allowed to desire), even though I may have no sensuous desire/inclination for the object so determined) and this they do by determining a higher faculty of desire. Now since such a higher faculty of desire, Kant tells us, cannot be determined "pathologically" as is the lower faculty of desire (that is, by the particular susceptibility of the subject to feelings of pleasure and displeasure (which can only be known empirically), and this susceptibility to sensations of agreeableness is the aforementioned patho-

logical condition), it must be determined by purely formal laws, and an object is given or arrived at or rejected by virtue of the determination caused by these purely formal laws. Thus the object is determined by principles (though the variety of objects is given by sense, so the determination is a regulative, not a constitutive, one) and the principles are not themselves determined by the object (as in empirical practical principles). Thus the 'I desire object x' is an integral part of all practical principles, but in the case of practical principles which are (or of maxims which function as) practical laws, the 'I desire object x' is not the determining ground of choice, and is itself (the object of choice/volition) determined by formal grounds - that is, by purely formal laws.

How precisely such a higher faculty is to be determined by "purely formal laws" so as to yield objects for these laws in their particular instantiations in the specific decisions and actions of individuals needs to be carefully examined and explicated, and this will be done in the next chapter.

To sum up then, the lower faculty of desire determines the particular 'I desire object x' by feelings of pleasure and displeasure associated with conceptions of objects (and this is the pathological element of susceptibility), and gives this ground of determination of the will in the form of empirical practical principles (which

are for this reason only mere maxims, though this is to anticipate a little). Thus, this ground of determination is to be found in such a faculty and the particular 'I desire object x' it is discovered to produce.

The higher faculty of desire, on the other hand, is itself determined by 'purely formal laws' and is indifferent to feelings of pleasure and displeasure which might be associated with ideas of objects. A particular 'I desire object x' is still the result of its function, but such 'desires' do not determine principles and thereby the will, but rather it is certain principles (that is, the form of certain principles) which determine them. Again, this will be treated in a later section of this thesis. Thus both faculties are called "faculties of desire" because they provide, in importantly disparate ways, objects of choice and volition.

The general theme or argument running through each of the five main reasons or arguments Kant gives in rejecting empirical practical principles as possibly serving as practical laws (or, again, more properly, as categorical imperatives) is as follows. Kant makes it clear that in terms of contentment with our existence, the material of the lower faculty of desire is the determining ground of the will - that is, that the idea of an object associated with feelings of pleasure or displeasure is that upon which we base our choice. But, as noted in my discussion of the faculties of

desire, this sort of determining ground can be known by the subject only empirically. Thus, granting that such determining grounds (those which proceed from the lower faculty of desire) are part of a necessarily determined causal scheme, they are at the same time (though not in the same respect perhaps) only contingent, being known only empirically and not a priori (i.e., through reason itself). It is this notion of the contingency (and the uncertainty which follows from such contingency) associated with such determining grounds that forms the basic thesis of Kant's arguments for the rejection of empirical practical principles as practical laws.

The first reason is fairly straightforward. Since the connection between an object and feelings of pleasure and displeasure can only be empirically discovered, it is possible that opposite connections or completely different sets of connections can be made by different subjects or by the same subject. For example, given that I must discover through experience that the idea of object x is associated with pleasure, it is possible that I may at a later time not associate pleasure with such a conception, or that I may in fact happen to associate displeasure with it. It is simply a matter of my experience that for me x is connected (or taken to be connected) to pleasure. It may be the case that I find associated with pleasure the conception of object x, while at the same time another subject finds no such asso-

ciation or finds instead displeasure associated with the same conception. As Kant states, if "the determinant of the faculty of desire is based on the feeling of pleasure and displeasure," then it "can never be assumed to be universally directed to the same objects". (K.p.V., p. 25) This violates the condition that practical laws must be universally valid and applicable. Any maxim based on the object of the principle could only be so based because of the pleasure found associated with the conception of the object, and for the reasons stated immediately above, it would be a purely empirical and contingent matter whether someone happened to have this maxim. Therefore such a maxim cannot serve as a practical law, and must be instead a mere maxim.

The second reason follows to an extent the reasoning of the first. Kant says:

But suppose that finite rational beings were unanimous in the kind of objects their feelings of pleasure and pain had, and even in the means of obtaining the former and preventing the latter. Even then they could not set up the principle of self-love as a practical law, for the unanimity itself would be merely contingent. The determining ground would still be only subjectively valid and empirical, and it would not have the necessity arising from a priori grounds . . . (K.p.V., p. 25)

Practical laws "must have an objective and not just a subjective necessity" and they "must be known a priori by reason instead of by experience, no matter how universally empirical". (K.p.V., pp. 25-6)

I take Kant to be saying something like this here.

A practical law cannot be an inductively discovered law. That is, no matter what features are observed, and no matter the uniformity observed, no law which is objectively necessary and universal can be built from such experience. Such an 'inductive law' would be purely descriptive of a set of experiences only. Even if we were warranted in making the statement 'All men (or rational beings) have such and such a desire', there could from this be no justification for stating that 'All men should have such and such a desire'.⁸

For, as Beck says,

[1] et us see what would happen if we found a man in whom desire D was absent, as we might always possibly find one by continuing our induction. The fact that everyone else had D would not constitute the slightest reason why he should do actions called for by D, or should feel any shame for lacking D; it would, in fact, provide a ground for rejecting the generalization. (Comm.; pp. 82-3)

Further, as Beck correctly notes, such a generalization could only be an a posteriori one, but a practical law must be universal and necessary, that is, a priori. (cf. Comm., p. 83)

Third, since the principle determines the will by reason of the pleasure associated with the object of the principle, if the actualization of the object proves that, in this instance at least, pleasure was not in fact found to be connected with this object, then it must be the case that such principles are dependent for their validity on the contingent fact that pleasure will indeed be connected to the object. Such connection is contingent for, as Kant points

out, pleasure in the existence of some object "belongs to sense (feeling) and not to the understanding, which expresses a relation of a conception to an object by concepts and not the relation of a conception to the subject by feelings". (K.p.V., p. 20)⁹ The feeling of pleasure or displeasure does not belong to the object qua object of experience, but rather is a phenomenon belonging exclusively to the subject who experiences objects. In other words, while feelings of pleasure and displeasure are connected or associated to objects (the object is that which satisfies the need which is grounded by inclination, and such satisfaction is productive of pleasure - cf. Groundwork, p. 95), they are not themselves objectively valid. Since this holds at any time for any empirical practical principle, no matter how many times I (or all agents) have found pleasure to be in fact produced as a result of the actualization of the object of the principle, it is possible that the next time I act upon a choice determined by this particular principle pleasure will not be found to be associated with this object. An empirical practical principle is a principle which depends for its validity upon the actual finding of pleasure connected to the actualized object. If no pleasure is found, then the principle is an invalid one, or at least must be reckoned an uncertain one. No uncertainty can be found in practical laws however, since such laws must be independent of all such empirically discovered conditions. Such finding

of pleasure is based on the (anthropological) nature of the subject, that is, on some condition of the subject, and, as seen before, no universality of principle can be produced from such a contingent condition.

There are presented in Remark 2 of Theorem 2 of the Second Critique (pp. 24-6) two different and very important arguments against empirical practical principles being practical laws. The second of these arguments we have already looked at (it was the first reason presented). I would like now to look at the first of these two arguments in some detail.

In the first argument Kant is trying to discredit any possible law emerging from the demand for happiness. His argument is vague and at times misleadingly unclear, but the point of it is I think clear enough. Kant is initially supposing either or both of two things; (a) (which will be our fourth reason) that the basic demand for happiness can serve (in some formulation of this demand as a practical principle) as a practical law, or (b) (our fifth reason) that particular empirical practical principles (which, presumably, apply in particular situations) can be practical laws.

In regard to the first of these, (a), Kant says:

. . . because this material ground of determination [which proceeds from the lower faculty of desire] can be known by the subject only empirically, it is impossible to regard this demand for happiness as a law, since the latter must contain exactly the same deter-

mining ground for the will of all rational beings and in all cases. Since, though, the concept of happiness always underlies the practical relation of objects to the [lower] faculty of desire, it is merely the general name for subjective grounds of determination (motives), and it determines nothing specific concerning what is to be done in a given practical problem; but in a practical problem this is alone important, for without some specific determination the problem cannot be solved. (K.p.V., p. 24)

A given practical problem would be, I take it, something like, 'What ought I to do now (in this situation)?'.

What Kant calls the 'subjective ground of determination' is merely a conception of an object that determines my will through its association with (the expectation of) pleasure upon its actualization through my effort. As we have seen, such association is the task performed by the lower faculty of desire. Its (the object's) association with pleasure or happiness is the reason why I choose to pursue this object, and this makes the conception the determining ground of my choice or will. And this is a reason or motive for action because of my nature as a finite being who has needs whose basic fulfillment is 'suggested' by my lower faculty of desire. This faculty of desire, in turn, makes its suggestion of which object to pursue so as to secure contentment with my existence through the association of pleasure with the idea of some object (or with the idea of some object's fitting into some overall pragmatically determined prudential 'package' (which ultimately has at its foundation an association or associations of pleasure and conceptions of objects)).¹⁰

Thus the concept of happiness is simply the general name for such subjective grounds of determination. The principle of happiness or self-love (which is the so-called 'supreme' empirical practical principle), is, Kant suggests in this passage, not a real practical principle (i.e., a maxim), for one never actually chooses (what would be the determining ground of a will under such a principle?) to be happy or to seek happiness. Insofar as finite rational beings desire at all, they 'desire' happiness (the achieving of this 'contentment with our existence', which itself is achieved through an integrated fulfillment of our particular desires). And, again, such a 'desire' is only a general name for all the individual desires and needs whose fulfillment is suggested in the "material of the [lower] faculty of desire". (K.p.V., p. 24) This 'principle of happiness/self-love' is simply the general name for all the principles which contain a determining ground of the will whose source is to be found in the pathological element of susceptibility being manifested in concrete associations in the lower faculty of desire. So the question whether this desire for happiness or this principle of happiness or self-love can be a universal practical law is a kind of pseudo-question, for neither is even an actual practical principle, and thus cannot be a practical law.

But Kant is, I think, making a deeper point here. Suppose that this principle of happiness (this concept or

demand for happiness) is considered as a practical law. The actions which a practical law dictates, Kant is suggesting, must be compatible with each other.¹¹ As Beck puts it,

it is essential . . . that the actions which one man undertakes under a maxim not be incompatible with the actions which I or another man undertake under the same maxim; and if they are, then the maxims cannot be instances of a single law. (Comm., p. 99)

If it is possible, then, that the principle in question allows of incompatible actions (or simply incompatible maxims), then such a principle cannot be a practical law (and not a moral law). It is possible, given the contingent nature of the association between pleasure and the conception of the object, that maxims and actions whose determining ground is precisely this association be contradictory. For instance, in a certain situation x, one person does A because he finds pleasure associated with his conception of A, while another person rejects the doing of A because he finds displeasure to be associated with his conception of A (or because he finds no such association, or because he finds associated to his conception of B greater pleasure than that he associates with A). Since it is only what object I approve of that is made the basis of my maxim and is the determining ground of my will, it is possible that I may approve of two opposite objects at different times (or perhaps even two opposite objects at the same time). For instance, at time₁ I may approve of my deceiving another person, while at time₂ I may not so approve, or may disapprove of such an object.

This deeper argument I call the 'argument from harmony'. As we shall find in the next chapter, this notion of harmony is vitally important in the Kantian moral system. Let us investigate it a bit closer. The argument from harmony states basically this - that harmony is only possible under a system of practical laws, but is never possible under maxims whose supreme principle is the principle of happiness.

If maxims which are empirical practical principles are taken to be practical laws, then we would have to admit the possibility of contradictory practical laws. But this is something we cannot admit, for a practical law would lose its necessity if it could be paired up with its contradictory, and thus could no longer be considered a law. However, there is the following problem. Any practical law (moral law) which is 'open' in its fulfillment (viz., no one particular action is rigidly designated as the action which fulfills the law - in Kant's terms, such a law has 'latitudio') may incorporate under it contradictory 'hypothetical imperatives' (I shall return to this problematic feature in a little while), but amongst the laws themselves there will be no contradiction.

Thus Beck's statement (which I have quoted on the previous page) is not strictly true, for such contradiction in action is quite possible under practical laws which allow of 'latitudio' in their fulfillment. Any positive law (a "you ought to . . .", rather than a "you ought not to . . .")

which draws upon empirical laws or generalizations or counsels of prudence for the judgement 'Given this practical law, what ought I to do in this particular situation' can possibly yield contradictory actions by different individuals or by the same individual at different times. For instance, given the practical law concerned with furthering the happiness of others, I may think that x will make y (a person) happy (or that doing x is the most conducive action to y's stated purposes or ends), while someone else ('k') at the same time and in the same situation judges that not-x will make y happy. (For instance, I think keeping y in the circus will make him happy, while k thinks getting y out of the circus as quickly as possible will make him happy.) As long as there are practical laws concerned with securing happiness (of others or ourselves), and as long as the knowledge of what makes for happiness is gained through experience and is therefore, at best, empirical contingent knowledge (see the discussion up to now for the significance of this), then there cannot be expected complete harmony in action given even the context of practical laws. As Kant says regarding this:

. . . what duty is, is plain of itself to everyone, but what is to bring true, lasting advantage to our whole existence is veiled in impenetrable obscurity, and much prudence is required to adapt the practical rule based upon it even tolerably to the ends of life by making suitable exceptions to it. (K.p.V., p. 38)

. . . even if a rational being were himself to follow such a maxim strictly, he cannot count on everybody else being faithful to it on this ground, nor can he be con-

fidant that the kingdom of nature and its purposive order will work in harmony with him, as a fitting member, towards a kingdom of ends made possible by himself - or, in other words, that it will favour his expectation of happiness. (Groundwork, p. 106)

. . . the concept of happiness is so indeterminate a concept that although every man wants to attain happiness, he can never say definitely and in unison with himself what it really is that he wants and wills In short, he [a finite being] has no principle by which he is able to decide with complete certainty what will make him truly happy, since for this he would require omniscience. (Groundwork, p. 85)

Presumably, however, with rational beings in an Ideal kingdom of ends (who necessarily treat each other as ends in themselves), such dispute as indicated above could be resolved, and a mitigated harmony established.

Theoretically, practical laws must not contradict each other, but the actions subsumed under them (when the laws are actually instantiated and put into an individual's practice) may contradict each other, but it could not be the case that an action falling under one law be able to contradict an action falling under another law, for this would mean that an action obligatory under one law is not obligatory under another. This sort of contradiction of actions would bring the laws themselves into conflict (thus it would be valuable to investigate this matter further, though such extended investigation will not be attempted here).

Thus, while the possible actions subsumable under a practical law may yield contradictions among themselves and thus not be in harmony (though only on the condition that

our knowledge be uncertain, as it necessarily must be, as it concerns the contingent connections to objects of pleasure and happiness in ourselves and others, and empirical generalizations from experience), the laws themselves will never be so contradictory. Whereas, if the attempt is made to derive any laws from the principle of happiness, you will find contradictory laws. That is, given any maxim which is a material maxim, a possible contradictory maxim can be consistently thought, and, if it can be so thought, then it can possibly be held by some rational being.

If a practical law is to be necessary and universal, it is clear that the principle of happiness or self-love cannot be a practical law or yield practical laws. Kant states:

This principle [of self-love], therefore, does not describe the same practical rules to all rational beings, even though all the rules go under the same name - that of happiness. The moral law, however, is thought of as objectively necessary only because it holds good for everyone having reason and a will. (K.p.V., p. 37)

In regard to the second of these, (b) (see p.81 of this thesis) (which will be our fifth reason), Kant concerns himself with possible practical laws whose source is to be found in the desire for happiness involved in answering particular practical problems. Kant says:

Principles of self-love can indeed contain universal rules of skill (how to find means to some end), but these are only theoretical principles, as, for example, how someone who wants bread should construct a mill. But practical precepts based on them [principles of self-love] can never be universal, for the determinant of the faculty of desire is based on the feeling of

pleasure and displeasure, which can never be assumed to be universally directed to the same objects.

(K.p.V., p. 25)

Such principles are mere maxims. Such maxims contain as their cognitional element, the contribution from reason, theoretical assertions of causal means-ends relationships. These may or may not be universal rules (they may merely be empirical generalizations of certain particular causal relations), but they are none the less objective. As practical, however, they depend upon some prior determination of the will, and necessarily cannot be practical until they are connected to some practical principle (a maxim) as the means to accomplish through activity some end. Since they are connected to practical principles (and not to mere maxims only), they can be connected to practical laws as well. Such rules are imperatives for imperfectly rational beings, and since they depend upon some prior condition of the subject and are thus contingent imperatives, they are hypothetical imperatives. Thus a practical law may have subsumed under it a number of hypothetical imperatives.

At any rate, since principles of self-love differ from individual to individual (as they must since they are based on that which individuates rational beings) no practical 'precept' based on such principles can be universal. Since such principles (viz., empirical practical principles) are ultimately based on feelings of pleasure and displeasure, and such feelings are only empirically found to be associated

with conceptions of objects, then no a priori assumption can be made that such feelings will be associated with the same object universally. Such an argument is different from the merely empirical one (that individuals are observed to desire different objects), and will be strengthened in the second main argument of this Remark (and this was the first argument or reason we looked at in this chapter).

ENDNOTES

¹Beck, Comm., pp. 92-3.

²Ibid, p. 93 (cf. also K.p.V., p. 9, n.7).

³Ibid, p. 93 (cf. also K.p.V., p. 9, n.7).

⁴Ibid, p. 93.

⁵Ibid, p. 95.

⁶A practical law would be, "A rational being would always (and necessarily) do x (given the appropriate situation)". The corresponding categorical imperative would be, "You ought to do x . . .", or, more properly, simply, "Do x" (given the appropriate situation).

⁷cf. K.p.V., p. 34.

⁸I am indebted to Beck, Comm., p. 82, for this discussion.

⁹Re-call the definitions of "pleasure" and "feeling" (cf. p. 70, this thesis).

¹⁰This "contentment with my existence", Kant says, is a "problem imposed upon us by our own finite nature as a being of needs" (K.p.V., p. 24).

¹¹cf. Beck, Comm., p.99.

CHAPTER VI

THE FORMULA OF THE PRACTICAL LAW

As we have seen, empirical practical principles (or material maxims) cannot be practical laws for the reasons provided.¹ Since, for instance, a particular practical principle cannot be assumed to hold for all rational beings, insofar as it is a material maxim, then it cannot be a moral law, which must hold necessarily and universally. As we saw, the essence of empirical principles is that they determine the will by their object, and this presupposes a pathological susceptibility of associating pleasure or pain to certain ideas of objects. Therefore practical laws cannot determine the will by virtue of the object of the law (viz., its content).

If practical laws (as practical propositions which themselves contain a general determination of the will) cannot determine the will by virtue of their content or matter, and they are only made of a form and a matter, then, if anything, it must be by virtue of their form that they determine the will.² Recall the logical form of hypothetical imperatives: 'If I fully will the effect (the end), I also will the action (the means) required for it'.³ To fail to act in accordance with this cognitional aspect of such

imperatives would be to act irrationally, for such a form is given by reason. Yet this form is not sufficient by itself to determine a will. The form of the hypothetical imperative contains within it as an essential part another determination of the will (expressed in this general form as a variable), and thus presupposes a more fundamental determinant. This latter will be the reason why one chooses as one does, and it is what allows one to pick out appropriate means from theoretical knowledge of causal means-ends relationships (and these will form practical rules). It cannot be the case that this form itself be the reason why one chooses as one does (though it will be part of the logical reason why one chooses the particular practical rules that one does). What form, then, can by itself be a reason for choice, and thus be fundamentally determinative of the will? In a sense, however, this is the wrong kind of question to ask in an investigation such as the one this thesis has taken on. Despite its existential wording, this question is not asking for the form which actually does determine the will, but for the form which, given the concept of the will which we have, would be necessary in determining the will by itself. Thus it is a conceptual or theoretical question.

Kant expresses this kind of form of a practical principle in the moral law: "A purely rational being acts only on maxims that he could will to be maxims for all rational beings, i.e., only on maxims that could be willed

to be principles universally binding on all such beings". (Beck, Comm., p. 73) This is expressed in the categorical imperative as "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as the principle for giving law". (Beck, Comm., p. 73)

Thus a practical law must determine the will merely by virtue of its form as a law, and this is fundamentally given in the Idea of moral law. As a law, it is necessarily and universally valid for rational beings who have complete control over their wills, that is, for rational beings as such. For such beings it can function as both a descriptive and a prescriptive law. It describes the behaviour of rational beings as such, for it is not logically possible that a rational being should veer or stray from the law in his actions. The law has at the same time an internal use for such beings, for it is used by them as reasons for their action. It prescribes a course of action (in the relevant situation) to such a being, though not as an imperative. It is used as a reason for and a guide to choice and action, though, in this case of perfectly rational beings, there simply are no other contending reasons. Such a being will necessarily choose and act according to the law (or, rather, since these are internal reasons for action, to the conception of the law). It is because it is a law, which holds for all rational beings as such, that it is used to determine choice. This corresponds in a way to the notion of

acting out of respect for the law.

Why does Kant make this immediate connection between morality and rationality (reason)? Given that a proof can be provided that pure reason can be practical of itself, what of it? Given what morality generally is (duty, an unconditionally good will and the unconditional good, obligation, universality, reverence for the law, etc.), the moral law must come from reason, for this is the only source of universal and necessary (a priori) laws or principles. Thus a system of morality must have its source in reason, and thus only a purely rational being's will will be necessarily determined by such laws from such a source (for there will be no other factors to account for, such as sensibility and inclination). (At this point in the development of the argument, I am referring only to reason in general (as possibly inclusive of the understanding) - the clarification of the exact relationship between morality and pure reason will be taken up in my final chapter.) It is not the case that Kant starts off with the idea of moral law as being the way a rational being as such would necessarily act - rather, Kant starts with the notions he finds inherent in the common concept of moral obligation (see above), and finds that a practical principle yielding such obligation could only come from the faculty of pure reason. Hence, the moral law would simply be the way a being chooses and acts given that his will was completely and exceptionlessly

determined by pure reason.

Whether, in fact, our wills are determined by such a law or imperative, is a different question, and requires an entirely different approach than the kind of approach we have taken so far. But if there is morality (and, given Kant's metaphysical/epistemological system, there must be, though I am not concerned with arguing this now), then it must be concerned with categorical imperatives and rational autonomous wills.

Acting solely out of reverence for the law requires that we act because of the form of the law and not because of the object contained in the law as its matter (for this would lead to heteronomy of the will, that is, in acting for the sake of something different from the law, i.e., pleasure or happiness in the actualization of the object). Thus duty is only possible given the possibility of a certain kind of principle and a certain kind of determination of the will (though fulfillment of duty requires a metaphysical investigation of the subject I am not prepared to give here). The principle must be such that it can determine the will by virtue of its form - that is, the reason that one would give for his choice would refer merely to the form of the principle involved. This fits the requirement of an unconditionally good will as well. Recall that a will which is unconditionally good is good for no reason which points to something independent of the will itself. A will which is

unconditionally good must be good through itself alone (see chapter 2 of this thesis). It is not good for something. A will can be good through itself only in the case that its determination involves a practical law, and in the case that its motive is precisely that this is law. Further, this leads us to say that, in some sense, the will is itself the law (though this needn't be a strict identity - if the will can itself produce its own law, then what is important about this sense is preserved). But as Kant goes on to develop, it is precisely the form of a freely acting will (that is, the Wille as the form or perfection of the Willkür) that yields the law of that freedom, and this form is given by the Idea of the moral law. At any rate, as Kant states:

An absolutely good will, whose principle must be a categorical imperative, will therefore, being undetermined in respect of all objects, contain only the form of willing, and that as autonomy. In other words, the fitness of the maxim of every good will to make itself a universal law is itself the sole law which the will of every rational being spontaneously imposes on itself without basing it on any impulsion or interest.

(Groundwork, p. 112)

What has to be done now is to show and explicate the transition from the possibility of practical law and its relation to the moral notions of an unconditionally good will, duty, absolute obligation, universality, etc., to the formula of the categorical imperative. To start, Kant says in the Groundwork that:

When I conceive a hypothetical imperative in general, I do not know beforehand what it will contain - until its condition is given. But if I conceive a categorical

imperative, I know at once what it contains. For since besides the law this imperative contains only the necessity that our maxim should conform to this law, while the law, as we have seen, contains no condition to limit it, there remains nothing over to which the maxim has to conform except the universality of law as such; and it is this conformity alone that the imperative properly asserts to be necessary. (p. 88)

Let us try to interpret Kant's statement here that the "mere concept of a categorical imperative" (i.e. an unconditioned command) can provide the formula of the categorical imperative. To begin, Kant says, "When I conceive a hypothetical imperative in general, I do not know beforehand what it will contain - until its condition is given". Hypothetical imperatives (imperatives of skill - i.e., technical/problematical hypothetical imperatives) are selected from amongst the infinite theoretical propositions expressing causal means-ends relationships. Empirical practical reason selects from these that particular means-end relationship appropriate (or thought to be appropriate) to the fulfillment of the desire or want that one happens to have. It is only possible to select the correct theoretical proposition and thus to have a hypothetical imperative on the presupposition that some object is desired (and this desire is given as we have seen, by the lower faculty of desire when it finds pleasure associated with the conception of some particular object or kind of object). Hence, only until the desire or inclination is known (that is, such a given desire must be taken up by reason as an "interest"⁴), nothing can be said

about the hypothetical imperative corresponding to (though, of course, not identical to) this desire, other than that the imperative will command some action as necessary or expedient to the attainment of whatever is desired.

Kant now states, "But if I conceive a categorical imperative, I know at once what it contains". It must be noted that, through the mere concept of a categorical imperative, not the content of particular imperatives is given (i.e., 'Do not lie', 'Do not kill', 'Do not take advantage of those less fortunate than you', etc.), but rather the content of the formula for particular (or 'of particular') categorical imperatives, and from this the corresponding supreme (practical) categorical imperative is given, which will be as a "second-order maxim or imperative".⁵

From the last line of this quotation, we see that the categorical imperative (the second-order imperative/principle) will contain just this: that one's maxim must only conform to the "universality of law as such". Since there is no dependence on some condition which must exist before anything definite can be said about the imperative itself, and which condition cannot be known in an a priori manner, we can know the content of the categorical imperative. That is, more properly, we can know the formula of the categorical imperative. But it is at the same time a command, and is the "single categorical imper-

ative"⁶ (that is, insofar as it is a second-order command or principle). It provides the formula (though not the content) for all subsequent particular categorical imperatives (such as 'Do not lie', etc.), and is the command to act only on such imperatives. The formula is simply this: only maxims which can conform to the universality of law as such can command categorically. The actual formulation given by Kant of this second-order categorical imperative (the "single categorical imperative") is the oft-quoted, "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law". (Groundwork, p. 88)

This formulation is made complete and more explicit by Kant's statement later in the Groundwork:

The will is absolutely good if . . . its maxim, when made into a universal law, can never be in conflict with itself This principle is also its supreme law: 'Act always on that maxim whose universality as a law you can at the same time will'. This is the one principle on which a will can never be in conflict with itself, and such an imperative is categorical. (p. 104)

Here is introduced the notion of conflict or contradiction in the (or 'through the') universalization of the maxim, and some time will be spent in this thesis in attempting to make sense of this.

As a second-order principle, the categorical imperative can be considered as a kind of test for maxims - if they pass the test of 'universalization' they are categorical imperatives and thus moral laws. Notice, however, that two things are being said in this passage regarding this

feature. A particular maxim will fail the test if (1) the maxim is in conflict with itself when the maxim is universalized, or (2) the will is in conflict with itself when its maxim is universalized. There seems to be a problem with this however. Kant speaks of the "single" categorical imperative itself (the second-order imperative) as if it were to be submitted to the test of universalization that it commands, when he states that it is "the one principle on which a will can never be in conflict with itself". But this kind of situation clearly cannot be the case, and I do not think that this was Kant's intent. Such an imperative is merely the general law necessarily followed by rational beings as such put in the form of a command for imperfectly rational beings. This categorical imperative commands us to act as if we were perfectly rational beings, who act on laws given them by their reason, which, as reason, is common to all rational beings qua rational and thus necessarily universal (and this, in the end, makes such commands obligatory for us). Further, as a second-order maxim, it is a principle not concerned immediately with action, but rather with principles which themselves are concerned with action. If these latter principles can be successfully universalized, then they are fit to be universal laws, or, for us, categorical imperatives, and so oblige us necessarily.

Another problem arises in understanding this "single" categorical imperative. Why does Kant place a volitional

condition as being essential in the testing of maxims, rather than an epistemic condition (though in the various restatements of this formulation of the categorical imperative there is a lack of consistency in this regard, and the volitional condition is sometimes dropped)? For instance, why doesn't the supreme principle of categorical imperatives run something like this: 'Act only on that maxim which you know (which you can or could know?) to be a universal law'? However, it is not clear that by formulating the categorical imperative in this way some kind of identification is being ruled out between willing and knowing a maxim as a universal law.

One extremely important item, which should be emphasized, follows from Kant's discussion of the supreme principle of morality. For a maxim to be moral (and thus a categorical imperative), the maxim must first qualify as a universal law. Second, and this is what must be emphasized, it must be the case that I will this maxim (which has passed the original test) solely because it is a universal law (or solely because it can or does hold universally). I must make this 'fact' that I can will this maxim to hold universally for rational beings as such my motive for choosing and acting as I do; that is, it is the ground (reason) of the determination of my will. This, I take it, is acting out of reverence for the law. The will which is determined by such a law gains its unconditional goodness from the fact

that it is determined solely by the mere fact that its maxim can serve as universal law (and my choice, if the will is mine, is not made by reason of any (sensuous) interest I might happen to have in the object of this maxim). If this is the case, then my choice is made unconditionally, that is to say, not on any condition that I find pleasure or happiness associated with the idea of the object. I am choosing and subsequently acting purely out of reverence or respect for the law as law, purely out of respect for the universal applicability of my maxim.

We are left now with two questions that must be answered to make this basic exposition of Kant's morality complete. First, what are the objects of practical laws and, second, how exactly does contradiction of the will work as a test for practical law? I shall now consider each of these in turn.

There are in Kant's ethical works three senses of "object" that must be distinguished. There is the sense of "object" that refers to the concepts of good and evil, and which refer through these terms to the action of the will itself. In this sense, Kant speaks of the object as being an "object of pure practical reason", and the object is the will itself, insofar as it is active. The second sense of "object" refers to the content or end of particular practical laws/categorical imperatives (in general, this sense refers to the content or matter of all practical principles). It

is concerning the exposition of this sense that I intend to spend considerable time, for it is, I believe a generally overlooked but vital element in Kant's moral system. The third sense is concerned with the highest good, the summum bonum in Kant's terms, where virtue and happiness are joined together (that is, that worthiness of happiness is rewarded, in proportion to one's worthiness, by happiness). Kant states that it would ultimately be irrational to consider moral commands as valid and obligatory without this notion of the highest good - for this reason Kant takes it to be an important element in his moral system. Parenthetically, it is only through this notion of the highest good that the postulates of pure practical reason can be justified, and thus it is through this that the transition from morality to religion is made. However, as Beck indicates (cf. Comm., pp. 242-50), this notion of the highest good is nothing less than extremely problematic. I wish now, in order to begin my examination of the object of particular practical laws/categorical imperatives, to present a brief synopsis and critique of an article by Beck in which, in part, he discusses the object of practical laws.

In his article "Apodictic Imperatives", Beck provides us with an examination of the nature of the formula of the categorical imperative and the nature of particular categorical imperatives (viz., specific practical laws). He begins with a definition of a categorical imperative as an imper-

ative which is independent of conditions which could be stated only in the protasis of a hypothetical imperative and which could concern only our private wants. Such an imperative is independent of any "material of desire" or "object of interest". ("Apodictic", p. 182) However, to anticipate, Beck misconstrues the notion of independence here. He takes the imperative's independence from the object of interest to be a complete indifference to the object of the principle. The independence properly attached to categorical imperatives is their independence from any empirical interest in determining the will. This does not mean, as Beck takes it here and in his Commentary⁷, that the formula for the categorical imperative is indifferent to what object enters into the acceptable form, but rather that the object cannot be the determining ground of the will (and why this is so we have seen in chapter 5 of this thesis). But let me continue in presenting Beck's exposition.

Beck states the main theme of his essay:

"Do X" might in one sense be considered a formula for a categorical imperative; but this is not what Kant means by a formula. A formula, he says, determines what is to be done in solving a problem, and "Do X" does not help us in determining the permissible range of values of X. We must find a formula from which the values of X can be determined, independently of any protasis . . . since they [i.e., the desires that might be stated in the protasis] are not stated in a categorical imperative. (p. 185)

Beck finds the solution to this problem suggested in a line from the Groundwork, that, " 'the mere concept of a categorical imperative' furnishes 'the formula containing

the only proposition that can be a categorical imperative' ". (from Groundwork, pp. 87-8 note) From this the following somewhat loose argument is built.

Beck says that "the categorical imperative commands that the maxim itself have the form of universal and necessary law. This form alone must determine the content of the maxim". (p. 187) He goes on to state that:

(a) what Kant is establishing is "a principle of categorical imperatives, a formula, a second-order principle and not an imperative for a specific action". (p. 187)

(b) from this is established the maxim to act only on maxims that fit the formula. This is the content of the categorical imperative as a maxim determined by the formula. (He says later that the formula of the categorical imperative is identified as being the second-order maxim or principle (pp. 187-8).)

(c) what these latter maxims are is not determined, with respect to their content, by the formula.

(d) such maxims (as these latter) which do in fact fit under the formula have their content determined by considerations of type (a1) and (a2)⁸ - "otherwise the action would have no specificity or overt quality".

(e) "the form of universal law serves, in the formula, to determine the second-order maxim, which is to follow maxims which allow universalization, and to follow them because they are universalizable." (all of the above argu-

ment is from p. 187)

My contention is that (d) is incorrect, and is an erroneous conclusion drawn by Beck about the nature of the categorical imperative.

Beck next looks at the example of the imperative "Write your name in the flyleaf of your books". (p. 192) Such an imperative has the outward form of a categorical imperative, but it is not "practically right"⁹, and thus not obligatory (it is not a moral imperative). Beck now attempts to answer why this is so. He says:

The maxim holds for my own action, if it is moral, only insofar as I can will it to hold as a maxim for others. Any maxim that passes the test of universalization is legally permissible; there is nothing wrong or unreasonable in my willing to put my name in books, or indeed in willing that others should do so too. But only the maxim which is a principle of action for me because I regard it as binding on rational beings generally is a maxim having moral status. (p. 192, emphasis mine)

Only because my choice is determined by the fact that this imperative binds universally all rational beings (and is a law of action for all rational beings as such), is the maxim which contains this determination a moral one and the practical principle of an unconditionally good will.

What Beck fails to realize is that the content of such maxims (which are categorical imperatives/practical laws) is itself determined by the requirement that the maxims be maxims of an unconditionally good will. There necessarily can be no indifference as regards the particular content, for not any content will 'fit' into such maxims (or into

such a form). The particular content must be regulated by some formulation of the categorical imperative (as we shall see, by primarily the second and third formulations of the categorical imperative) which follows (analytically) from the concept and the supreme formula of the categorical imperative.¹⁰ I will argue for this in a moment.

Beck says that categorical imperatives must meet two tests (and these are set out in the formula of the categorical imperative).

(1) the test of universalizability, by which they (maxims) are certified as legally correct, and

(2) the test of motive. (cf. p. 193)

From this Beck goes on to say, in regard to the example given on p.107 of this thesis, that,

. . . the latter is the requirement that the motive for the fulfillment shall be found in the fact (or belief) that they are legal. An imperative like "Do not lie" constrains me to a moral action and is itself apodictic only when it is addressed to my motive to obey it as valid for and obligatory upon others too My motive to obey an imperative like "Write your name in your book" is not expressed in the imperative, as it might be in a hypothetical imperative: "If you want your books returned, write your name in them." But certainly in this case, the universal applicability of the imperative is not my motive for obedience to it. (p. 193)₁₁

The last two lines of this passage form the crux of Beck's arguments (at least as far as I am interested in it), but, as we shall see, it is seriously flawed. It is possible for me to take any empirical practical principles, remove it from its context of determining the will by means of desire

for its object, and express it as a universal imperative. Thus I can get universalizable imperatives which are contradictory - i.e., "Do lie when you can get away with it", and "Do not lie". The crucial question to be answered is why it is that "the universal applicability" of the first imperative cannot be "my motive for obedience to it", while the universal applicability of the second can. Beck says:

If the imperative, "Wear your rubbers" is obeyed, it is not obeyed by anyone because it is a general imperative; the reasons why it is obeyed may be stated only in an expanded protasis of the corresponding hypothetical.
(p. 196)

Insofar as both of the above imperatives concerned with lying can be and usually are originally expressed in material maxims (or hypothetical imperatives), it must be asked why is it that only one can be removed from its empirical context and made into a moral maxim and a practical law (a categorical imperative) while the other cannot? I will argue, in the next few pages, that this question can only be answered if we pay attention to the distinctions among the contents themselves (and it will turn out to be the case that whether a particular practical principle can be a particular practical law will depend upon its object).

It is necessary to hold, as Beck did not, that certain objects cannot be the object of a will determined by the pure form of practical law. Granted that some maxim determines the will by virtue of being grounded in the lower faculty of desire (the conception of the object associated

with pleasure), why not say that this maxim could also serve or function as a practical law (though not by virtue of its being an empirical practical principle)? It is clear that what are empirical practical principles can also be practical laws (categorical imperatives), though not in the same respect that they are empirical practical principles. So it is not the case that such a maxim as 'getting out of difficulty by a false promise' (cf. Groundwork, p. 71)¹² could a priori simply not function or serve as a universal practical law because it is the material of the maxim that is determining the will (the conception of false promising in these situations is associated with pleasure or the diminishment of pain; though, of course, being merely an empirical connection (between false promising in certain situations and pleasure) it is less than certain that it will actually hold when the action is performed and the consequences occur, etc.). This simply is not enough, for it can be the case that something which we have an inclination to do might also be commanded as a duty. Note that while Kant says that something which we have an inclination to do and would do naturally anyway cannot be commanded, it is the case that we or other rational beings might not always or do not at all have such a particular inclination (the connection between the conception of the object and pleasure by the lower faculty of desire being empirical and therefore not necessary) and therefore the action 'normally'

done through inclination can be commanded. For instance, it cannot be commanded by a categorical imperative that a parent should have 'pathological' love for their children. This, presumably, is for the reason that such a love is not in the control of humans, and thus it would be absurd to command that which one has no control over.¹³ However, what Kant calls a practical love can be so commanded, and would apply in the case that no such inclination as pathological love was felt by the parent, or in the case that considerable disinclination was present.¹⁴ But the main point is that what we do by inclination can still be commanded regardless (though, as I have just pointed out, you can't command someone to have the inclination itself) - doing something from duty and doing it from purposes of self-interest are two distinct things, so something that we normally do from the latter can be done instead from the former (though obviously not in the same way that we do the latter).

Even though it may be the case that for some particular maxim the object of the maxim has always been the determining ground of the will, this is not enough to conclude that this maxim could never determine the will by means of the pure form of practical law and thus could serve as a practical law/categorical imperative. However, insofar as this maxim is serving as an empirical practical principle it could never serve, at the same time and in the same respect that it is an empirical practical principle, as a

practical law. In other words, such a maxim could be universalized, and (as far as we have gone) could be acted upon because it is universally applicable.

Now, if all this is the case, then it also must be the case that if the above maxim cannot serve or function as a practical law (and, as we have seen, this result has nothing to do with the form of the maxim, for it has successfully been hypothetically made into a universal principle) it must mean that the content of the maxim either lacks something or is 'faulty' in some way, such that it could not serve as the content or object of a universally applicable law/categorical imperative. This is a fairly radical shift in the approach to determining practical law (though, as we shall see, it is not as radical as it would seem). It would seem then that there are only certain contents (or certain kinds of contents) which permit the form they are 'in' to determine the will independently of themselves as contents or objects of the maxim.

From all that I have said, two main points emerge.

(1) One cannot universalize a maxim which is an empirical practical principle in such a way that it retains that which makes it an empirical practical principle or material maxim (that is, that it is the object of the principle which determines the will).¹⁵ Kant seems to be suggesting at one place that this is where the contradiction or conflict comes in when universalization takes place:

Now, if I say that my will is subject to a practical law, I cannot put forward my inclination (in this case, my avarice) as fit to be a determining ground of a universal practical law. It is so far from being worthy of universal legislation that in the form of a universal law it must destroy itself. (K.p.V., p. 27)

However, that this is so is obvious, and is a result which naturally follows from my previous chapter's investigation.

(2) But the real problem is this - Why can't a maxim which is an empirical practical principle be universalized in such a way that it no longer retains that which makes it an empirical practical principle? Clearly, according to Kant (cf. his examples throughout the Groundwork) some such maxims are so universalizable and can function as practical laws (cf. also the admonitions of such commentators as Beck (Comm., p. 120n20, p. 135n19 and text) and Paton (The C.I., pp. 58, 63) against the traditional interpretation of Kant as the advocate of 'sour duty', duty being done only where there is no inclination). Since this is so, if we simply remove that which makes a practical principle an empirical practical principle (and hence any empirical practical principle can assume a universal form), the question thus becomes what differentiates between the contents of empirical principles which can serve as practical law and those which cannot (and there must be a differentiation, otherwise there emerges the possibility of contradictory necessarily-obligatory categorical imperatives)?

It would seem in the end, therefore, to be a matter

of the content of these maxims. Such would seem to be at least hinted at in our earlier discussion of Kant's notion of the faculties of desire, viz., that while the higher faculty of desire is concerned with objects, 'only purely formal laws of the will' determine it (this higher faculty) and thus in some respect the particular object itself. Of course, the object itself has nothing to do with why it's the object sought after, though something about the object is such a reason.

But then this is crucial. What will determine whether some maxims/practical principles can be categorical imperatives is the content of those maxims, but from the standpoint of purely formal considerations. It will also be the content which will determine which maxims are moral maxims and which are morally indifferent maxims. But how can this be? How interdependent are form and matter in practical principles which are practical laws?

Since it seems that only the particular content of practical principles is left so as to differentiate between principles which can be practical laws and those which cannot, the criteria of 'contradiction through universalization' and the object of practical laws/categorical imperatives must be intimately connected. The subsequent formulations of the categorical imperative in the Groundwork set out the conditions in which contradiction takes place, and so regulate the objects which particular categorical imperatives

can have, and thus, in essence, make particular, substantial categorical imperatives possible.

There is one interpretation of this notion of contradiction which it would be best to mention and then dismiss from our attention. If I will a maxim to be a universal law and will at the same time my exception from that law (as, in the case that I transgress or wish to transgress that law), then a simple contradiction is evident. This, if a contradiction at all, is merely a trivial one, and not the kind of contradiction Kant attempted (albeit in no clear way) to work out. Kant himself dismisses this interpretation as really indicating a contradiction, stating that it is, "rather an opposition of inclination to the precept of reason, whereby the universality of the principle is turned into a mere generality so that the practical principle of reason may meet our maxim half-way . . .". (Groundwork, p. 92)

The most promising line of interpretation by commentators of the principle of contradiction as providing concrete content for practical laws is offered by Paton. His argument centers around the 'second formulation' of the categorical imperative. This formulation, "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature" (Groundwork, p. 89 - "Formula 1a" in Paton's terms (The C.I., p. 146) that is, it is second in order of presentation but is taken to be a corollary of sorts to the first formulation), is, in somewhat loose terms (which shall

be made tighter in a moment), a kind of schema for the practical law. Its counterpart in the Second Critique is the section entitled "Of the Typic of Pure Practical Judgement" (K.p.V., pp. 70-4). While the notions of schematism and the type of moral law are important though extremely difficult notions to understand, I shall attempt to provide a brief exposition of them as preparation for Paton's suggestion regarding the object of pure practical laws.

Both schematism and the type of the moral law are concerned with judgement (in particular, transcendental judgement), which is the faculty "of subsuming intuitions under concepts which are independent of intuitions" (Beck, Comm., p. 127). The "faculty of judgement . . . has [a] mediating role, whether the principles and concepts in question be those of theoretical or practical reason In each, the subsumption of facts or acts in the world under the principle or major premises is a task ascribed to judgement." (Beck, Comm., p. 128) Theoretical judgement is judgement concerned with subsuming intuitions under the pure a priori concepts of the understanding - this yields objects of experience. These 'schematized concepts' are the principles of experience which, in effect, are the most fundamental laws given to nature by the understanding. As we have seen in Chapter 1, such concepts have an 'immanent' use when they are restricted to the conditions of experience (and thus must be schematized concepts), and have a 'tran-

scendent' use when they are not so restricted (and thus cannot be schematized concepts). In this latter use they are Ideas of reason, and allow of no knowledge (for there is no intuition available to justify such synthetic a priori judgements, while there are such intuitions to justify the concepts and a priori synthetic judgements in the immanent use - that is, one has recourse to intuition (experience) to verify such judgements, while there is, ex hypothesi, no such, recourse available to the Ideas).

A schema is a "third thing" which mediates between these two disparate things - pure a priori concepts and intuitions, and in the case of this immanent use of the pure concepts of the understanding, this third thing is some form of the temporal dimension. As Beck says:

The schema of an empirical concept is a kind of generic image which contains at its core the defined properties of the definiendum but covers also a range of variation that makes it resemble all the members of a class. There can be no image, however, for an a priori concept. Its schema is not an image but the representation of the procedure of the imagination in synthesizing from possible data of intuition in such a way that this synthesis is homogeneous with the conceptual synthesis whose rule is the category itself. (Comm., p. 155)

Practical judgement, on the other hand, is concerned with subsuming particular maxims and acts of the will under the moral law. Here one is concerned with judging or assessing what maxims or acts are morally good or evil. However, since the practical law with which such judgement must take place is a concept of pure reason and not of the under-

standing, no intuition can possibly be connected to it, and thus the notion of schematism cannot strictly be applied to it. As Beck says:

But the concept of the moral good is an Idea that cannot be schematized; we cannot find a structure of intuition that corresponds to it. The concept of law-giving, which is that of freedom in one of its senses, is the concept of a cause that does not exist in time, and therefore the schema of causation does not apply to moral decision and its expression in action with the same epistemic consequences that it has in theoretical knowledge. (Comm., p. 129)¹⁶

What is needed, then, is a 'schema' of the law itself.

To this end Kant provides what he calls the "type" of moral law. This "type" is not strictly a schema but rather a symbol to be used to bring the moral law nearer to intuition (K.p.V., p. 73 - "the same typic guards also against the mysticism of practical reason, which makes into a schema that which should serve only as a symbol"). This type or symbol is the formal aspect of natural law, the law given by the understanding. Kant says that this rule of judgement is, "Ask yourself whether, if the action which you propose should take place by a law of nature of which you yourself were a part, you could regard it as possible through your will." (K.p.V., p. 72)

This rule is, as Kant emphasizes, merely a test of maxims for humans, and does not represent the essence of moral laws. It is a device of sorts, which permits us to judge which of our maxims can serve as practical laws and which of those cannot. As Kant says:

This comparison of the maxims of his actions with a universal natural law, therefore, is not the determining ground of his will. But such a law is still a type for the estimation of maxims according to moral principles. If the maxim of action is not so constituted so as to stand the test of being made the form of a natural law in general, it is morally impossible (K.p.V., p. 72)

How should we interpret this? How precisely is this a means for judging morally obligatory maxims (or 'practically right maxims')? This notion of a "universal law of nature" in the use of practical judgement, Paton suggests, must be understood as being a teleological law rather than a causal law, which is the kind of law one expects in nature. This use is linked to the idea that purposive action is an essential characteristic of human nature (Paton, The C.I., p. 151). What we are looking for then, by using this 'type' of moral law for practical judgement, is some sort of contradiction in the harmony of purposes of a system of nature made possible by our willing. Making reference to a particular immoral maxim, Kant says that:

Though elsewhere natural laws make everything harmonious, if one here attributed the universality of law to this maxim, there would be the extreme opposite of harmony, the most arrant conflict, and the complete annihilation of the maxim itself and its purpose. (K.p.V., p. 27)

Practical judgement uses the idea of order in the natural world as a symbol of moral order, and this is what we must use to identify practical laws from among the maxims we have. As Beck states, "implicit in the notion of a moral order is that of an order of interacting wills . . . and the best model we have of such a world is the order of

nature under law." (Comm., p. 159) Paton says in this regard that:

We can test them [maxims which we are attempting to imagine becoming laws of nature as a result of our willing] so are as they affect others, by considering how far the universal adoption of these maxims would further, or fail to further, or would actually destroy, a systematic harmony of purposes among men. We can test them insofar as they affect ourselves by considering whether as universal laws of nature they would further, or would actually destroy, a systematic harmony of purpose in the individual, it being assumed that his powers have a natural purpose which can be recognized and that these powers, and especially the powers which are the differentia of man, must be furthered and not destroyed, if this systematic harmony of purposes is to be realized. (The C.I., pp. 156-7)

The specific reference then, in the typic, is to the content of the maxim, viewed as an end or purpose of the individual. By means of the typic we can judge of the purposes (and thus the content or object of our maxims) which can serve as the objects of particular practical laws/categorical imperatives. In terms of laws which regard oneself, the notion of the teleological comes in this way - there must, teleologically speaking, be a natural purpose for one insofar as one is a human being. Any action (and therefore any end or purpose) which is not in harmony with this natural purpose must be judged as immoral, or, at least, not obligatory.

The problem with this interpretation is that it is difficult to see which set of ends or purposes, if followed universally, would be productive or destructive of an overall harmony of ends or purposes of all rational beings

(just as, in the same way, due to our lack of knowledge, we cannot know whether happiness will result from certain actions though we know that in a determined scheme of things, the particular relation between actions and happiness will be a necessarily determined one). Further, it is not clear that this is to do justice to the notion of contradiction that Kant connects to the test of universalizability (though it does of course make sense of the notion of 'conflict' arising from universalized maxims, and assuming that 'contradiction' means more than just 'conflict').

Let us now look at the second formulation of the categorical imperative. Here Kant says:

Suppose . . . there was something whose existence has in itself an absolute value, something which as an end in itself could be a ground of determinate laws; then in it, and in it alone would there be the ground of a possible categorical imperative - that is, of a practical law. (Groundwork, p. 95)

The crux of my interpretation lies in uncovering what kind of object (and through this what particular objects) can be willed as the object of a universal practical law (or a categorical imperative).

One argument that Kant gives for ends in themselves (which, it turns out, can only be unconditionally good wills, as the only object good in itself and therefore an end in itself) being ends for practical laws is as follows (this argument is to be found in the Groundwork, p. 96)¹⁷

(1) If there is to be a supreme practical principle/ categorical imperative, "it must be such that from the idea

of something which is necessarily an end for everyone because it is an end in itself it forms an objective principle of the will and consequently can serve as a practical law".

(2) The ground of this principle is that "Rational nature exists as an end in itself".

(3) This is the way a man necessarily conceives his own existence. Therefore it is a subjective principle of human actions.

(4) "But it is also the way in which every other rational being conceives his existence on the same rational ground which is valid also for me . . .".

(5) Therefore, since we are logically constrained to view all other rational beings as conceiving themselves as ends in themselves, this principle is, at the same time it is valid for me, an objective principle "from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all laws for the will". That is, it gives the objects or ends of particular practical laws/categorical imperatives.

(6) Therefore, the practical imperative, "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end."

However, premise (3) is the weak link in this argument. If (3) were the case, there would be no need or necessity for duties to oneself. But Kant does state that there are such duties, for instance, the duty forbidding

suicide and the duty to seek to develop one's talents, whatever they may be. Even if in cases such as suicide we always, in some deeper sense (perhaps in a purely formal or logical sense) did treat ourselves as ends, then the result would be that such duties would be superfluous if not merely empty. The point that Kant is making is that in any action whose source is a will determined by an empirical practical principle, someone must be treated as a means, and it is only when our maxims are practical laws/categorical imperatives that we treat no matter who as an end and not merely as a means. That is, given the will's determination by an empirical principle, we always treat ourselves as a means (to pleasure), and sometimes treat others as means. In the former case, there is, however, a troublesome dual aspect to the problem - for instance, in the case of 'illicit' pleasures, enjoyed perhaps at the expense of our talents or our general moral health, we are treating ourselves as means only from one aspect, but in another aspect, since it is 'we' who are enjoying 'ourselves', we are treating ourselves as ends (though I am not sure that, as it seems from the language, a third 'we' is required). In his discussion of this kind of example in the Groundwork (pp. 97-8), Kant reverts back to the argument of "Formula 1a", that is, that such actions would not be in harmony with our natural purposes. However, this would seem to be merely side-stepping the issue.

At any rate, my suggestion concerning the content of particular practical laws/categorical imperatives is as follows.

Granting from the second formulation that the general object of practical laws must be an unconditionally good will, why does it follow from this that I must then, in my maxims and actions, respect such a being as an end and not merely as a means?

A practical principle, to be a practical law, cannot depend on the fact of its object's association to pleasure or pain to determine the will. Such a principle would be empirical only, and could not serve as a law. This was shown in chapter 5. The content of the principle (which is potentially a practical law) cannot be deemed good only insofar as the principle in which it is found is willed universally. This was shown in the beginning of this chapter. Just from the criteria of universalizability alone, I can will contradictory universal principles, and that two such principles could coexist is impossible (practically speaking) (chapter 5). The content being good of itself must indicate to a rational agent whether he can will the respective principle universally. The content can't be conditionally good, for then it wouldn't be the content of a universal and necessary principle (viz., a law), for it would be conditional by virtue of its connection to feelings of pleasure and pain through the lower faculty of desire. Therefore the content

must be unconditionally good. Only in this case can the principle be willed universally by a rational agent. There is only one kind of unconditionally good object, and that is an unconditionally good will.

If I treat another or myself as a means only, then that being is no longer, in terms of my maxim and act, as an unconditionally good will (he may, in actuality, be an unconditionally good will - but I am treating him or intending to treat him as if he were not). Therefore, I cannot will my maxim to be a practical law if the content of that maxim contains an intended treatment of another or myself as a means only and not as an end. A practical law can contain as its content only an unconditionally good object (viz., an unconditionally good will/subject), and thus to try to force a law to contain a conditionally good object is to express a manifest contradiction (this argument is hinted at by Kant at Groundwork, p. 105).

But can this be a valid way of justifying the second formulation of the categorical imperative as providing, as it were, an a priori method for establishing the content of particular categorical imperatives? Kant says that the object cannot precede the principle, for then the object is called 'good' independently of the principle and thus can only possibly be called 'good' because of the relation it holds or is conceived to hold to feelings of pleasure and displeasure. As Beck says, "no principle derived from the

concept of the good as an object (das Wohl) can be a law, and no imperative to seek a previously and independently defined good can be categorical". (Comm., p. 133) But the requirement that the goodness of the object not be prior to the principle is still met by my argument, for the criteria for the goodness of the object is, in fact, given first. First, that it (the object) must be universal and independent of any interest (viz., it must be a 'self-existent object'). Second, that the object of the law is another will acting because the law is universal (and not because it has some interest in the object of its maxim), and this is given prior to its being an object of the law. In a sense, there is a circular relation between the second and third formulations of the categorical imperative which allows us, without violating any of the requirements for our maxim to be a practical law, to determine a priori the kind of object (and from this the particular objects or contents) of practical law (see fig. 2).

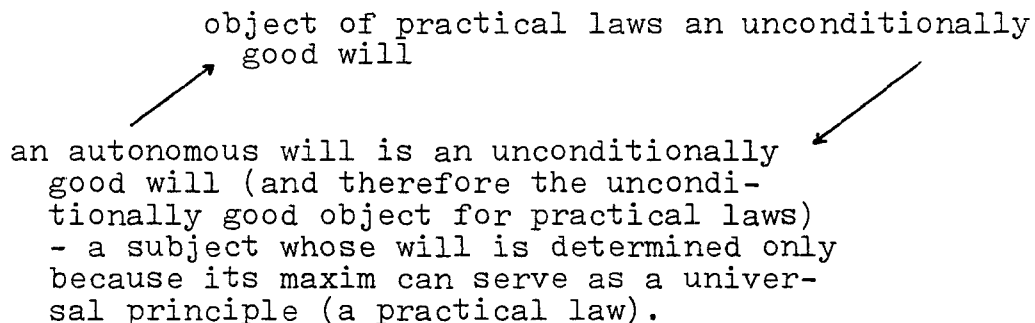


Fig. 2

You can treat someone as an end if you at least do not hinder or obstruct his purposes and ends and, in a positive sense, if you further his attempts to attain those purposes and ends. Of course, there is this problem - which of the goals or purposes that a subject has does one seek to further (or at least not to hinder)? All goals that a subject has, even those goals whose origin lies in sensuous nature, i.e., even those goals dictated by blind passion? Or does one seek to forward only those ends which are rational ends (i.e., those ends which at least fit or presume to fit into some overall prudential package)? Or does one seek to forward only those moral ends that the subject possesses (or perhaps should possess)? Given that only as an autonomous being who governs himself by laws given by his pure practical reason can he be considered as an end in himself, perhaps it is the case that duty requires that only goals which are moral goals be furthered by another. Since he can only be an unconditionally good will if he acts according to maxims which are practical laws, then if he is acting according to mere maxims, he cannot be an unconditionally good will, and thus cannot serve (at least in respect of this particular maxim) as an object of my practical law/categorical imperative.

However, there are two aspects of this problem, one of which I have just mentioned (viz., the question concerning which goals to further). The other has to do with this - if

another is acting according to a maxim in which he is treating himself as a means only, do I, by helping him in reaching this particular goal, also share in his moral crime? If I help him in treating another merely as a means (this is, after all, his goal or end), then do I not also treat that second person as a means also (as a means to the fulfillment of this first person's subjective purpose)? This particular topic, in fact, is rather complicated and involved, and since it has only marginal importance in the context of this thesis, I shall leave it for future consideration. I wish now to look at the third formulation of the categorical imperative as a means of determining the content of practical laws, and thus the very possibility of the particular, practical laws themselves.

Kant says that:

From this [the first two formulations of the categorical imperative] there now follows our third practical principle of the will - as the supreme condition of the will's [Willkür] conformity with universal practical reason - namely, the Idea of the will of every rational being as a will which makes universal law [Wille] (Groundwork, p. 98)

Like the other two formulations of the categorical imperative, the formula of autonomy¹⁸ (insofar as it is a formula) is a test of particular maxims so as to judge of their capacity of serving as practical law, and it can be considered a second-order principle. Such a formulation follows logically from the unconditionality of the will. Given that, to be unconditionally good, the will must not

accept its maxim for action from any source outside itself (for if it did it would thereby be dependent on that source for its goodness (its value or worth), and hence would only be conditionally good, in terms of the 'wants' of that particular source), it must be the case that it give itself its own law (its maxims). As Paton states, "autonomy is the source of the unconditioned or absolute worth which belongs to moral persons as making laws and not merely obeying them". (The C.I., p. 180) The formulation follows logically as well from the necessity that the moral imperative be categorical, that is, unconditioned by any pathological interest that a subject may happen to find influencing his decisions. That a will, which is the faculty of causality through the idea or conception of a rule or an object, makes its own law, excludes emphatically the possibility of the will being determined by feelings of pleasure and pain, and thus by desire and inclination. In other words (although these words really only express a tautology), the will making or giving itself its own law prevents heteronomy of the will (which cannot manifest itself in maxims which can serve as practical law).

But this formulation also provides us with a key to filling out the role concerning content which we found the second formulation, the principle of humanity, to play (and, though not as clearly, played also by 'Formula 1a'). It provides an heretofore unformulated criterion for selecting

amongst possible ends those which are unconditionally good and which, therefore, are to be treated as ends in themselves and the objects of practical laws. These must, as we have seen, be obligatory ends (the only absolutely obligatory ends), commanded by particular categorical imperatives. Kant says: "Every rational being, as an end in himself, must be able to regard himself as also the maker of universal law in respect of any law whatsoever to which he may be subjected; for it is precisely the fitness of his maxims to make universal law that marks him out as an end in himself." (Groundwork, p. 105) Since the will must be unconditionally good, it cannot be good relative to some end to be produced. This formula, then, concerning the content of our maxims, is purely regulative. It commands, "an end against which we should never act . . ." (Groundwork, p. 105), but in so doing it provides finite, rational beings with a method of determining a concrete object or content for a categorical imperative, thus making particular categorical imperatives possible.

However, to make full and proper sense of this formulation of the categorical imperative, which the Second Critique claims to be the supreme formula (the "fundamental law", K.p.V., pp. 30-3) of pure practical reason, essentially requires that we introduce and discuss at length the notions of freedom, and the Kantian distinction (and subsequent unity in distinction) between Willkür (taken as the spon-

taneity of the will - that is, the active part of the will, its executive, so to speak) and Wille (which is, in strict terms, the autonomy of the will - in some sense (which would require much more investigation and argument than I am prepared to give it here in this thesis) the Wille represents the perfection of the Willkür. Wille is pure practical reason in a purely legislative capacity - that is, it does not act itself¹⁹, but it gives the law of freedom by which Willkür can exhibit its pure spontaneity, and thus manifest moral action).

The connection between the concept of autonomy and the Idea of freedom is a vital one for the systematic development of Kant's moral theory. The concept of autonomy is drawn out of an analysis of the notions of obligation, duty, and perhaps the phenomenon of moral constraint, and is seen to be necessary for the very possibility of these. This concept is assimilated to the Idea of freedom, which, having been shown to be possible in the First Critique (or, at least, it was shown not to be self-contradictory), now is shown, as transcendental freedom, to be real, though only from the practical standpoint.

Thus, Reason, practically speaking, has two functions: (1) to give or produce the practical (and, therefore, moral) law, which, as a law of autonomy or freedom is possible only through Reason as the faculty of the idea of the unconditioned, and (2) to be practical itself, that is, to actually

make choices for certain reasons. In the former capacity Reason (in its function as reason) is Wille, and in the latter Willkür. Reason in this latter sense can either act on laws which reason in its pure legislative capacity (viz., as Wille) gives to it (and in this case reason or Willkür is transcendently free (or is at least acting according to the Idea of transcendental freedom)), or it can act on reasons whose source is in the lower faculty of desire. In this sense it is not transcendently free, and it would seem rather that its activity would most likely be determined activity. All of this, of course, requires a much fuller discussion than I can give here. But what is clear is that the Idea of freedom, through the necessary dependence of practical, and therefore moral, law upon the idea of the unconditioned, is brought out as a necessary condition for morality. We shall see how this is so in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

¹Finally, since it was shown that all material principles were wholly unfit to be the supreme moral law, it follows that the formal practical principle of pure reason - according to which the mere form of a universal legislation, which is possible through our maxims, must constitute the supreme and direct determining ground of the will - is the only principle which can possibly furnish categorical imperatives, i.e., practical laws which enjoin actions as dutiful. Only a so-defined principle can serve as a principle of morality (K.p.V., p. 42)

²"If a rational being can think of its maxims as practical universal laws, he can do so only by considering them as principles which contain the determining grounds of the will because of their form and not because of their matter." (K.p.V., p. 26)

"The will is thought of as independent of empirical conditions and consequently as pure will, determined by the mere form of the law, and this ground of determination is regarded as the supreme condition of all maxims." (K.p.V., p. 31)

³Beck, Comm., p. 85. Cf. Groundwork, pp. 84-5; "Who wills the end, wills (so far as reason has decisive influence on his actions) also the means which are indispensably necessary and in his power . . .".

⁴cf. Groundwork, p. 81, note. Of course, this notion of desire as an "interest of reason" is crucial. Mere desire (desire simpliciter) belongs to an arbitrium brutum and not an arbitrium sensitivum but liberum. Desire, as recognized by practical reason, is used as a reason to determine the will (that is, to determine choice).

⁵cf. Beck, "Apodictic Imperatives", p. 185 (originally from C.D. Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory, pp. 120-21, 123).

⁶cf. Groundwork, p. 88.

⁷i.e., Comm., p. 118.

⁸Both of these considerations, according to Beck, appear in the protasis of a hypothetical imperative. The protasis consists of a conative element (this is consider-

ation (a1)) which includes incentives, impulses, interests in objects, etc., and a cognitive element (this is consideration (a2)) which is theoretical knowledge of causal means-ends relations.

⁹cf. "Apodictic", p. 177, for discussion of the phrase "practically right".

¹⁰As we shall see, this formulation will be the second and third formulations of the categorical imperative as discussed by Kant in the Groundwork.

¹¹Note that Beck distinguishes between the "fact" and the "belief" that some maxim is legal (i.e., passes the test of universalizability). Is it the case that the volitional requirement of the categorical imperative yields the "fact" of the maxim's legality, while a cognitive requirement would yield the "belief" of its legality? Is Beck identifying these two? See p. 102 of this thesis.

¹²cf. Groundwork, p. 71: 'my maxim is to make promises with the intention of not keeping them when hard pressed.'

¹³The philosophical issue of control is a sticky one - cf. Daniel Dennett, Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Having, (The MIT Press, 1984), see especially pp. 50-73.

¹⁴cf. Groundwork, p. 67. A better phrase than "practical love" might be "parental respect and care for one's children".

¹⁵cf. K.p.V., p. 28 - "Empirical grounds of determination are not fit for any universal external legislation, and they are just as little suited to an internal, for every man makes his own subject the foundation of his inclination, and in each person it is now one and now another which has preponderance."

¹⁶cf. K.p.V., p. 70 - Given that practical law = law of freedom, then, ". . . since all instances of possible actions are only empirical and can belong only to experience . . . it seems absurd to wish to find a case in the world of sense", and K.p.V., p. 71, "Here we are concerned not with the schema of a case occurring according to laws but with the schema (if this word is suitable here) of a law itself . . .".

¹⁷The actual formulation of the categorical imperative, which is grounded on this notion of an object existing as an end in itself and therefore an end unconditionally, is: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end".

¹⁸The third formulation - "So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim" - Groundwork, p. 101 (quoted from Paton, The C.I., p. 180).

¹⁹"Laws procede from the will - maxims from the power of choice. In man the power of choice is the power of free choice. The will, which does not look to anything beyond the law itself, cannot be called either free or unfree, since it does not look to actions but rather, in an immediate way, to legislating for the maxims of actions (and so to practical reason itself). Thus the will functions with absolute necessity and itself admits of no necessitation. It is, therefore, only the power of choice that can be called free." Kant, The Doctrine of Virtue, trans. Mary J. Gregor, (University of Philadelphia Press, Philadelphia, 1971), p. 25.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN REASON AND MORALITY

The conclusion of this thesis (which will fulfill my third intention as outlined in the introduction) can be done in a relatively brief manner. However, before drawing out the main connection between morality and reason in Kant's moral theory, I should like to present first a secondary conclusion of this thesis.

It has been contended by some that "practical reason" has a valid use only insofar as it is based on the feelings of conscience.¹ I will argue that this is not the case for Kant. Since conscience is dependent upon a connection between reason and feeling (that is, feeling which is stirred up as a result of a certain attitude or conclusion of reason), the connection can at best be only a contingent one. Since conscience as a feeling depends upon a certain moral conclusion by reason, the idea of the moral law and its validity must already be known by the individual. Thus a justification of the valid use of practical reason must be independent of any feelings connected (even if in an a priori way) to the idea of the moral law. Were morality to be somehow justified by the presence of certain 'moral feelings', would it then follow, that a rational being (or a 'race' of

rational beings) who simply lack such feelings in appropriate situations, could never justify for himself (or themselves) the valid use of his pure practical reason and hence morality? This, I contend, would be a difficult thesis to defend.

Finally and most importantly, a distinction must be made between 'pure practical reason' and 'practical reason'. Pure practical reason is reason being practical through the Idea of freedom - viz., the moral law. The moral law, and, in turn, the Idea of freedom, can never be validly used and justified in the same way that the pure concepts of the understanding are used and justified in their relation to objects of experience, for no intuition corresponding to the former and their actual use by a rational being can be given (for such an intuition could only be intellectual - see Chapter 1). This is the whole reason behind a typic of practical judgement. Thus no experience can be used to justify the validity of pure practical reason. On the other hand, practical reason in general can be shown to be 'validly used' in the experience of choosing according to ideas or conceptions (see the discussion on the notion of the will in chapter 3). The Second Critique and the Groundwork can be looked at as giving the necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for the possibility of the experience of moral feelings, but it does not follow from this that it is the experience of moral feelings which allow us to deduce or justify the moral law and its use by pure practical reason.

What is the connection between morality and pure reason for Kant? Beck states that, "in addition to its real use in discovering or formulating the moral law, practical reason also has a merely logical use in the derivation of rules of actions either from the moral law or, in the case of prudence, from human desires and the laws of nature". (Beck, Comm., p. 203) The latter use of reason is clear and relatively unproblematic. There can be little of any interest for us in it concerning the connection between reason and morality. We must instead focus our attention on the former use, that is, that reason 'discovers or formulates the moral law'. It will be my contention that the only faculty of thought capable of doing this is pure reason in general.

It is only the ability to think the Idea of freedom (that is, the idea of the causally unconditioned) that permits the possibility of thinking the moral law, since the moral law is simply the idea of the law of freedom. We saw in our examination of the faculty or function of pure reason in chapter 1 that it is only pure reason which can think the unconditioned, and this provides us with the beginnings of making explicit the connection between morality and reason (or finding the necessary conditions for morality, or for pure reason to be practical).

What precisely am I attempting here? Is this an attempt to link pure theoretical reason to pure practical

reason? In fact, this is not my contention at all, but I am concerned rather with what makes these both pure reason in general, and I find that this is the ability to at least think the unconditioned. This is the necessary condition for the very existence and possibility of morality (and for the possibility of pure reason to be practical - however, for this latter, this necessary condition amounts to a tautology, for pure reason itself is characterized by the idea of the unconditioned - and so this necessary condition boils down to the condition that pure reason be pure reason). Without the idea of the unconditioned as its foundation, the idea of the moral law and morality would be impossible, and only a prudential system governed by strict laws of cause and effect, and limited by our sketchy knowledge of these laws, would be possible. However, it may instead be the case that, if one has this latter, then inevitably one will have the former, that is, the idea of the moral law (or at least will have the possibility of knowing this former). My argument, which is rather tightly condensed, is as follows.

The first condition (for the possibility of morality) is that one be an object-perceiving and object-thinking being. If this is the case, then this being has an understanding and therefore categories of the understanding. Given the necessarily ambiguous nature of these categories or pure concepts, they can allow of the thought of their use beyond the limitations of sensible intuition. The

second condition concerns whether this being has the capacity to make use of this ambiguous nature of the concepts. Does this being have, as part of his thought about objects, the subjective maxim 'to find for the conditioned cognition the unconditioned which completes its unity'? In other words, is this being capable of syllogistic reasoning? If he is not, then we need go no further in asking whether he will have or be capable of having or understanding morality or the idea of the moral law. If he does have this maxim and is capable of syllogistic reasoning, there is yet one more condition that must be fulfilled. This condition concerns whether this being has the category (or concept of the understanding) of cause and effect. Since the Idea of freedom, as an idea of the unconditioned, is inferred or developed by what we have called the faculty or function of reason, it is necessary that the concept exist as a category of the being's understanding. Otherwise, though such a being may be capable of the idea of the unconditioned, he will not have the idea of the unconditioned that is necessary for morality, that is, the Idea of freedom. However, if it can be shown that all rational beings have precisely the set of categories indicated by Kant in the "Transcendental Analytic" of the First Critique, and if it can be shown that there is some link between syllogistic reasoning and the constitutive function of the understanding², then the presence of the idea of the (causally) unconditioned is virtually assured in every rational

being. From this it can be concluded that the necessary condition for the possibility of morality is, as it were, built in the mental apparatus that rational beings possess. In broader terms, all of this points out the fundamental connection that exists between reason and morality in Kant's moral theory, seen in terms of the overall Kantian framework.

To conclude this chapter and this thesis, I wish to suggest for further investigation what seem to be two rather promising grounds of interpretation. The first concerns a question I raised earlier (cf. chapter 1, p. 26), that is, whether viewing the world from a moral standpoint (from the standpoint of the idea of the unconditioned) is a way of thinking that is discontinuous from the way we think about the world when we do physics or natural science (or in 'ordinary' experience, though it's not clear which of these ways is to be classed as 'ordinary'). Does pure reason in general admit to us a distinct and discontinuous mode of thought about objects from that admitted to us by the understanding? It would seem that the same objects are under consideration, but in one mode of thought we consider only what is there (and hold only that it is), while in the other mode of thought we consider what ought to be.

The second concerns an investigation of the Kantian notion of the subject itself. Two passages in particular from Kant's texts suggest a potentially interesting and fertile line of interpretation. In the Second Critique

Kant says:

Thus freedom and unconditional practical law reciprocally imply each other. I do not here ask whether they are actually different, instead of an unconditional law being merely the self-consciousness of a pure practical reason, and thus identical with the positive concept of freedom. (p. 29)

In the First Critique Kant says:

This character we come to know through the powers and faculties which he reveals in his actions. In lifeless, or merely animal, nature we find no ground for thinking that any faculty is conditioned otherwise than in a merely sensible manner. Man, however, who knows all the rest of nature solely through the senses, knows himself also through pure apperception; and this, indeed, in acts and inner determinations which he cannot regard as impressions of the senses. He is thus to himself, on the one hand phenomenon, and on the other hand, in respect of certain faculties the action of which cannot be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility, a purely intelligible object. (K.d.r.V., B574-5)

What is the connection between apperception and morality?

Is morality the result of the subject's thought about itself?

What are the necessary conditions for a subject to think about itself, and what relation do these conditions bear to the possibility of morality?

ENDNOTES

¹Cf. my comments on conscience in Chapter 2. There I pointed out that by the "experience of conscience" I am referring to the sensuous feelings of conscience.

²Kant argues for both of these in the "Transcendental Analytic" of the First Critique. However, I will make no attempt to reconstruct or evaluate these arguments here.

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