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DOCTRINE OF FREEDOM
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Kant's Doctrine of Freedom

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Kant's Doctrine of Freedom

BY

E. MORRIS MILLER, M.A.
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TO MY FATHER

PREFACE

It was the reading of Max Müller's preface to his translation of the Critique of Pure Reason that awoke in me the desire to study the writings of Kant in earnest, and I have not regretted the devotion, even in these days of reaction. While so many are warning students against wasting their time over Kant, it may not be out of place to record one's enthusiasm, even if one's own weaknesses are all too manifest.

This study has grown out of an earlier brochure, entitled *Moral Action and Natural Law in Kant*, published in 1911. The subject was accepted by the Melbourne University as a suitable field for the work of a research student, and I here express my cordial acknowledgment of the assistance which the scholarship has given me.

PREFACE.

In discussing the formal significance of Kant's doctrine of freedom, my purpose has been to unfold it as set forth in the *Analytic of the Critique of Practical Reason*; and, in doing so, I considered it of advantage to adhere to the general arrangement of the *Analytic* itself, and preserve, as far as convenient, Kant's own setting. The first two chapters contain a criticism of the idea of freedom, as it originated in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and form an introduction to the starting-point of the *Practical Critique*. The five following chapters deal with moral freedom in its immediate surroundings in the *Analytic*, and the closing chapter prepares the way for the problem of the *Dialectic of Practical Reason*. The brief footnotes and references will convey in some measure the extent of my indebtedness to the various Kantian authorities. Of the authors consulted, I desire to single out for special thanks the late Edward Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, and V. Delbos's *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, whose bibliographical references have proved an indispensable aid.

PREFACE.

It may appear injudicious to send forth an incomplete study of the supreme phase of Kant's philosophy, but those friends, who understand the reasons for printing it, have accorded their willing recognition, and this confidence releases one from over-much misgiving.

E. MORRIS MILLER.

Public Library, Melbourne.

December, 1912.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Watson* for Philosophy of Kant as contained in extracts from his own writings, selected and translated by John Watson, Glasgow, 1897. (*C. of Pu. R.*, pp. 1-222; *Metaphysic of Morality, Grundlegung*, pp. 225-58; *C. of Pr. R.*, pp. 261-303; *C. of J.*, pp. 307-49.)
- Müller* for Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, tr. by F. Max Müller, 2nd part, Lond., 1881. (*Note*.—Where the first volume, containing 2nd ed. additions, is referred to, the volume number is given.)
- Abbott* for Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, and other works on the theory of ethics, tr. by T. K. Abbott, 6th ed., Lond., 1898. (*Fundamental principles, Grundlg.*, pp. 1-84; *C. of Pr. R.*, pp. 87-262; *Metaphysic of Morals*, pp. 265-322.)
- Rosenkranz* for Immanuel Kant's Sämmtliche Werke, h. v. K. Rosenkranz und F. W. Schubert, 12 v., Leipzig, 1838. (v. 2, *K. d. r. V.*; v. 3, pp. 1-166, *Prolegomena*; v. 4, *K. d. Urth.*; v. 8, pp. 1-100, *Grundlegung*, pp. 105-315, *K. d. pr. V.*; v. 9, *Metaphysik d. Sitten*.)
- Akad.* for Kant's gesammelte Schriften, h. v. d. K. Preuss. Akad. d. Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1900—. (v. 3, *K. d. r. V.*, 2nd ed.; v. 4, pp. 255-383, *Prolegomena*, pp. 387-463, *Grundlegung*; v. 5, pp. 1-163, *K. d. pr. V.*, pp. 167-485, *K. d. Urth.*; v. 6, pp. 205-493, *Metaphysik d. Sitten*.)

Kant's Doctrine of Freedom

Negative Foundations

CHAPTER I

THE NEGATIVE (TRANSCENDENTAL) IDEA OF FREEDOM

It may be maintained that Kant's supreme effort to establish a positive basis of freedom was the most weighty problem of his philosophy. Certainly, it is the central theme of his ethical system, and the elaborate preparations* made by him for its satisfactory solution, demand close attention from anyone desiring to estimate his contributions to ethics.

We shall here attempt a summary of Kant's doctrine of freedom, and a criticism of the basis on which it rests.

Freedom, as a moral idea, relates peculiarly to man, and it is not easy to give a clear intellectual interpretation of the fact † consistent with the objective necessity of the natural world of

* Cf. A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *Philosophy as Criticism of Categories*, in his *Philosophical Radicals*, 1907, p 313.

† Cf. S. H. Mellone, *Studies in Philosophical Criticism and Construction*, 1897, pp. 267, 274.

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which man also forms a part. Man's position in this respect is unique, and the problem of his freedom inevitably involves a discussion as to the relation between the two worlds, which claim man as a member. This relation, in the first place, raised the question of human knowledge and its boundaries, and, further, the consideration whether the existence of a spontaneous or self-originating cause could be established, even though the conception of it transcended the limits of scientific thought. If Kant could conclusively demonstrate that the necessity of the material world was conditional, and only obtained within a restricted area, and that man's being outstripped the particular influences of his immediate natural environment, the path would be clear towards the formulation of an idea of freedom from a point of view independent of any inferences from the mere inadequacy of sense-determination to explain the higher activities of man.

In the Dialectic of the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant dealt with this antinomy of freedom and necessity,* so far as to show that it was allowable for us to hold both ideas, provided we kept apart the spheres of their application; but the inescapable demand for a causal interpretation of events, considered as a totality,

* *Watson*, p. 182 ff. ; *Müller*, p. 460 ff. ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 418 ff. ; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 362 ff.

TRANSCENDENTAL IDEA.

compelled some form of statement regarding the connection between the two planes of reality. How are we to accept the idea of a causality spontaneous and underived, *i.e.*, a cause which is its own condition, and therefore out of time, as a legitimate explanation of the origin of a series of events manifested in time? So long as we keep within the limits of the conditioned, we cannot get any conception of a condition of the series as a whole; and yet we are bound to ask, how did the events, so dependent upon one another, come to be at all? Causation, which is altogether mechanical, is no more than an external bond linking up a collection of particulars: it is utterly insufficient as a principle of explanation. The mechanical mode of the connection between events avoids reference to their significance as real things with differences;* they are perceived in their juxtaposition or association in space, without distinction as to value or meaning. Thus we have two distinct conceptions of causality—that of a cause within nature, and that of a cause beyond nature, yet influencing the course of natural events.

Though Kant recognized the force of these questions, going beyond the limits he had prescribed to a knowledge of natural phenomena, he did not despair of ultimately solving them. He

* Cf. A. D. Lindsay, *Philosophy of Bergson*, 1911, pp. 36-38.

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had shown that the theoretical determination of the material world, in accordance with the categories of the understanding (as a system of necessary laws linking events in time), did not at all satisfy the demands of reason, and he was aware that he must necessarily transcend the limits of sense, if he would find a solution. In Kant's restricted sense, nature was then no more than an unending series of events in time, following upon one another in a fixed order according to laws, and their relations, thus set up, referred only to the external situation of the phenomena. Within nature, defined under these conditions, there is no law or cause other than what is determined by some other law or cause: its highest category is just this inter-relatedness of the events themselves.

The mention of this category implies a definite relation to consciousness, and therefore to unity, and hence there is a strong tendency to supply an explanation of the unity from consciousness itself without the aid of sense-impressions. But we cannot give a positive justification for such a mode of interpreting events which are sensuous in origin. The fact that we are endowed with the capacity to conceive their unity as whole, is a sufficient reason for us to go on with the process of determining the relation between things in the natural world, but we dare not rely upon the conception itself to account for their deter-

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mination as objects of knowledge: we may only accept the idea as an inference which our reason calls forth, having no object corresponding to it in the natural order.

We may therefore intelligibly hold a causal conception of the origin of the whole of a series of phenomena, though we may not apply the idea in the specific resolution of the system into an interplay of causes and effects. Thus we may conceive a free cause without involving ourselves in a contradictory relation to the world of sense, which in this respect we transcend completely. This statement of the severance of a rational (or free) cause from any direct or positive contact with phenomena means that we cannot prove connection between them in terms of knowledge, in Kant's sense. Yet reason demands the conception, not only to satisfy its need for a completed explanation of the conditioned world of nature, but also to fulfil its determination of an ideal order in equivalent correspondence with itself as a rational subject. The requirement invokes the transcendental idea of an unconditioned cause, whilst in the latter this conception is self-initiated and therefore immanent, and reveals the principle of spontaneity as a positive causality. Or, as Kant himself has explained it, this faculty of self-determination, as an active principle of reason, is freedom. So far as being independent of sense perception, it has only a negative founda-

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tion: it is merely the *idea* of the power of bringing a state into existence spontaneously*: it does not represent an actualized fact, cognizable by the understanding. This is Kant's transcendental idea of freedom. He attaches the utmost importance to the notion, because it can be held consistently with the fact of natural necessity; for their spheres of operation do not conflict, being on separate planes of reality.† Having secured this idea in independence of sense connections, we are enabled to release ourselves from the lower order of external determination, and advance without hindrance towards the complete realization of human freedom as a fact of morality,‡ supported in our effort by the hardly-won conviction that the world of natural necessity cannot gainsay its admissibility.

This preliminary outline of Kant's negative basis for freedom involves certain implications affecting his attitude towards man and nature. These conclusions, although they form the main problems of his Critique of Pure Reason, are so important for a clear understanding of his ethical system,§ that we might well consider them

* *Watson*, p. 182; *Müller*, p. 460; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 419; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 363.

† Cf. G. Locker Lamposn, *On Freedom*, 1911, pp. 114-15.

‡ Cf. V. Delbos, *La Philosophie pratique de Kant*, 1905, p. 218.

§ Cf. H. S. Chamberlain, *Immanuel Kant*, München, 1905, p. 701.

further in some detail. We shall discuss the three following principles as underlying his main position as to the negative origin of the transcendental idea of freedom:—

1. The limitation of knowledge to the positive experience and systematization of objects in the material world.

2. The reduction of nature to a system of laws or relations between existences, and the consequent want of correlation between real efficiency and natural causation.

3. The intermediate situation of man as combining in his person the principle of a timeless noumenal causality and its effects as a phenomenal series of events in time.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF KANT'S NEGATIVE BASIS

I.—RELATIVITY OF KNOWLEDGE

The Limitation of Knowledge to the Positive Experience and Systematization of Objects in the Material World.

KANT obtained a negative conception of freedom by imposing limits upon natural necessity. His idea of freedom was exclusive of, though he held it to be consistent with, the conception of an endless chain of physical causes. Being dissociated from a definite or positive relation to sensibility, freedom could not be rendered explicable in terms of knowledge, in the strict sense of the theoretical determination of perceptual objects. Though the understanding was endowed with intellectual principles which in themselves transcended sense-limitations, yet apart from their application to impressions, which originated from an external source, they could not be made available for knowledge. It might have been thought that the understanding, as the faculty of knowledge, having an intelligible foundation in itself, could take cognizance of freedom, and the temptation to assume this is very subtle,* for the

* Cf. H. S. Chamberlain, *Immanuel Kant*, München, 1905, p. 713.

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understanding as a whole is not confined to passive registration of successive sensations.* Being the faculty of comparison or synthesis, it connects presentations with one another, and relates them with itself as parts of a system of experience. This spontaneous construction of a world of objects by the understanding might well be accepted as an elemental factor in the exercise of mental freedom, involving as it does the principle of selection. But we cannot regard Kant's conception of mental spontaneity, or this idea of a self-distinguishing consciousness, as a sufficient basis for moral freedom.† Moral freedom is of necessity an act of rational choice, and although it would at least appear to be related in some way to this operation of intellectual spontaneity on the part of the understanding,‡ as outlined by Kant, yet it did not belong to his method thus to conjoin the theoretical category of self-determination with the self-activity of the moral consciousness; and any idea of conjunction was rendered utterly abortive as Kant's principle of self-consciousness in knowledge was no more than a bare analytical unity.

* Cf. J. Watson, *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, 1907, p. 61 ff.

† Cf. F. Adler, *Critique of Kant's Ethics*, in *Essays, in honor of William James*, 1908, p. 336. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 4th ed., 1899, p. 92. Cf. also S. S. Laurie, *Synthetica*, 1906, v. 2, p. 36.

‡ Cf. P. Janet, *Theory of Morals*, tr., 1884, p. 392.

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Instead of analyzing the concrete unity underlying the relations which he had set up between objects as they are for consciousness and consciousness itself, *i.e.*, the inseparable union of the ideas of the mind and objective facts of experience, Kant reflected upon the thought-determinations and the given sense material as somewhat isolated from one another, and sought means of combining them to constitute the world of objects as presented to consciousness. He was thus led to turn the pure concepts of understanding back upon themselves, and, devoid of all contact with sense reality, they became no more than a string of bare identities incapable of objective reference, being forms without substance. The implication is that thought in itself, apart from the thing thought, is of no positive significance in human knowledge, but Kant concluded from this that knowledge was definitely prescribed to the world of objects comprised by the understanding. If Kant had avoided this "turning back" of thought upon itself by the method of abstraction, and had gone forward in the strength of mental synthesis, he would not have been constrained to invent artificial barriers against the advance of the human instruments of knowledge. He had rightly subordinated sense to understanding, which subsumes the objects of sense under rules, and gives forth of itself principles combining sense impressions into a com-

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munity of relations. We have already hinted that this phase of mental activity * may be a constituent of freedom as revealed by the whole personality of man. But Kant dwelt upon the association of sensibility with understanding; the synthetical process was directly called forth by, and was dependent upon, sense excitation: it had no value in itself as a contributing factor to human knowledge. But what need is there to discuss useless abstractions and the inability to combine them into objects of experience? We may admit with Kant that the pure ideas or categories of the understanding, as principles of unity, are empty identities, if completely separated from the impressions of sense, which give them their entire significance for knowledge; but we are not justified in concluding that knowledge itself is restricted to determinations within the area of sensibility; nor do the principles themselves cover the whole field of what ordinarily passes as knowledge. There are sciences, such as chemistry, biology, anthropology, etc., whose subject-matter is not reducible altogether to the mere external ordering of things in space and time. Conceptual systems, which elude to a large extent mechanical manipulation by the Kantian categories, are not on that account disjoined from scientific treatment. † The advance required of Kant was to develop the

* Cf. also *Watson*, p. 187, referring to reason.

† Cf. F. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant*, tr., Lond., 1902, p. 172.

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synthetical significance of the categories, particularly those relating to causation, as experience became more and more complicated.* On Kant's view, then, knowledge is limited to the system of elements connected in experience according to laws of external necessity, and is thus concerned wholly with what Kant sums up as nature.

Now the imposition of a limit inevitably raises the desire to pass beyond it, as Kant himself avers.† If the world of experiential reality were indeed a closed world, if it truly subsumed the whole of things in a single synthesis, phenomena would adequately correspond to the noumena of which they were the outward representations. But it is peculiar with phenomena that they cannot be actually expressed in the form of totality: there is no completed summation of them for a finite understanding. The human mind struggles to obtain comprehension of a totality of natural phenomena, but inevitably fails, for effect succeeds cause indefinitely. Though the very limits prescribed for knowledge compel this attempt to transcend them, and reach unto ideas of the supersensible, and obtain some form of an unconditioned or absolute, yet the infinite is on these grounds an impossible demand: it has no counter-

* This defect was largely remedied by Hegel. Cf. his *Logic*, tr. by Wallace, 2nd ed., 1892, pp. 116-17; also ch. viii., *The Doctrine of Essence*.

† Cf. R. Adamson, *Development of Modern Philosophy*, 1903, v. 1, p. 228.

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part in experience. Still, it forces on us the incompleteness of human knowledge, and the idea of it urges the endeavour towards a more extensive grasp of the world of things in time and space.

And so we strain after what is non-phenomenal: we feel the need for an existence higher than mere sentience, and, if the need be real, how may we fulfil its demands? The way to Kant's solution lies through his conception of noumena, or, in other words, we must escape the limitation of experiential knowledge. If he can show that the conception of a non-sensuous object is possible, and that, at the same time, its admissibility with the sensible formulation of phenomena cannot be assertorically disproved, a point has been gained towards establishing ideas of intelligible relations between things in themselves. At this negative stage of the argument we have but non-contradictory conceptions, valueless in themselves for knowledge, except in so far as they emphasize its boundaries. In this respect they are limiting conceptions, determining the farthest extent of perceptual reality, and, if consistently marked at their face value, they will not be mistaken for concrete representations of objects in experience. Thus the understanding cannot transcend its appointed sphere without detection, and, even if it endeavoured to do so, it would cease to have positive intercourse with sensibility,

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and so become dissociated from phenomena with which it is intimately concerned. So long as we are reduced to the systematization of human knowledge, as limited by the sensibility and the combining functions of the understanding, we may only make positive affirmation of phenomenal reality; but we have no claims to assert the absolute non-existence of the noumena they manifest, and, if we show that there is a sphere of non-sensuous relations in accordance with rational ideas, the realization of which is practically necessary for the highest interests of man, we shall amply justify, Kant believes, the problematic assumption that the conception of a noumenon is "not only admissible but indispensable, serving as it does to define the limits of sensibility."*

Thus, on Kant's theory of knowledge, we may only legitimately treat of noumena in this negative way as limiting conceptions; and any attempt to regard them positively, as implicating existence of non-sensuous objects, will immediately land us into a hopeless morass of confusions.

For the theoretical consciousness they exist purely as a check to its combining activity, confining it within the field of the sensible. As regards the relation of noumena to the practical consciousness determining objects according to moral law, this "problematic" employment of

* *Watson*, p. 133; *Müller*, pp. 222-23; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 211; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 212.

them takes on a positive implication; but our argument has not yet arrived at this stage. At present we have but endeavoured to state the position, which Kant holds to be of supreme importance—scientific knowledge is positively directed to sensible reality, and as such does not transcend the boundaries of the demonstrable under any circumstances. The understanding may be allured to think conceptions divorced from their sensuous filling, but these abstractions are, strictly speaking, worthless as contributions to the knowledge of the actual, which relates to material existences, or to what is dependent upon material foundations; though at the same time we have learnt that they possess an important negative function. Once again Kant's theory affirms that positive knowledge does not rise above the world of natural phenomena: it has no immediate reference to noumena, or things in themselves.* The connected system of objective existences, which we call nature, is related to a consciousness of self which is also phenomenal,—phenomenal of a transcendent real self, which does not immediately appear within the range of psychical facts. The

* This aspect of Kant's phenomenalism dominated Sir William Hamilton and Mansel. Their error is avoided by affirming "degrees of reality" (Bradley), "identity in difference" (Hegel), and regarding noumenon and phenomenon as names for the object from the point of view of the whole (i. e., of an all-Supreme intelligence) and of human knowledge. Cf. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *Scottish Philosophy*, 3rd ed., 1899, p. 177.

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whole surroundings of the human intelligence, whether within or without, being dependent on time-determinations (which also imply extension in space), are thus mapped out by Kant, circumscribed by the limiting conditions of the sensibility and held completely in check by the negative function of noumenal conceptions, which the understanding may think, but never know. Hence there can be no positive division of the world into sensible and intelligible spheres on the plane of the categories. For the understanding, there is the world of sense as its domain: we may get a negative glimpse of an intelligible sphere, if it be conceived as limiting the functions of thought-determinations to positive experiences of reality, though the understanding cannot possibly cognize these restrictions to its operations.

Having thus definitely marked off the sphere of the knowable or phenomena, and completely severed it from transcendent occupation, and having allowed for a problematic assumption in favour of intelligible realities, though not on the plane of theoretical determination, we see that Kant's statement that a transcendental idea of freedom is not inconsistent with the world of natural necessity, is in thorough-going agreement with his epistemology. But we must now ask ourselves, Has Kant justified his assumption? The real crux of the question lies in the problem of the limitations placed upon the activity of the under-

IMPLICATIONS: RELATIVITY.

standing. Is it possible to set up definite bounds for human knowledge? Finite we know it must be, but have we a sufficient warrant to confine our faculty of knowledge to what are merely the appearances of things and not the things themselves. Or, in other words, does our knowledge only extend as far as the phenomena of physical science, as the only *positive* accomplishment of the *knowing* mind? Kant's fundamental position in the Critique of Pure Reason was that objects to be known must be relative to the understanding: only as related to consciousness are they for us objects of experience at all. There must be pre-supposed the subject for which objects exist, and without which they have no rational interpretation. We cannot divorce intelligence from the external world of things without stultifying all our knowledge. But rationality is meaningless apart from the unity of the whole. Unless this ultimate fact enters into knowledge as a prime condition, we cannot claim to know things at all, and even the world of reciprocally-related objects under causation would be void of its most indispensable foundation. We do possess real knowledge of the world in some degree, and not merely of ideational relations between things which in themselves we cannot know. Our knowledge of reality may be far from being complete, but it is sufficient to nullify the separation by Kant between reason and understanding, and his elaborate attempt to

KANT'S DOCTRINE OF FREEDOM.

find forms of regulative connection between them. It will be readily granted that finitude is an essential aspect of our being as we know it, and, being finite, we cannot escape what is not ourselves, or existentially apart from us. This is everlastingly there for us, as something beyond, which we cannot, and did not, originate, but which we may yet understand, and even use for making our presence known and felt. With a view to comprehending this external world, we are forced by a rational necessity to posit its intelligibility,* for, if it had no meaning for us, we could never come to recognize it as "other" than ourselves. We cannot think nor formulate knowledge apart from the world of things. It forces upon us the fact that there is something permanent, existing beyond our power, which may become "organic" to ourselves through knowledge. We may change the surface of nature, but its laws stand fast, and being rational, we are able to manipulate them for our own ends.† We do not make nature rational and intelligible: we find it so, and the more we systematize its facts in terms of knowledge, the more command we possess over the world of external things.‡ A better under-

* Cf. A. M. Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, 5th ed., 1907, p. 35 ff. A. Campbell Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, first series, 1895, pp. 220-47.

† Cf. J. Seth, *Study of Ethical Principles*, 10th ed., 1908, p. 378. R. Strecker, *Kants Ethik*, 1909, p. 40.

‡ Cf. J. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd ed., 1906, v. 2, p. 235 ff.

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standing and formulation of nature's laws, on man's part, helps to externalize the revelation of his uplift and movements. So in our redistribution of nature's elements, we partly reflect what we have grown to be, and then leave behind us the marks of our aspirations and achievements.* The outside world becomes a means of registering the attainment of knowledge and the effects of human activity. Nature is not absolutely opposed to us; it is there for us to understand and use for communication with other minds. There is not one world of natural things absolutely separable from a spiritual world: there is but one universe for all. There is therefore a community of relations between the knowing mind and the object known, and the latter must be real, if our knowledge is to be more than fancy, relating merely to appearances of reality. These conclusions necessarily follow on the assumption that nature and intelligence are relative to one another, but Kant vitiated this principle by attaching it to his conception of unknowable things in themselves, of which phenomena are the known appearances. Knowledge for Kant related to these appearances and determined them according to conceptually-constituted instruments: by

* Cf. H. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 1911, p. 279. But, in the above, freedom loses its novelty by the insinuation of spirit into matter (p. 285). Cf. J. M'Kellar Stewart, *Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy*, 1911, pp. 251-54. See also Lotze, *Microcosmos*, tr., 1885, v. 1, p. 258.

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means of it we could not get into immediate touch with reality, only with the semblance of the real thing. Thus, in addition to the limitations of our consciousness as finite individuals, we are also circumscribed in our connections with the world of objects around us. To an intelligence, higher than ours, it may take on another appearance altogether, or its reality may be known as it actually is, and such a world on Kant's assumption could not *appear* in time and space. Now, if it is rational to suppose that the world existing in time and space is the real world for human minds, then this idea of a supersensible reality is an abstraction from the very conditions which render the world of external things real for us. In other words, the conception of a thing in itself as an unknowable reality beyond human experience is a figment of the imagination, and worthless as an instrument to account for the limitations of human knowledge. Our individual consciousness may be finite, but is not therefore confined to the appearances of a reality, which may only be cognizable by minds above the plane of humanity.

We are in immediate touch with reality, and, so far as we can grasp it, we do so in intellectual terms, which are real for all intelligences whatever. We must assume that we can get into communal relations with every form of intelligence, and the more we complete our formulations of what we know of nature, enriching and

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varying the methods of our expressions of these forms, so we enlarge the scope of our intellectual powers in terms of an objective experience, and thus render ourselves more capable of mental affinity with all intelligences, which relate themselves to the same system of things which we know as the external world of nature. Were this experience of ours merely phenomenal of something which was not directly related to our minds, we would be absolutely severed from all association with higher or other forms of intelligence. Indeed, we would have no knowledge of such even by way of imagination: we would be completely reduced to the position of being the sport of supersensible realities without any cognizance of the fact. But our critical faculty is proof positive against such condemnation: we are free in consciousness to claim the whole of reality for our self-development, provided we fashion the conceptual means for this achievement. There is nothing our intelligence may not do; though there is more in reality than it has determined; but we cannot arbitrarily impose limits upon it,* other than those which belong of very necessity to its finitude as definitely related to particular experiences, which belong to each individual intelligence for itself. Yet even these it may transcend: its powers of self-origination and self-determination,

* Cf. Henry Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, 1891, p. 23.

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resolving isolated impressions into systematized relations of universal significance, enable it to push its experience far beyond its immediate sphere, and draw to itself other intelligences for mutual intercourse and development. If, then, human knowledge did not relate itself to what was objectively real, and so common to all intelligences, intellectual advance would be impossible. If this be true, we cannot consistently relegate the consciousness of freedom to a sphere beyond human knowledge on its theoretical side. Though we may not reduce it to a passing phase of the intelligence, we must yet be able to give it a rational interpretation consistent with the intellectual foundations of our being. Kant's degradation of positive knowledge to what is phenomenal, compelled him to satisfy himself with only a negative relation between freedom and the understanding. The concept of a free cause, he held, was not a violation of the principle of natural necessity, provided we conceived it as operating in a sphere divorced from sensuous conditions. The fact that the concept was not contradictory of a perfectly fixed system of natural laws, with which it could have nothing to do, was Kant's bare justification of it on theoretical grounds. Being a rational idea and therefore of significance to the supersensible world, he believed he was able to discover for it a positive (practical) sanction through the moral law, but not according to knowledge.

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II.—NATURAL CAUSATION

The Reduction of Nature to a System of Laws or Relations between Existences, and the Consequent Want of Correlation between Real Efficiency and Natural Causation.

By denying causal spontaneity in nature, or the creation of a new order of relations *ab initio*, Kant reduced nature, as we have already seen, to a system of connecting conditions between existences in time, thus negating efficiency as an element in natural causation.* Having regarded the categories of the understanding as constitutive of nature, he was led to look upon natural events as reflecting the categories in operation as the necessary laws of the world of phenomena. The whole system of nature was confined to the interplay of these conditional relations between existences in time. Causal connections referred relatively to the varying temporal situations of events, and there could be no end to the summation of the succession of condition and conditioned in the time series. Efficiency, implying the actual production of real objects or changes in nature, formed no part of a purely conceptual account of the distinction

* Cf. J. Lindsay, *Fundamental Problems of Metaphysics*, 1910, p. 75; F. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant*, tr., Lond., 1902, p. 196; J. M. O'Sullivan, *Old Criticism and New Pragmatism*, 1909, pp. 231-32.

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between cause and effect: indeed, considered as mere inter-adjustments between events, cause and effect are no more than two names for the one thing under different aspects. This explanation cannot interpret the construction of a new order of things in the external world: it cannot lay hold on a cause that is not also an effect.

The idea of efficient causation Kant did attach to noumenal causality in reference to the determination of the will by reason. Kant sometimes even refers to the temporal succession of events as involving the notion of efficiency. In the Critique of Judgment* he says:—"The causal connection as thought by the understanding, always constitutes a regressive series of causes and effects; this sort of causal connection we call that of efficient causes." But an efficient cause must be productive, effect change, not merely of relations, but of state, though not fully merged into the thing which is changed or reflects the process of change. † These real causes are more than external movements or transpositions between objects; they involve the creation of something new, whose complete explanation cannot reside in itself as effect. Distinct from the resultant, there must therefore

* *Watson*, p. 327; *Kant's Kritik of Judgment*, tr., Bernard, 1892, p. 276; *Rosenkranz*, v. 4, p. 255; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 372.

† Cf. "The efficient cannot be its own effect."—J. Ward, *Realm of Ends*, 1911, p. 470. Cf. Wundt's law of the "increase of spiritual energy," quoted by Ward, p. 280. Also Wundt, *Ethics*, tr., v. 3, 1901, p. 40, and *System der Philosophie*, 3rd ed., v. 1, 1907, pp. 303, 337.

be some motive power, whose action is sufficient to account for the change. By overlooking this, and reducing causation to temporal succession, which may even be regarded as fixed by objective reference to moving things, natural causation becomes in this phase a reflection of the changing relations between objects, which is the bare form of mechanism without efficient direction. As a matter of scientific explanation, Kant was concerned only with the strictly mathematical or physical sciences; he did not specifically refer to the higher sciences of chemistry, biology, and physiology, which treat of organisms. In connection with these more complicated systems of natural phenomena, which cannot be reduced absolutely to terms of pure mathematical measurements, the category of causality must necessarily involve aspects which are not required for expressing mechanical adjustments between isolated points in space.* Kant admitted the need for this higher determination of organic activity in his Critique of Teleological Judgment. Cause in this connection is something more than transposition: it involves an element which cannot be reduced to abstract or conceptual relations: changes in the world of nature on this elevated plane implicate purpose, including efficiency to

* Cf. J. A. Thomson, *Is there One Science of Nature?*—*Hibbert Journal*, Jan., 1912, pp. 323-27. Also J. S. Mackenzie, *Notes on the Problem of Time*.—*Mind*, July, 1912, p. 340.

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determine the necessary means on the part of an agent.

By his insistence upon a subjective origin for his categories, or immanent principles of knowledge, Kant has given us the purely formal aspect of causation. The scientist's conception of causality may avoid the need of a real effective connecting bond between things, for it is sufficient for his purpose to deal only with the temporal succession of events, discovering what *particular* events follow from the operation of *particular* laws: he is concerned merely with the integration of relations into general formulæ, expressing constancy of operations under definite conditions. The idea of force, or productive energy, is ruled out: but in the real world of things, as we know them, this fact must count for something. Causal efficiency, or the power of effecting change in an objective order of things, cannot be wholly resolved into a mere temporal relation: there is a something in the consequent which we did not find in the antecedent before the event took place; and this difference, not due to the imposition of any category, is realized as change. There is therefore in natural causation a time element, or succession, and a permanent which undergoes change. For the purposes of scientific investigation a system of communal relations between co-existing things may suffice, but knowledge in its ordinary acceptation is not limited to a com-

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munity of related objects in space and time, but also includes the fact of the existence of this system of connected phenomena in their relation to the mind which comprehends them. This organization of the external world is the unity of nature as object for self-consciousness. Kant held that objects in experience were only so in so far as they were objects for consciousness, and as organized by the categories of the understanding, they become systematized, and thus reflective of unity in consciousness; * but Kant's fundamental principle of self-consciousness was rather an abstract conception than a concrete unity revealing in itself the objective unity in nature. This was due primarily to his separation of sense from understanding.

As a connected system of phenomena under laws, Kant's natural world reflected his highest causal category of reciprocity. But that is not a final view of nature. If Kant had not dislocated the intimate relations between mind and things, he might easily have taken the next step in the development of the idea of causation. A world of mutually interacting objects is a mere abstraction: in relation to self-consciousness, it may take the form of unity, as Kant averred. But we ask, What is the meaning, or purpose, underlying this unity? or, How comes it to have a purpose at all?

* *Watson*, p. 68 ff. ; *Müller*, v. 1, p. 437 ff. ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 735 ff. ; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 111 ff.

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In answering such questions, we cannot avoid the element of consciousness, as a factor in the world, as we know it. If the organization of the world of things by means of causal connections implies some purpose as immanent in them, then we may infer that their ordered unity reveals the operation of intelligence. Instead of taking this step, which treats the external world in its concrete character, Kant violently kept it separate from self-consciousness, and it remained no more than an abstraction, and he was forced to find another sphere for the operation of pure intelligence. But, accepting the fact that the world, as it is known, is reflected in self-consciousness, we must then investigate what deeper meaning this conception gives us. It certainly implies that there is an element common to consciousness in the human mind and in the world of external reality, and that, without this essential resemblance, there could be no knowledge for us. The implication is that the external world, to be known at all, must be posited as intelligible, and this assumption is absolutely necessary for human knowledge. The world is outside us as individuals: it is felt as something beyond, but, on this rationally necessary hypothesis of its intelligibility, we are enabled to reflect it in self-consciousness, and, thus organized, to realize the active purposes of our mind. So we may formulate its principles of construction as related to our consciousness. The

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satisfaction of these conscious aims is associated with the idea of force, or efficiency, and it is the conception of purpose, which gives us an explanation of the reality of causal efficiency as a factor in the natural world. All things are co-operant to an end, and, as regards their final consummation, we realize their causal relations to one another in the experience of the mind which embodies that purpose, and, thus from the higher point of view of conscious experience, the connection between things in the external world implies more than mere temporal succession: it reveals the operation of efficient causes, producing effects making for the rationally determined end. We find ourselves compelled by the inner constraint of a rational necessity to posit the intelligibility of the universe, and, as we cannot obtain an explanation of this world of finite things within itself, but are ever and anon forced to seek beyond it for some rational cause of its dependent existence, we are led to postulate a first cause of all things. Having risen in these conceptions beyond the world-plane of naturalistic thought, we find a sufficient reason for such a postulate in the rational demands of self-consciousness; and were they not satisfied, knowledge would be hopeless. We do not leap to the existence of a first cause from the bare compulsion to think it; but the fact of its being positively a necessity of thought is sufficient ground for accepting the validity of the

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hypothesis as an explanation of causal efficiency in the world. Such a positive conception renders the primal source or ground of the world as something more than the first link in an indefinite series. And thus, while preserving the time element in the idea of causation, we may also maintain the factor of efficiency, or power to produce change, and so assure the transcendent aspect of the ultimate ground. Were this not so, the Supreme Being would be absorbed in his own universe, and in no way distinguished from it; but he is more: he is the sustaining principle of the world he has created.

By dwelling upon the concrete nature of self-consciousness, which Kant overlooked, we are able to validate the common-sense view of causation as a nexus between things, which is prior to all intellectual determinations of the fact itself.

Indeed, it is because we are directly conscious of the fact of will, of our power as creators and users of physical materials, which we ourselves have ordered and arranged for our own ends, that we grasp intuitively efficiency as an original element in causation. And this is a positive conception, though we may be limited in the working out of our design by our materials; still, the result of our labours reveals the higher capacity of our being inwrought upon the materials of sense.*

* Cf. Browning.—“Still my art

Shall show its birth was in a gentler clime.”

Paracelsus, ii. (*Poetical Works*; ed. Birrell, 1902, v. 1, p. 34).

And the significance of this efficiency, even in our own instance, cannot rest upon a mere physical basis: it involves a teleological principle. There is a reason why we act, or reveal causal power, though such a demand exceeds the province of scientific investigation. Because the world of things upon and through which our actions are registered, is intelligible and under law, it becomes a permanent factor in our development as moral agents, as we cannot easily efface the real changes inwrought upon it, which, in the general uplift of the race in moral conceptions, show forth the extent and nature of this advance.

If we rest then with a conception of nature as an abstract system of connecting principles apart from the objects related, or as merely an elaboration of laws interpenetrating phenomena, efficiency is denied to natural causation. But the idea of freedom as causality is essentially creative, and, so Kant believes, may consistently be assumed to give rise to alterations in the world of sense which cannot be explained, in regard to origin, in terms of phenomena.* Or, rather, in the effort to reach a completed statement of a cause, adequate to account for the aggregate of events in time, we cannot find any satisfactory solution on the level of the understanding: reason, which demands the explanation, constrains

* Cf. W. T. Harris, *Philosophy in Outline* (§ 86 ff.), in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, v. 17, 1883, p. 344 ff.

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us to assume an efficient cause beyond the phenomenal series of reciprocal conditions, but this assumption being noumenal, and devoid altogether of sensuous determination, cannot be given a positive recognition in time, for that would reduce it to the phenomenal sphere. It is an extra-intellectual condition, which is not referable to knowledge: it is a conceptual necessity, arising out of a rational need, and theoretically its significance is rather negative: it is untrammelled with sense-elements within experience, and being thus independent of them, it is beyond the reach of the categories, and cannot be equated to the terms of scientific thought-determinations. Hence Kant's first idea of a free causality,* *i.e.*, a cause which is non-sensuous in its origin, and which is never an effect, results in this respect from removing efficiency as an element in natural causes, and determining nature itself as a system of inter-connecting relations, which are necessary and universal as links externally uniting objects within experience. But these perceptual adjustments are more than an aggregate of disconnected movements: they are relative to consciousness, and reflect in the laws underlying their progression the constructive activity of consciousness. If Kant had pursued this idea, which he himself had laid down as a condition of knowledge, and not dis-

* *Watson*, p. 182; *Müller*, p. 460; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 419; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 303.

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sociated its elements (perception and conception) in analyzing the phenomena of nature apart from self-consciousness, these natural laws would have taken on a positive significance for human freedom. As it was, his dualistic tendency was too strong, and he consigned them to a necessity into which free causality could not penetrate. Freedom was saved, so Kant thought, by preserving its initiative for a sphere above the reach of natural necessity, even though its operations assume a sensuous aspect. And this feature of Kant's assumption of noumena leads to the third phase which we intend to notice, the peculiar situation of man in relation to the problem of freedom in its transcendental aspect.

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III.—NOUMENAL CAUSALITY

The Intermediate Situation of Man as Combining in his Person the Principle of a Timeless (Noumenal) Causality and its Effects as a Phenomenal Series of Events in Time.

Spontaneity, as Kant tells us, is a pure idea created by reason to enable it to conceive of a cause acting purely of itself, without external compulsion of any sort. A spontaneous cause is unknown to Kant's view of experience: it cannot be constructed out of sense-data, nor be revealed in perception. It is a transcendental idea of freedom belonging to the world of ideal relations.

We have discussed Kant's position that conceptually the idea of freedom, though completely severed from a sensuous origin, is not inconsistent with phenomenal causation or natural necessity. Now, understanding and reason are elements of the consciousness of the self in man, and so, if we keep man's position specifically in view, may we obtain grounds for preserving both freedom and necessity as phases of action on the part of the same individual?*

Man has a higher and a lower nature: he is both sensuous, as in contact with the world of sense, and intelligible, as being endowed with

* On this distinction of *homo noumenon* and *homo phenomenon*, see J. Ward, *Realm of Ends*, 1911, p. 300 ff.

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reason, and thus able to form conceptions dissociated from experience. The categories of the understanding, which organize sense-impressions into objects for consciousness, belong to him as original endowments of his mental constitution. He is thus uniquely situated. He not only receives sensations, which imply dependence on phenomenal associations, but he also constructs them into a world of objects relative to his consciousness. Indeed, the limitations placed upon knowledge, following upon the assumption of a radical distinction between things as they are and the same things as they appear for consciousness, have their basal significance for Kant in this double relation of man's mentality. And is he justified in finding a ground for the acceptance of a transcendental negative idea of freedom upon this very conception of man's dual position?*

From observation we know that his bodily actions are manifestations in the world of sense, and from reflection the productions of his imagination, being resultants from external stimuli as their original sources, are recognized as sense-determinations: these outward phases of man's self are but its appearances, and an analysis of them instantly reveals their contingency: they are not self-determined facts of consciousness, but the mere interplay of changing states which are re-

* *Watson*, p. 185; *Müller*, p. 471; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 428; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 370.

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duced to order by the interposition of the categories. Thus we may express the empirical aspects of man's being, *i.e.*, his empirical "character [which] we learn from an observation of the powers and faculties which he exhibits in the production of effects."* This phenomenal representation of a man's inner self may be known to the understanding, and expressed in terms of natural causation. But man's being is not wholly resolved into a series of successive states in consciousness, even though they be determined according to a fixed order in time: he is more than an object for consciousness. Man is also a subject: his consciousness is active in itself, being the ground of the unifying functions of the categories. The synthetic movement in knowledge expresses the constructive work of consciousness, and this inner, or originating, factor in the determination of phenomena, cannot be itself phenomenal. By assuming that the understanding transfuses the material contributions of sense with ideal elements, not discoverable in the external impressions, and combines them into a systematized order, reflective of the inner gradations of consciousness, Kant meant to show that there were original powers of construction belonging to man's faculty of knowledge, not dependent for their character upon any outside source. These self-

* *Watson*, p. 186 ; *Müller*, p. 471 ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 429 ; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 370.

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subsisting functions of the intellect, though of course of no value for knowledge apart from sensuous contact, are yet capable of being conceived as functions of unity in an ideal synthesis. Thus there are in man elements which mark him as a being not absolutely conditioned by sense.

Kant's aim in all this is to demonstrate that we may have the idea of a causality operating apart from sense conditions, and therefore transcending the province of natural necessity, though at the same time not inconsistent with the phenomenal facts of causation. By assuming that we could only know the empirical character of reality, and condemning the faculty of knowledge to the lower sphere of phenomenal existence, Kant reserved for the higher interests of the intelligence the immaterial realm of ideas, which could not be equated to the terms of human knowledge; for it arose in the mind as a negative reaction from the world of sense.

Translating ourselves into this world of ideal elements, we remove our thinking faculty from the impoverishing conditions of material limitations. Causality in this pure sphere of reality is not dependent upon empirical solicitation: it is the causality of an ideal cause, self-conditioned and free. Being noumenal, it transcends the whole series of phenomena of which it is an ultimate ground. Thus it does not connect itself with single phenomena, but is related negatively to the ideal

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summation of a series of events manifested in time, which cannot causally explain themselves. The idea of a noumenal causality is therefore not brought in to express a phenomenal relation, but it is an ideal condition fulfilling the need of the understanding for a ground to account for a series of causes and effects in the form of a community of relations between mutually interacting objects. As such this non-phenomenal cause is just a limiting conception, an abstraction of the intelligence, obtained by divorcing sense material from its ideal construction in knowledge; and so, being non-sensuous, it does not exist in time. Kant therefore negatively conceived a timeless condition as an ultimate explanation of the origin of a series of phenomena, existing under temporal relations. This conclusion is forced on Kant, for the categories of natural causation cannot fully account for the mechanical world as a whole.

But he disregarded the teleological foundations of the world at this moment, and endeavoured to satisfy himself with the negative assertion of a cause beyond phenomena, which was conceived to be their prime condition.

Now, as in Kant's view, man (avoiding reference to any higher being at this juncture) is both phenomenal in his existence and noumenal in possessing understanding and reason, there must be combined in his person these two aspects of causality. As phenomenon, man is under the law

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of natural causation: as a noumenon, he is unconditioned by sense, and therefore self-determined, spontaneous, free. By virtue of his individual existence, we must find some way of resolving these apparently incompatible facts of his nature. Can they subsist together in the same person? In seeking for a solution, Kant finds himself compelled to draw upon morality. Man's practical intelligence* can, with perfect spontaneity, make for itself an order of its own in accordance with ideas, into which it fits the empirical condition. Reason thus takes upon itself to originate actions, and their effects are realized in time, *i.e.*, are phenomenal. A noumenal causality, according to pure reason, can, and does, give rise to phenomenal changes in experience, but once the phenomenal series has been originated, cause and effect follow on in time, and reflect the natural order of experience. Noumenal causality refers to the original enactment of that sensuous condition, from which there flows a whole series of changing states in the temporal world. This is, in other words, the spontaneous effect of a cause, unconditioned by sense: it has the power within itself of making an absolute beginning, which sets going a series of events in time, and these temporal existences are ever afterwards dependent upon natural causes for their determination, and are not to be explained in

* *Watson*, p. 187; *Müller*, p. 473; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 430; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 372.

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terms of a timeless relation. We cannot say of an intelligible cause that it begins to act at a certain time, for that introduces a temporal element, which would instantly render the cause phenomenal. We assume negatively the connection between a spontaneous cause and a series of events in experience; such an assumption being forced upon our intelligence by the inability of the understanding to account for experience as a complete whole. And granting the assumption, Kant can infer no more than that, if noumena are causally connected with phenomena, the relation must not be expressed temporally, but absolutely.

Freedom is the faculty of beginning an event spontaneously, and, therefore, in reference to phenomena, a free cause does not effect isolated phenomena, following one another in succession, but sets itself up originally as the means by which the sensuous condition of the whole series of events first begins to be.* This intellectual cause must not come under a time-determination: it is purely ideal; we can only infer the connection

* *Watson*, p. 190; *Müller*, p. 476; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 433; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 374.

As Sidgwick points out, "causality of this scope and extent would seem to be indistinguishable from the Divine creative act" and "human freedom is, from a cosmological point of view, superfluous."—*Lectures on the Philosophy of Kant*, 1905, p. 173. Kant refers to this difficulty as regards the reality of man's freedom on the ground of his creatureship, and endeavours, as usual, to save the situation by emphasizing man's noumenal existence. Cf. *Abbott*, pp. 194-97; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 232-35; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 100-03.

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negatively, as a limiting conception or idea of reason, not as a positive determination of the understanding. Freedom is therefore not an actuality, but a transcendental idea, and in so far as man is an intelligence, capable of conceiving an order of ideas unconditioned by sense, and thoroughly self-determined, so is he free in himself and untrammelled by natural necessity. But these conceptions, being unrelated directly to experience, cannot be known within the limits prescribed by reason for the operations of the understanding, and so cannot be sensuously determined and realized as phenomena. Man may be free in himself, but not according to knowledge. Indeed it is only as there is this causally ideal relation between phenomena and noumena that we have the idea of freedom. "The idea of freedom occurs only in the relation of the *intellectual*, as cause, to the *phenomenon*, as effect."* This asserts, in other words, that a timeless cause may have effects in time, and further that "the intelligible world is the condition of the world of sense, and therefore of the laws of that world."†

By timeless cause Kant means pure spontaneity—the faculty of absolutely initiating a new state

* *Prolegomena*, p. 109 n. (Mahaffy and Bernard's *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, v. 2, 1889); *Rosenkranz*, v. 3, p. 115; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 344.

† *Watson*, p. 254; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 87; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 453. Cf. also D. Neumark, *Die Freiheitslehre bei Kant und Schopenhauer*, 1896, pp. 38–39.

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or order of relations, and, being timeless, the causality is a conception transcending the limits of knowledge, and therefore non-phenomenal. But the effects are phenomenal, being manifested in time, and come directly under the dominance of natural law or necessity. Causality is therefore used by Kant in two connections.* With reference to causation, we must not assume that things in themselves are related to phenomena in the same way as phenomena are related to one another.† This should imply some additional element in the meaning of cause, as applied in the higher sphere of the intelligence. But instead of seeking a developed significance in a more complicated region of reality, Kant adheres to his dualistic method. In this discussion we may refer to passages in the Critique of Practical Reason. He finds all laws the same in kind,‡ because they all express formally relations between things, whether actually existing, or ideally represented. The similarity of laws, whether of the intellectual sphere or the world of experience, is due to this likeness in form. But, although one world may be the pattern of the other, so far as the faculty of knowledge is concerned, they are separated by

* *Watson*, p. 182; *Müller*, p. 460; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 418; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 362.

† *Watson*, p. 294; *Abbott*, p. 211; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 253; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 115.

‡ *Watson*, p. 283; *Abbott*, p. 162; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 193; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 70.

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an impassable gulf. In like manner, all causes are the same in kind, though operating in disconnected spheres. So justifying free causality, Kant says the conception of cause has its source entirely in pure understanding.* Only as *used* as a category of the understanding, can it have objective reality in experience. *Qua* category, it is non-sensuous in its origin, and an *a priori* mental endowment of every rational being. Being therefore in itself independent of all sensuous conditions, as a pure conception, it belongs to the pure region of the intelligence, and is therefore applicable to noumena, though in itself it has no significance for knowledge.† We can merely assure ourselves of the liberty of thinking the concept cause in reference to things in themselves, knowing that the conception is not inconsistent with phenomenal reality, as being negatively independent of it. The causal concept is not empirically obtained: it resides originally in the mind of a rational being. Being therefore an intelligible

* *Watson*, p. 279; *Abbott*, p. 145; *Rosenkranz*, v 8, p. 174; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 55.

† Cf. F. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant*, tr., 1902, pp. 156-57, 184, 196; A. Riehl, *Der Philosophische Kritizismus*, v. 1, 2nd ed., 1908, p. 569. For the opposite view, cf. L. Stählin, *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, tr., 1889, pp. 49 ff., 61 ff. But the distinction was altogether removed by Fichte. Cf. his *Werke*, 1845, v. 1, pp. 186, 260-63 (*Grundlage d. g. Wissenschaftslehre*), pp. 387, 411 (*Grundriss d. Eigenth. d. W.*); also, *Science of Knowledge*, tr., 1889, pp. 231-32, 270-71. Cf. also O. Liebmann, *Kant und die Epigonen* (*Neudrucke, etc., h. v. d. Kantgesellschaft*, Bd. 2), 1912, p. 80 ff. (1865 ed., p. 81 ff.)

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relation, causality may, without self-contradiction, be combined with the idea of freedom, and so there arises the concept of a noumenal causality, or free cause. Kant steadfastly adheres to the limits he has so resolutely set to theoretical knowledge, and seeks by many abstractions to account for facts within *human* experience, which cannot be enclosed within the sharply defined boundaries of physical reality. Time is the instrument by means of which causality, as a pure concept, may be applicable within theoretical experience. Remove this schema of time, and the causal concept shrinks back into the ideal realm of the intelligence, where it may operate unrestrictedly, but without the sanction of knowledge. Let the category of causality be clothed with time, and, in consequence, space relations, and it takes upon itself the inevitable necessity of natural law: let it remain within the pure understanding, undefiled with sensuous contact, and it is inherently of itself free in spontaneous activity. It is this abstract likeness which enables Kant to bring the two aspects of causality into consistency: they are not immediately connected, for that would bring the noumenal under a time relation (which would be self-contradictory).

But can Kant justify this use of the term timeless (spontaneous) cause—the power of beginning an action purely of itself, having effects in time?

Cause must differ in some way from effect so as

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to make the distinction at all, and, in a series of events, every conditioning fact must be conditioned by its antecedent. A conditioned cause is thus an effect also: cause and effect are, in this respect, reciprocal relations. But the primal condition of the whole series must be positively distinct from any or all of the terms of the series.* Now, time-determination is an essential element in every cause within the series, and it must differentiate the condition of the totality from the factors within the totality. Hence the cause, absolutely beginning the series, must be removed from time-determination: it is therefore non-sensuous, spontaneous, free. But this conception is purely limitative: it is obtained by abstracting from sense. And to attribute to it the power of initiation of temporal causes, even indirectly, is to give it a real significance, which does not belong to it.† The position is, we look into the intellectual or non-sensuous realm with the eyes of sense, and regard noumena as causative by analogies drawn from sense experience. This idea of a timeless cause is due to a false conception of the limitations of knowledge. Kant's initial error raises difficulties all along the line. The need of conceiving a causality beyond experience was due to Kant's irrefutable conclusion that mechanical manipula-

* *Watson*, p. 181; *Müller*, pp. 458-59; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 417; *Akad.*, v. 3, pp. 361-62.

† Cf. H. Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy*, tr., 1900, v. 2, pp. 65, 87.

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tions cannot embrace reality in its entirety: the real is more than conceptual relations. But instead of isolating the two aspects of reality, and regarding them as separate worlds, raising the necessity for a bridge of connection (which could only be given in mechanical terms), the truer way was to regard one aspect as involving the other—as being a deeper penetration into the heart of things.* When once we regard the world and self-consciousness as correlative implicates of reality, and not conceive them as interacting opposites, we solve the difficulty here. The mechanical determination of the world as reciprocally interchanging causes and effects is an abstraction from consciousness: reality is not completely envisaged by these conceptions; they merely interpret it in its lowest stages, and, even if we go so far as to include the systems of things in physiology and biology, or the organic sciences, we still only concern ourselves with a world void of consciousness of self. Only as this world becomes organic to self-consciousness, does it take upon its real meaning. And, as implicating relativity to consciousness, it requires the conceptions of purpose and end for its expression; and the constructive

* Cf. R. Eucken, *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*, tr., Lond., 1911, pp. 124–25. Also his *Geschichte der Philosophischen Terminologie*, 1879, p. 145, where he says that “Kant is more successful in separating what is different than in reducing to unity what is divided.”

Quoted by A. Hegler, *Die Psychologie in Kants Ethik*, 1891, p. 181.

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activity of self-consciousness,* as reflected in a world becoming more and more adequate to its own inner determination, reveals immediately (on analysis) the fact of human freedom.

* Cf. J. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd ed., 1906, v. 2, p. 247.

A. E. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, 2nd ed., 1909, pp. 367-68.

Also, W. R. Boyce Gibson, *Problem of Freedom*, referring to Stout's theory of consciousness as a causal agency, in *Personal Idealism*, ed. H. Sturt, 1902, p. 179.

Positive Foundations

CHAPTER III

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES AND THE POSITIVE IDEA OF FREEDOM

KANT'S practical philosophy turns entirely upon the problem of moral law and freedom; and, in considering how Kant comes to give a positive interpretation of the idea of freedom, we shall find it of advantage to undertake a critical examination of the Critique of Practical Reason. The Analytic may be regarded as unfolding the formal determination of freedom as a positive idea, and the Dialectic as revealing the implications and consequences following upon Kant's view of freedom as a moral postulate.*

In moral or practical judgments, we make affirmations, not necessarily of actual fact, but of ideal design or determination. We seek through them to unfold a world of objects which ought to be, even though we may not have the capacity to effect their existence.† Still, we may somewhat fulfil our purposes, and even render them cog-

* Apart from the brief reference in the last chapter, these have not been discussed.

† *Abbott*, p. 101; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 119; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 15.

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nizable to others by means of the readjustments reflected in the common medium of the natural world. This concrete result may assuredly be stated in terms of theoretical knowledge, but we may go deeper than the conative tendencies put forth in its construction, and express the underlying aims according to the sanctions of morality. We thus try to reach back unto moral determinations or judgments. The conception of purpose implies a more comprehensive survey of the relations of the external world to mind: it opens up the inner connections of a reality that is greater than what appears to the limited categories of the understanding, which merely state in relational terms the outward phases of interacting objects in experience.

In Kant's way of putting the distinction, which makes a subreption of the underlying unity of understanding and reason, we would say that the principles of the understanding can only apply as subsuming the given matter of sense, whereas the ideas, or principles, of reason carry their range of application within themselves, as the pre-suppositions of unconditioned reality. The latter possess efficiency, or power of construction, in the world which subsists beyond the limitations of sense-experience, while the former are immanent principles, which relate to the system of things as they appear to consciousness. Hence we may say that the principles of the understand-

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ing involve the idea of an external necessity, conditioned by the mediation of phenomena, whereas the principles of reason possess immediate or unconditioned necessity.

Practical principles are similarly distinguished :* when dependent on material conditions, they are subjective or empirical, being only applicable to individual cases; but, when entirely dissociated from contingent dependence, they are universally valid. Kant calls the former maxims, or subjective principles, and the latter practical laws, or objective principles. The former apply to will under certain conditions, the latter under all conditions whatsoever. This distinction is fundamental, and involves the establishment of Kant's category of practical causality or freedom. Strictly speaking, the idea of a first principle, as an ultimate ground of morality, attaches only to practical law, or the objective conditions of free will; but, as maxims, in their origination, reveal modifications of the supreme idea, or law, of morality, they may be allowed as subjective practical principles, coming under the term of general determinations of will. Maxims, therefore, which further the realization of particular objects of desire, are subjective precepts, or empirical conditions of the will's activity, and are void, in Kant's judgment, of moral reference. But maxims, which manifest in their operation

* *Critique of Practical Reason*, Bk. I., ch. 1, §§ 1-8.

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principles of universal acceptance, have moral worth. When they arise from particular interests or considerations of pleasure or pain, they are relegated to the lower, or sensible, sphere, and denied moral approbation.

Kant also distinguishes maxims from imperatives, which possess inherent authority over the will. Imperatives, carrying their own justification in themselves, are called categorical. But, if the determination is conditional, as means to certain ends, the imperative is hypothetical, and, morally, has scarcely more weight than a practical precept, being hardly perceptible from a maxim or subjective principle. An obligation of this kind resembles counsels of prudence,* which involve only a conditional necessity, not presuming to the dignity of an objective law. It is merely a minor principle, which the will necessarily adopts, if certain desired effects are purposed. But the mere disposition to act lacks the moral uplift of an absolute injunction, based upon law as given by reason. On the other hand, the categorical imperative is unconditionally binding: its authority resides within itself, and the will, so accepting it, acts upon the initiative of universal law.

In the opening sections of the Critique of Practical Reason, Kant formulates these practical

* *Abbott*, p. 33; *Rosenkrantz*, v. 8, p. 41; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 416.

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principles, which, while presupposing the conclusions of the Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morality (*Grundlegung*),* remove the moral distinction between the will's acceptance of worthy desires as determining motives to its action and the easy indulgence of meaner pleasures. However good and desirable any object may be, in submitting to its motivation, the will acts upon a material or empirical principle, which cannot yield a practical or objective law, valid for all rational beings. Further, all material principles of action are the same in kind, whether they exemplify mere sensuous feelings, or the more exalted pleasures of intellectual discrimination: they are only modes of individual happiness. Seeing that the happiness principle is only a means of determining the will through the agency of desirable objects, let us turn upon the will itself, and see whether we can discover a principle of determination, resident within the will as practical reason. We therefore discard all external constraints, and remove from empirical determination the matter of desire, and consider the bare fact of the determination itself. Hence we are left with the pure form of the maxim, which, as thus stated, is a practical law. For a principle, carrying in itself

* *Abbott*, p. 93; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 111; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 8. Cf. also *J. Watson, Philosophy of Kant Explained*, 1908, p. 339; *Kant, Critique de la Raison Pratique*, tr. par F. Picavet, 3rd. ed., 1906, p. 306 (*Notes*).

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universal acceptance, in determining the will, does so as a pure practical law. A truly moral action, therefore, results from the will's adoption of the form of the law as its originating principle. This inner motivation is, by its very nature, universally binding, and hence the will, so determined, is free. For, if it were not free to accept the law's determinations, it would cease to be an intelligible reality, and become an object under natural necessity. The compulsion of this supersensible law of morality is rational, not mechanical nor arbitrary, and therefore is not a principle alien to the will, as practical reason. This law is the supreme law of pure practical reason, or, simply, the moral law, the consciousness of which is given as a fact of reason. From this, Kant deduces the pivotal principle of moral action, the autonomy of the will, which, as the highest form of freedom, is the main goal of Kant's philosophical system, being, as he puts it, "the keystone of the whole edifice of a system of pure reason, speculative as well as practical."*

From the previous discussion, it is clear that Kant's positive basis of freedom excludes empirical determinations as prime factors in morality. As desires necessarily involve objects desired, he refuses them positive moral significance, for they are dependent upon the sensibility of the subject experiencing them, inasmuch

* *Abbott*, p. 88 ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 106 ; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 3.

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as their existence is sought for to satisfy some want. But the objects corresponding to desires are not given in experience. Now, the fact of there being wants demanding satisfactory resolution in the form of objects in experience corresponding to them, raises the analogy of a manifold of sense, which, given as existing "without direction and spiritless," becomes resolved into a system of relations through consciousness. The various inclinations, wants, &c., may be regarded as constituting the moral manifold,* but nevertheless a manifold with a difference, for its realization is not given, but required, and the task of the moral consciousness is to express the achievement as a formal unity, rendering possible the condition of a world, which ought to exist, conformable with the aspirations of man as a moral intelligence.

It might be questioned whether this analogy of a manifold of desires may not be pressed too far. Sense impressions as mere sensations are assumed to be without definite determination. They become objects of experience through the application of the formal principles of the understanding. These forms or categories are in themselves "empty"; they receive their filling from sense consciousness, which becomes modified in the process. So there arises the question whether the

* *Abbott*, p. 157; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 186; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65.

formal principles of the moral consciousness are likewise without content? Are the moral principles empty apart from their application to the matter of desire? It has been stated that Kant's formal moral rationalism consists in the application of the will to the material furnished by the inclinations.* Is the activity of the will merely the regulation of disorderly desires? Has it no real content in itself apart from inclinations, propensities, &c. We shall be called upon to refer to this question in considering the categorical imperative.

Kant associates the desire to realize an object inseparably with feelings of pleasure or pain, and denies it a moral value.† The fact of material existence is directly related to sense-consciousness, which the moral sphere transcends. These feelings are no more than the inner response of the sensibility to the outward play of material objects, and the inward disturbance does not pass beyond the bounds of natural necessity. But in so far as the will may be moved to seek the existence of objects likely to afford pleasure, and avoid such as may occasion displeasure, these feelings may be regarded as having a practical,

* Cf. R. Strecker, *Kants Ethik*, 1909, p. 79. Also, H. Schwarz, *Der Rationalismus und der Rigorismus in Kants Ethik*, in *Kantstudien*, v. 2, pp. 50-68, 259-76, quoted by V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, p. 331 n.

† *Abbott*, p. 108; *Watson*, p. 262; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 129; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 22.

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though not a moral, reference to the will's doings. Their relations to the will in this respect are conditioned by the forms of sense-experience, and have no part in the higher functions of consciousness: they do not concern the will as intelligible, but as phenomenon (*Willkür*). The feelings, aroused by desirable, or undesirable, objects, are incommunicable: they are felt, as sensed, by the individual subject, and have no value for another, except in so far as their content may be formally determined by the understanding. But the fact of the feeling is unshareable and cannot be communicated. Further, the pursuit of pleasure is hopelessly disappointing, for its realization cannot be guaranteed, though its constant anticipation is undoubtedly a source of influence over the will to acquiesce in the inner promptings of desire. But even the realization often refutes the pleasurable excitement felt in advance. However this may be, the contingent character of the feelings is sufficiently attested. This affirmation implies a similarity in kind in all practical principles relating to feelings of pleasure and pain: they are without exception associated with some idea of material existence as the predisposing cause of their excitability; and they cannot assert themselves apart from direct contact with the sensibility of the individual subject.

Though it is usual to distinguish between

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pleasures of sense and pleasures of intellect, as different in kind, for Kant the distinction will be one of degree only.* It may be true that love of self, as a predisposing motive, applies both to sensual hedonism and intellectual delights; and yet we may be permitted to separate them as different kinds of pleasurable feelings. But with Kant it is not so: pleasure becomes "practical" only as affecting the sensibility and stimulating desire, whether the originating source of the pleasure be the satisfaction of an intellectual need, or a natural want. Thus the enjoyment of enthralling emotions and the base exaggerations of sensuous indulgence, implying the common fact of a relation to objects in the world of experience, are directly associated with the sensibility of the subject, and this common experiential element determines their sameness in kind as motives, though we may maintain differences as regards their sources of origin. And so, whilst affirming original distinctions, Kant maintains all feelings of pleasure to be alike as determining principles of will. And the will, accepting them as stimuli to action, submits to the lower forms of desire, all of which involve subservience to external sanctions. Even admitting the desirability that every human being should be happy, Kant will not accept happiness as an

* *Abbott*, p. 109; *Watson*, p. 264; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 131; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 23.

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objective principle of moral observance. According to him, happiness is made up of an unceasing series of pleasurable emotions, experienced in the consciousness of the individual.* The idea of happiness, therefore, relates to the object for which the will is determined, and, as such, it loses the inherent stamp of moral worth. This connection with the material satisfaction of wants limits its sphere to sense-dependence, and it can never become more than a general statement of what is exemplified in the resolve to seek, without ceasing, the pleasures, and avoid the pains, involved in the fulfilment of desires. And the strikingly subjective character of these resolutions, as implanted by the happiness principle of life, disallows that "specific direction which we require for a practical principle." It cannot affirm with the conviction of law, for the enjoyment of the pursuit of happiness differs with different individuals. Thus happiness, even as a desirable accompaniment of a good man's life, is not acceptable as a determining principle of his morality. While we may agree with this, we find Kant goes further, and does not differentiate it as a practical principle from calculating selfishness. Truly the air of displaying an exclusive love of self, whilst revealing considerable skill and discrimination in the choice of means in mediating

* *Abbott*, p. 108; *Watson*, p. 263; *Rosenkrantz*, v. 8, p. 291; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 22.

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circumstances, is morally worthless. But these powers of readjusting situations to meet the demands of blind sensual passion, or the crafty cunning of an ill-devising intelligence, are not to be confounded with practical principles, which relate to the inner dispositions of the mind towards moral observances.

We may readily understand how Kant assigns pleasures of sense-experience to the lower faculty of desire, but it requires knowledge of his theoretical Critique to demonstrate the necessity imposed upon him to relegate intellectual enjoyments to the same designation. The understanding is restricted in its scope by sense conditions, for its connecting principles have no validity beyond their application to the materials of sense. Thus all categories, originating in the understanding, cannot release themselves from this inevitable conjuncture. Hence, if we find pleasure in the activity of the understanding in the pursuit of the joys of intellectual culture, such as advance in knowledge, or the realization of hopes in the construction of ideal objects, reflecting that which appeals to the higher tastes of the mind, we are still in contact with the world of sense-reality, for the material satisfaction of fulfilment awaits the functioning of the principles of the understanding to become positively realized as an object in experience.

Thus the sources of intellectual pleasures, with-

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out exception, involve sense experience as an elemental condition. The realization of the idea of an object as agreeable to the mind willing its existence, is, therefore, fundamentally, in Kant's opinion, dependent upon empirical conditions. By thus demanding an absolute separation between desire and formal law, Kant reduces the one to the sway of natural necessity and designates the other as an exemplification of the causality of freedom; and so all desires are forced into the same mould of experience, with some allowance for variance in their manifestations.

But if the desire to seek something is merely the inner response to an external stimulus imposed upon the self, the activity aroused in consequence is not self-originated as a deliberate act of will. Ordinarily speaking, desire goes beyond reaction to sense-perceptions: it springs inwardly from the subject as under the influence of a train of ideas, which may not be immediately dependent upon one's surroundings.* And in morality, the fact of the self's responsibility for its desires renders the consideration of their acceptance or rejection as isolated phenomena nugatory, and involves the question as to how far we reveal ourselves through them.†

May they really express the inner deter-

* Cf. J. Ward, *Psychology* in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed., v. 20, pp. 73-74; 11th ed., v. 22, pp. 588-89.

† Cf. E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2, pp. 227, 258.

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minations of the moral self? If so, we cannot regard desires as altogether external to what may be called the aboriginal set of the will. And, further, it should be possible to maintain an independent value for ethical resolutions, without excluding all reference to desires. In regard to Kant's position, desires, as active impulses moving the will, are particular: they relate to specific objects whose existence is sought. It matters not whether the object be some concrete external thing, matter of fact, or train of ideas; for with Kant these are all phases of empirical experience. It is this intimacy of desire with a desirable thing, capable of arousing agreeable or disagreeable impressions, which is prominent in Kant's mind. And, further, he is seeking a basis, or ground, for ethical determinations. Desires as such can furnish no common experience, no universal relation, binding on all men, or graspable by them. We must discover somewhere in morality an absolute ground, self-sufficing and self-constraining, and otherwise there can be no common recognition of ethical principles. If we grant this, we necessarily exclude desires as ethical sanctions: they possess no universal value acceptable to all. And we have yet to seek the all-supreme principle. But, even then, is it necessary to refuse desires moral worth? Kant's position is an immediate result from his theoretical conclusions. All positive knowledge

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only concerns phenomena under natural necessity, and phenomena embrace both external objects and psychical facts. Hence desires, conforming to objects desired, belong to Kant's inner sense, and are therefore phenomena, and so under natural law, and what is under natural law cannot be moral. The underlying fault is the inability to develop the significance of the categories beyond a merely mechanical interpretation; for, indeed, in some respects, Kant's intelligible world reveals no more than an "intelligibeler Mechanismus," inasmuch as the element of contingency is eliminated, and the unifying function of a rationally accepted end, assigning values to the varying volitions, is not availed of. Desires therefore come under the "taint" of external necessity, and cannot implicate moral determination.

But it may be that desires are capable of moral expression, for they may be demonstrated as partaking of the activity of the self. Their origin is not wholly external. They may rather be regarded as resultants of the self's activity than mechanical impulses, imposed upon the self from without. And, in that case, their satisfaction would involve their acceptance by the will as expressive of its character. Kant did admit that the inclinations might be satisfied,* but the satisfac-

* *Abbott*, pp. 152, 186; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 181, 222; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 61, 93.

Cf. V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, p. 333.

tion was not of moral significance. This may be so, if we only regard them as competing impulses. But ethical relations go deeper than the fulfilling of desire. Why is one desire rightly satisfied, and another wrongfully so? How is this conception of right and wrong originated? Wherein lies its strength? Kant, having the far deeper problem in view, readily discarded the manifestations of man's moral life through persistent allegiance to his theoretical conclusions as though they were axiomatic. But he certainly allowed that, in so far as desires do not conflict with moral law, they are rightly fulfilled; but, where they are not in harmony with the law, they must be utterly rejected; if not, they are wrongfully and immorally indulged. So we cannot exclude from Kant's system of ethics an action accomplished with inclination. It is the admitted contrast between desires and duties that bring into relief his rigourism.* His conception of morality did not mean the absolute negation of all desires, but their restraint or modification in accordance with ethical principles. But we would rather advance upon such negative acquiescence and say that, while it is not the propension that has inherent moral worth, the subject may be so developed

* Cf. A. Messer, *Kant's Ethik*, 1904, pp. 230-42; V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, pp. 330-38; also E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2, p. 196, who points out that the weakness of Kant's ethics consists in its exclusive attention to this antagonism.

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morally that desires spring inwardly from the self, and reveal a moral foundation. The acceptance of the law has then become well nigh constant. And things wished for are desired as a consequence of the will's own activity ever conforming, and being one, with the law itself.

Kant has fundamentally distinguished between desires as empirical motives and the moral law as the primary foundation of a will conforming to ethical standards. This severance of moral sanctions from desires is preparatory to his main conclusion, which affirms that a maxim, revealing in its operation a principle capable of universal acceptance, or determining the will purely of itself uninfluenced by material issues, may be regarded as a practical law.* In this statement Kant shows what he means by a higher faculty of desire—that the will may be determined to action by the pure form or idea of law. We have seen that we cannot base the distinction between a higher and lower faculty upon the grounds of a difference between pleasures of sense and pleasures of understanding, for the feelings in both instances have a common relation to sense. Hence it is necessary to show that the will has an inner disposition towards good as distinct from emotional expectancy. The problem does not immediately concern itself as to whether the

* *Abbott*, pp. 114-19; *Watson*, pp. 265-68; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 136-42; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 27-31.

intentions of the will be actualized in experience or not, the essential point being that the will is inwardly constrained to action by the formal sanctions of law, apart altogether from material considerations. Not only, therefore, is the will transcendently free; it is also determined by a pure supersensible law, and through this law we come to a positive conception of freedom. From the Critique of Pure Reason, it was shown, in the solution of the antinomies, that we were not immediately aware of freedom, but that we had an idea of it as a conception limiting sense-phenomena. Kant uses this negative derivation of freedom, as independence of natural necessity, towards an analysis of moral principles, which operate in a sphere void of sense-limitations.

By this method he attains the conception of a positive law, determining the will of rational beings absolutely of itself. But how do we become conscious of this law? It is certain *ex hypothesi* that we cannot derive our consciousness of it by the mediation of sense conditions: it is not an object of experience. Being underived from phenomena, and distinct from the immanent principles connecting phenomena according to universal rules (for a moral law has no direct applicability to phenomena), this law is a constituent of pure reason as practical. Thus we may say that a practical law, according to Kant's method, is an immediate conception of the moral

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consciousness, and presupposes freedom of action as its essential foundation.*

Accepting Kant's principles, we cannot be directly conscious of freedom, for our first recognition of it is negative.† But moral law, as a self-dependent principle, is impossible and meaningless apart from the idea of freedom; otherwise it would merely be a law of causation. Hence the consciousness of moral law unfolds the consciousness of freedom, for which Kant thus obtains a positive basis. A rationally determined will therefore acts through freedom, and being free is necessarily self-legislative.

This fact of the moral law is, according to Kant, beyond dispute: it is an ultimate statement of the prime condition of a universal order in the intelligible world of rational beings; it is universally binding, possessing the intrinsic validity of law in its pure form. But this conception of moral law involves the removal of all subjective variations due to inclinations, and inwardly expresses the universal forms of moral action, and exemplifies them as the principle of the inherent self-activity of the moral ego. If this be so, Kant has formulated abstractions of the moral consciousness into a system of laws, and imagined that they are the primary facts of

* Cf. *re* Herbart's misinterpretation, p. 72, n. *infra*.

† *Abbott*, p. 88; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 106; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 4.

that consciousness. A world of moral activity is set up upon a foundation of universal and necessary laws typical of, but not derived from, the world of natural phenomena. In this similitude of mechanism there lies the source of much confusion, and we shall return to a consideration of it. But the point for present notice is that moral law is here stated to be a fact * of pure reason, or, in Kant's words—pure reason is practical of itself and gives to man a universal law, which is called the moral law.† This is an ultimate statement of the inner consistency of pure practical reason. Unconcerned with every aspect of individual preferences, and unalloyed with any extraneous detail, this supreme principle of morality, formal in nature and universal in application, is the one fact of reason which has definite positive value: it carries within itself immediate necessity, not the conditional necessity of natural laws, but the self-originated peremptoriness of a free cause, and is valid for all intelligences.

* *Factum*, not *Thatsache*. It is not an empirical fact as Schopenhauer (cf. *Basis of Morality*, tr. 1903, pp. 57, 65) alleges: it rather relates to the inner spontaneity of the practical reason, recognizing the fact of the law's universality apart from its actual realization. Cf. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, pp. 317, 431. Also E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2, p. 173; T. Ruysen, *Kant (Les grands Philosophes)*, 2nd. ed., 1905, pp. 206, 217-18.

† *Abbott*, p. 120; *Watson*, p. 269; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 143; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 31.

CHAPTER IV

THE CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE AND ITS DETERMINATION OF THE WILL

MORAL law reflects not what a rational being desires for his sole benefit, but expresses in itself the formal or objective principle underlying volition: it resides within pure reason, and manifests the spontaneous and original activity of the will. By the command of duty we must seek not the realization of some desirable object, but reveal the conformity of our will to the ideal constraint of objective law for the sake of the law only, and in this respect show the inwardness of our reverence for what is absolutely obligatory on all rational beings. Moral ideas spring spontaneously from reason, and the will, acting in universal accordance with them, is just practical reason. A rational action, fully exemplifying the idea of law, is the absolute determination of moral reason; but we have no instance of such a practical conception in real life as known to us. Our wills are not completely determined according to rational principles, but are liable to the sway of emotions of various descriptions, and their actions are consequently not always reflective of the objective harmony of a system of moral laws. Still, it is a fact of will as practical reason that it cannot avoid the inner constraint of duty, commanding the

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observance of moral laws. The formulation of these obligatory commands or duties is an imperative.

A moral imperative belongs to the dispensation of mankind, for, on this plane of rational being, the will is liable to the influences of passion, to the unreasoning sway of natural desire, and thus is incapable of the immediate consummation of holiness, which, according to Kant, is that state of an intelligible being in whom the moral law is fulfilled unto all perfection.* All laws fulfilled in the Supreme Being take on the form of unconditioned necessity, and do not carry the dead weight of physical impropriety. Desire, as we attribute it to a finite being, has no abiding place in an ultimate intelligence: it is overcome in the unexceptional adoption of law as the only mode of expression: moral activity, in its supreme acceptation, is but the objective phase of the inner determination of absolute being. There are no gradations here: all the exemplifications of law are equally stable, and so fully unfold the undisturbable harmony of the self-subsisting subject, that moral progress has no applicability. Holiness is moral law in unblemished purity and formal perfectness: it is mortality that stains the white radiance of eternity. Such an ineffable serenity of being and absolute freedom from distracting impedimenta have no part nor lot

* *Abbott*, p. 121; *Watson*, p. 270; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 144; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 32.

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in our earthly estate; and, though we may seek to display constant progression towards the ideal life in which they are embodied, we but show forth that moral endeavour, by its inability to pass beyond constraints, rather manifests its supreme end as a never-resting ideal. Moral progress is not lineal development, nor does it resemble an expanding intelligence: it is rather exemplified in the clear and immediate grasp of ultimate goodness, as perfectly embodied in God, as completely realized in his being, and of the self-constraining influence and energy of God's person towards the elevation of the finite will into active union and participation with his own nature. The recognition of this fact is an elemental condition of moral advancement. Its acceptance emphasizes the conception of the all-inclusive authority of the divine will, and the obligation on man's part to fulfil the whole law of righteousness, truth, and love in his own person, because its realization in God is a self-evident fact. The law of duty, as absolutely binding on all men, follows in consequence; thus duty as a moral enactment is something more than a formal conception of an authoritative obligation.*

Now, Kant affirms that all imperatives involve

* This statement scarcely accords with Kant's conception of moral progress; it is contrary to his presupposition that the idea of the moral law is an absolute and undervived fact of the moral consciousness, and determines the conception of the end of conduct.

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an "ought" or a peremptory demand, carrying in itself its own warrant to compel the acceptance of an objective moral principle by the will of a being not perfect in all respects. The supreme imperative is that which commands categorically, and which permits no choice of alternatives, calling forth actions as morally necessary without exception. It is an unconditional formal demand of reason upon a rational intelligence, involving the inflexible law that a maxim, to be a moral principle, must reflect universal obligation.

This absolute universality of law is the mark of any natural system of objects, positively dependable in all their manifestations under all circumstances: however these latter vary, the relentless subservience of all things to the dominance of laws, irresistibly determining them with completest reliability and unfaltering sureness, is the supreme safeguard of this all-inclusive harmony. With this assumption as the type of the perfect moral order, Kant affirms duty, in the form of a universal imperative, as the obligation so to act that one's principles of action should have the unexceptional decisiveness and efficacy of a universal law of nature.* Just as the objective world would reflect to an intuitive understanding the totality of a system of laws, so ought the moral world to be the complete embodiment of the

* *Abbott*, p. 39; *Watson*, p. 242; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 47; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 421.

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universal principles determining the activity of a rational will. But as we do not know an intuitive intelligence in terms of consciousness, and, as only the Supreme Being can reflect an absolute moral order, we cannot pretend to the demonstrable reality of our conceptions, though, in the light of them, we may, with assurance, constantly put forth effort towards their highest realization.

We have thus far only had in mind the form of the categorical imperative; we have yet to establish its possibility, affirming that there is a practical law commanding absolutely on its own authority. This involves Kant's positive conception of freedom.* He has laid down that the world of intelligible ideas conditions the world of sensible existence: in the latter the law of natural necessity prevails, conditioning all phenomena without exception. But, in complete independence of these physical laws, there is the moral law which determines the will of a rational intelligence by inward compulsion. Now, a will that is moved

* Cf. Herbart, *Werke*, h. v. Hartenstein, 1851, v. 9 (*Bemerkungen ü. d. Ursachen, wh. . . . prakt. Phil. srechweren*), pp. 20, 21, (*Freiheit des Willens*), pp. 258, 270, 284, etc., where, on the contrary, he affirms that Kant rests the transcendental doctrine of freedom upon the conception of duty, or the categorical imperative, as the basic principle of ethics. Cf. H. Cohen's criticism of Herbart's contention in his *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, 2nd ed., 1910, pp. 129, 149 ff., 249, 251, 311 ff. Also A. Cresson, *La Morale de Kant*, 2nd ed., 1904, p. 143, who assumes that Kant's law of duty has direct or immediate effects in time, and that the idea of duty is necessarily phenomenal, even on Kantian grounds. (Cf. p. 79, *infra*.)

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to action apart from external pressure, or physical force, is, by its very nature, free, and hence its moral activity resides within itself, so far as it is a member of the world of the intelligence. Because the will of a rational being is therefore free and self-determined, in spite of the fact that the results of this determination must perforce manifest themselves in the world of sense, there is nothing inconsistent in supposing the possibility of an imperative of duty, categorically commanding such a will to action through the pure initiative of a moral principle, inasmuch as the will is free to adopt the law as motive to the construction of an ideal order, though the effects as phenomena must come under the necessity of natural laws.* If the will of man were a perfectly intelligible reality, and not, as is the truth, open to the irrational perversity of contingency, the imperative of duty would be devoid of significance; but as human actions are explainable, in their outward appearance, only as the results of a series of physical conditions, there is certainly required this additional (moral) conception of an unconditional command to put into effect the demands of duty as an objective necessity, even though it may appear that the whole circumstances of external things were against the consummation of the idea. This synthetical "ought," imposed

* *Abbott*, p. 138; *Watson*, p. 277; *Rosenkruuz*, v. 8, pp. 164-65; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 48-49.

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upon a will capable of free action, though liable to hindrance, therefore conditions the sensuous expression of moral determination; and it is only through the idea of freedom that Kant is able to give an intelligible explanation of its possibility. Unless the will of every rational being were free in itself to determine its own activity, unless as practical reason will can regard itself as the author of its principles of action and as independent of all external influence,* the categorical imperative is utterly meaningless. But it has been alleged that Kant's idea of a categorical imperative sets up a moral despotism.† This objection may be raised against Kant's doctrine, if we hold that the categorical imperative is an alien principle, compelling man's submission without question, and so violating his rational nature. But Kant's very purpose in unfolding the imperative of duty has been to gain a law of morality, sufficiently inward as to possess within itself the needful authority. His emphatic rejection of the desire for happiness as motive to moral action is a clear recognition of the fact that he did not seek to base his moral principles upon external foundations. And, above all, he concluded that

* *Watson*, p. 252; *Abbott*, p. 67; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 81; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 448.

† Cf. A. Cresson, *La Morale de Kant*, 2nd ed., 1904, pp. 164-65; R. Strecker, *Kants Ethik*, 1909, p. 28; P. Janet, *Theory of Morals*, tr., 1884, pp. 36, 38; Schopenhauer, *Basis of Morality*, tr., 1903, pp. 10, 30, 33.

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the idea of an imperative was rational, and had its origin in the intelligence itself. The imperative of duty has no power behind it, which can enforce its authority upon all occasions absolutely without resistance, nor is it an external force which a man may call to his aid, merely when he feels himself succumbing to the pressure and stress of untoward circumstances. It is not to be conceived as an *object*, set up against the will over which it has command, as a superior. The categorical imperative does not relate to any object of interest: it is an absolute command, independent of all external, or alien, sanctions: its authority abides inwardly within itself, and thus transcends conditional necessity (*müssen*). Kant has shown that this latter idea of an imperative may be analytically derived.* If we have some end in view, and desire its accomplishment, we must accept the means necessary to attain our purpose. There is no "ought" here, but sheer (rational) compulsion, once the choice has been decided on. Imperatives, so derived, are hypothetical, and require the combining activity of the theoretical consciousness for the attainment of the particular ends. But the categorical imperative concerns only the pure activity of the will itself, not the realization of specific tasks: it is unrestricted by the limitations of sense-experience.

* *Abbott*, pp. 33-36; *Watson*, pp. 238-40; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 41-45; *Akad.*, v. 4, pp. 416-19.

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Kant never separates the conception of a moral duty from that of freedom, and his categorical imperative is meaningless apart from freedom. The idea of dictation does not associate itself with the supreme imperative in its pure transcendental form. This feature of it raises the question as to whether it is only a bare abstraction, and useless as a restraining principle in morality. The elementary "despotism" appears, if at all, when it is maintained that the imperative "lords" it over the desires of the sensible nature of man.* But the very idea of morality is involved in this ceaseless war between "sense and soul," and morality without restraints would have no reference to human life at all. And yet it should not be a question of excluding sense altogether, for sensibility is a permanent feature of our earthly state: the problem is so to reorganize, and remould the sense-life, as that it shall be informed with the uplifting strength of the will, devoted to the call of duty. This incessant antagonism demands the exercise of a principle of constraint: and the conception of an imperative just expresses the law of action of a will, which recognizes the fact of man's dual nature. Deny this dualism, and the idea of imperative goes.

But there is a real difficulty in Kant's problem—How is a categorical imperative possible?—

* Cf. *Kant: Fondements de la Métaphysique des Moeurs*, tr. par V. Delbos, [1907], p. 130 n.

because the question roots itself in his theoretical system.*

In considering Kant's negative bases for freedom, we noticed that he made much of the assumption that, in man's person, there was involved the principle of a timeless noumenal reality as the unconditioned cause of a phenomenal series of events in time. Or, as he put it, "the world of understanding contains the foundation of the world of sense, and consequently its laws also."†

If man abide utterly in the intelligible world, his actions will completely conform to the law of his will as pure practical reason: but that correspondence is just what ought really to be, the "ought" referring to the fact that he is also a member of the world of sense. If this were not so, "ought" would not have any meaning. But, practically knowing himself inwardly as an intelligible being, and knowing positively that his outward being is subject to the unvarying laws of the world of nature, he sees that what he "ought" to be, and do, is just what he "would" do, if he were *wholly* a member of the higher realm.‡

* Cf. D. Neumark, *Die Freiheitslehre bei Kant und Schopenhauer*, 1896, p. 36 ff.; A. Cresson, *La Morale de Kant*, 2nd ed., 1904, p. 143.

† *Abbott*, p. 73; *Watson*, p. 254; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 87; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 453.

‡ *Abbott*, p. 74; *Watson*, p. 255; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 88; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 454.

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If Kant can justify the analogy, he believes he can claim the possibility of the categorical imperative or "unconditional ought." And he relies for his proof upon the common feature of law as the connecting link between the worlds of understanding and sense. Will, being a free causality, and being, of necessity, conceived as self-conditioning, is one with the idea of an unconditioned causality as cause of a completed series of events in the world of sense. This, we have seen, Kant concluded from the rational necessity of assuming a noumenal cause to explain the coming into existence of a series of sensible objects. This was negatively thrust upon him by the limitations of theoretical knowledge. And the assumption that this ultimate cause was timeless and unfettered by natural restrictions, rendered it consistent with the laws of nature,* and easy to accept as opening the way towards a practical foundation for the action of will-causality.

Hence Kant's justification for the possibility of a categorical imperative is deeply involved in his theoretical determinations. But, as against Kant, we showed that he had merely brought into juxtaposition two phases of causal activity through the conception of an abstract likeness † between

* *Watson*, pp. 184, 190; *Müller*, pp. 464, 476; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, pp. 422, 432; *Akad.*, v. 3, pp. 365-66, 373-74.

† Cf. F. Adler, *Critique of Kant's Ethics*, in *Essays in Honor of William James*, 1908, pp. 323-24.

them, *i.e.*, the common element of the category of causality as an *a priori* endowment of the understanding. He had not established real causal connection, nor had he even endeavoured to show the necessity, nor even the possibility, of a higher form of causality according to purpose or end. This also would not fit in with his conception of the categorical imperative as being absolutely unconditional, and void of all reference to objects of interest and desire.

We must not, however, imagine, because Kant finally bases the possibility of the categorical imperative upon the fact of the limitations of man's positive or theoretical knowledge, he meant that the unconditioned law of duty had immediate or direct effects in time.* This would, if possible, require experimental demonstration according to the laws of the world of phenomena, which would be absurd *ex hypothesi*.† But, on the other hand, the hypothetical imperatives, as technical principles, or rules of skill, related directly to sense conditions in considering the means necessary to accomplish ends: they were of conditional necessity, being dependent upon the realization of the

* Cf. *Watson*, p. 190; *Muller*, p. 476; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 433; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 374.

† Cf. A. Cresson, *La Morale de Kant*, 2nd ed., 1904, pp. 133-34, 143, who, opposing this view, holds that, as Kant's imperative of duty is addressed to man as phenomenal, the agent should be *phenomenally* free to execute it.

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desired objects by natural laws.* But a categorical imperative carried its own necessity within itself: it was absolutely binding and unconditional: it did not relate to the possibility of the existence of any object, as a consequence of its motivation of the will: in its activity, it moved within a sphere, independent of all sense conditions as determining factors, and, therefore, it necessitated other categories than the laws of nature to explain its possibility as a practical law. Its reality required the acceptance of the idea of freedom as an immediate fact of reason, in its practical aspect. Kant has undoubtedly drawn an absolute distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives. The one commanded according to a particular interest: the other without reference to any interest at all, other than what was implicated in the moral law itself.

* These rules are nevertheless rational in origin, for the understanding is a faculty of means: otherwise, they would refer only to "subjective and contingent impulses."—V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, p. 353 n. According to Schleiermacher, assuming the moral will to be also rational, Kant's categorical imperative is really hypothetical. Its fundamental expression may take the form, Be rational and act so and so, or do not act so and so, and thus be irrational. The form is useless, unless expressed disjunctively. Cf. his *Werke*, 3te Abth., *Zur Philosophie*, Bd. 2 (*Ueber den Unterschied zwischen Naturgesetz und Sittengesetz*), pp. 406–08. Schopenhauer, concluding that every obligation derived its meaning from threatened punishments or promised rewards, held that the idea of an ought was likewise conditioned, and was thus hypothetical and not absolutely categorical. Cf. his *Basis of Morality*, tr., 1903, pp. 32, 86.

By this distinction Kant denied moral worth to any action which sought to attain a particular object of desire, for the motive was inextricably associated with pleasure; and all pleasures were sensible, and therefore incapable of application to an activity freed from natural limitations. Even granting this denial of a moral value to acts of will at the instance of desire, may we still affirm that Kant entirely dissociated pleasurable actions from morality? Schiller had ridiculed the categorical imperative, if obedience to it necessarily implied joylessness, in well-known lines, which are frequently quoted;* but it should not be overlooked that, while Schiller says he always saw the monk† in Kant, he, none the less, accepted the rigourism of Kant's conception of duty, and denied he was an opponent of the critical system.‡ Indeed, in his endeavour to harmonize duty and inclination,§ he does not subordinate duty to

* Cf. Hastings Rashdall, *Theory of Good and Evil*, 1907, v. 1, p. 120; but V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, pp. 327-29 n., holds that the epigram was not so much against Kant as some of his followers (p. 329 n.)

† Cf. *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*; v. H. S. Chamberlain, 1905, v. 2, p. 199 (Dez. 22, 1798).

‡ Cf. *Akubl.*, v. 11 (*Briefwechsel*, v. 2), pp. 487-88; *Rosenkranz*, v. 11, pt. 1, p. 169. Cf. also K. Bache, *Kants Prinzip der Autonomie*, 1909, p. 12 (*Kantstudien, Ergänzungshefte*, No. 12), and H. Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy*, tr., 1900, v. 2, p. 84.

§ Cf. Schiller, *On Grace and Dignity in his Works: Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays*, tr., 1903, v. 1, pp. 199-207. Also, Kuno Fischer, *Schiller als Philosoph*. 2nd ed., 1892, v. 2, pp. 92-98.

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desire; and the difference between his position and Kant's is that where Kant seeks absolute subordination of inclination to duty, Schiller would favour their ultimate harmony.* The real point in Kant's rigourism—which also commanded the admiration of Herbart and Schopenhauer †—was its complete exclusion of hedonistic motives from moral determination. But obedience to the moral law was not necessarily unaccompanied with pleasurable feelings. ‡ What Kant excludes from his moral valuation is the idea of pleasure as a predisposing motive to an action. We have already referred to his remark in the *Metaphysic of Ethics*, § that what is done, not with joy, but as a compulsory service (*Frohndienst*), has no internal moral value for him who obeys the call of duty. And the fact that Kant affirmed that noumenal-, or will-, causality must be related to the world of objects in time as their phenomenally-unconditional cause—though we may disagree with his theoretical

* Cf. A. Messer, *Kants Ethik*, 1904, pp. 239–40, who considers the difference to be merely terminological: K. Vorländer, *Kant, Schiller, Goethe*, 1907, pp. 102–03.

† Cf. Herbart, *Werke*; h. v. Hartenstein, 1851, v. 9 (*Bemerkungen über die Ursachen, etc.*), p. 19. A. Schopenhauer, *Basis of Morality*, tr., Lond., 1903, pp. 23, 25. But both of them dispute Kant's foundations.

‡ Cf. Abbott, pp. 330–331 (Kant's note in reply to Schiller), also pp. 152, 186; *Rosenkranz*, v. 10, pp. 24–25, v. 8, pp. 181, 222; *Akad.*, v. 6, pp. 23–24, v. 5, pp. 61, 93. Cf. also A. Messer, *Kants Ethik*, 1904, pp. 235–36.

§ *Metaphysic of Ethics*, tr. Semple, 3rd ed., 1871, p. 303; *Rosenkranz*, v. 9, p. 353; *Akad.*, v. 6, p. 484.

ground for this affirmation—and the fact that he also directly associated pleasure or pain with objects of experience, as desired or undesired, conclusively show that he did not deny the possibility of a moral action having, as its phenomenal consequence, the feelings of pleasure or pain. Only these feelings could not morally determine the action. The existence of pleasure can only be derived analytically from the fact of its being experienced, and therefore it cannot furnish an universal foundation for moral action. If this be Kant's position, then it were false to assume that his abstract expression of an unconditional ought was the final or complete statement of his ethical position,* and then criticise him as though our assumption constituted his whole case. Kant's aim was to reduce to the lowest positive terms the prime and original motive of moral activity, and give this a formal expression.†

But, in thus stripping all the acts of will of their varying phases, and in seeking for an original fact underlying them and expressing formally an essential condition of morality, it is objected against Kant that he disregarded the social basis of morality.‡ While it may be true that an uncon-

* "On est trop porté à regarder l'impératif catégorique comme le dernier mot de la doctrine kantienne."—Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905. p. 354 n.

† Cf. H. S. Chamberlain, *Immanuel Kant*. München, 1905, p. 703.

‡ Kant of course recognized that man as a moral being was a member of society, and not an isolated unit.

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ditional ought was not altogether unrelated to feelings of pleasure as accompanying its acceptance by the will, still, Kant's discovery of this idea of ought resulted from a process of abstraction carried on within the individual consciousness,* and, consequently, it was not allowable for him to relate this abstract residuum to what it had been abstracted from. And we have seen that this objection really goes down to his uncritical separation of understanding from reason, and his endeavour to unite them through the common bond of the universality of all law. He had drawn forth the ideas of necessity and universality by abstraction from the synthetical processes, in which they were revealed as ideal elements, and given to them a transcendental reality, making them effective as intellectual instruments on their own account. To set them up as criteria determining the validity of processes, from which they have originally been abstracted, is the fundamental weakness of these transcendental categories; but this illegitimacy of their application to the facts of real life does not lie against them as truly formal elements in the facts themselves. While we may readily agree that the primary conception of duty should be fundamentally necessary and universal, there is no need to affirm the abstract consistency of this

* Cf. J. G. Schurman, *Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution*, 1881, pp. 66-67.

notion, as being in itself the determining principle of the will in human conduct, apart from the synthetical relations in which it is inherent. Here again we may state that this is an instance of the difficulties consequent upon Kant's setting out from a negative idea of freedom, involving the reduction of nature to a mutual interaction of ideal causal elements, in which efficiency, as we know it in the real world, is absent. The fact of efficiency involves the deeper conception of causality as implicating purpose, which in its turn cannot be dissociated from the activity of a designing intelligence. Kant neglected to follow up this more complex notion of the causal relation, and sought to satisfy himself with the mere fact of a common element of universality and necessity between all laws of the understanding and the reason, as being sufficient to justify the reality of the causal connection between the sensible and supersensible worlds.* While maintaining the fundamental value of the formal category of causality, we deny the validity of setting up this formal element, on its own account, as being in itself the determining factor in reconciling two spheres of its operation as a universal law. This criticism applies to the categorical imperative. We agree with Adler † that it is not the "formal

* *Watson*, pp. 282-83; *Abbott*, pp. 156, 161-2; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 186, 192-93; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 65, 69-70.

† *Critique of Kant's Ethics*, in *Essays in Honor of William James*, 1908, p. 344.

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character of Kant's ethical principle that makes it unsatisfying," for we have already justified him in seeking for an ultimate basis for ethics. We disagree with him in setting up the principle over against the elements of the moral consciousness from which it has been disengaged,* and we may question with Lotze,† whether there are "wills which, apart from feeling, actually exist and can enter into relations with one another." It was Kant's subjective determination of the moral law which made such a question possible.

But nevertheless it is still affirmed by many Kantians that the categorical imperative does possess content,‡ which is brought out clearly, it is believed, by means of the principle of the autonomy of the will, involving the demand that we should act only out of respect for the law. The content of the formal principle of morality, or the categorical imperative, is just the law itself (*Gesetzesinhalt*), which we must reverence out of

* Wundt does not accept the imperative as a fact immediately given to us. He rather likens it to the forms of knowledge, which can only come to consciousness in its application to concrete content. "The proof of its merely formal nature lies in the fact that it cannot be derived from the given sensuous content of experience." Cf. his *Ethics*, v. 2: *Ethical Systems*, tr., 1897, p. 114.

† *Microcosmos*, tr., 1885, v. 1, p. 692.

‡ Cf. V. Delbos in his introd. to *Kant: Fondements, etc.*, p. 45 ff.; K. Bache, *Kants Prinzip der Autonomie*, 1909, pp. 7, 14 (*Kantstudien, Ergänzungshefte*, No. 12). Cf. also Green's criticism, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 4th ed., 1899, pp. 233-35.

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sheer duty. On the other hand, there is the content of the action, resulting from the moral law in determining the will to activity; but the action-content is material, and under natural necessity, whereas the law-content is formal, and under internal or rational necessity.

Inasmuch as morality concerns itself with what ought to be, and if we also agree that its principles cannot be derived from what is, though they may be used to give a deeper significance to existence,—it follows of course that the “content” of a law of noumenal causality does not exist, in the same sense, as the content of a law of nature. Moral laws, being transcendent of sense determinations, have in themselves independent worth; but are we to conceive of them just as laws in themselves, apart from the objects or ends of moral endeavour? Kant has given an *a priori* value to all laws, as original elements of the mental constitution of rational beings, in contradistinction to their value, when applied to materials furnished to the understanding by the senses. In a perfect or supersensible world these laws would possess in themselves their own “content”; the intelligible order of relations would be just the laws in their own objectivity. And moral laws, being absolutely independent, would be similarly objective,—universal and necessary for all rational beings. But this conception of law involves no more than the conception of identical

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relations, merely the formal principles of activity, apart from the things, or beings, through whom, or in whom, the laws are embodied.* If real and effective, the laws must be revealed in operation, and that implies a particular reference.† And Kant's difficulty is to justify the fact of the objective applicability of moral law: he has excluded all elements of desire as positive factors in moral development as such: he has striven to rise to a conception of the ideal principle of morality from a negative starting-point. We have yet to see how far he can legitimately unfold a positive determination. In this connection we shall consider his conception of the autonomous will.

* Cf. E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2, pp. 215, 227. J. Dewey and J. H. Tufts, *Ethics*, 1909, p. 352. H. Höfding, *History of Modern Philosophy*, tr., 1900, v. 2, p. 86.

† Hence, according to Schleiermacher the law is not a "mere Ought."—*Werke*, 3te Abth., Bd. 2, 1838, p. 409. Cf. J. G. Schurman, *Kantian Ethics and the Ethics of Evolution*, 1881, p. 54 ff.

CHAPTER V

MORAL AUTONOMY: THE UNITY OF FREEDOM AND THE MORAL LAW

A LAW of external necessity is a natural law; the moral law is one of internal necessity, its compulsion implying self-imposition. ⁺Being thus originally formulated as an intelligible fact of reason, the moral law is universal in application. Laws of nature, though necessary, are not unconditionally applicable,* for their universality is limited to what is positive for scientific knowledge. On Kant's assumption a natural law cannot be a condition of freedom: it is rather its direct antithesis, controlling a separate sphere of existence. On the other hand, moral law both conditions and is conditioned by freedom (*i.e.*, in independence of sense-objects), which is the one and only principle in and through which moral activity may be affirmed of any being. If the will were compelled to action by some outward influence, the direction would not be moral, but physical, and would come under the designation of natural law: whereas the morality of will is determined under self-direction; and thus, whatever we may call the initiating principle, its assertion and imposition are immediate, *i.e.*, it is an original determination of pure

* Cf. A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *Philosophy as Criticism of Categories*, in his *Philosophical Radicals*. 1907, pp. 301-03.

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reason. Such an act declares complete severance from sense-control, and is therefore promulgated through freedom; but it implies more than freedom in the transcendental, or negative, aspect. It unfolds a self-enacting moral principle, and thus enunciates the legislative character of pure reason. Through moral law, then, freedom takes on a positive emphasis, and its rational necessity is upheld, affirming its validity as a directive principle of moral action, and establishing its reality as an idea of reason,—which was impossible upon merely theoretical foundations. In this statement of moral autonomy Kant reaches the supreme employment of practical reason. Self-legislative activity of the will (or moral freedom) is, therefore, the “keystone of the whole edifice of a system of pure reason, speculative as well as practical.” *

We have seen how insistently Kant laid down the limitations of the world of natural necessity in order to absolve the conception of freedom from the contradictions which sense-contact would thrust upon it, and how, having secured the consistency of this negative assertion of it, he obtained a positive declaration through the internally-conditioned necessity of the moral law. Thus the moral law expresses nothing else than the autonomy of pure practical reason,† and so,

* *Abbott*, p. 88; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 106; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 3.

† *Abbott*, p. 122; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 145; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 33.

moral action is possible on the assumption of a self-initiating will, capable of directly imposing upon itself the principles of its own activity, and in no wise subordinating itself to external sanctions.

The sole principle of morality, then, is the autonomy of the will, by which is meant that, in any maxim of moral worth, the will shows forth of itself a universal law. The will which is merely subject to law, because of some interest in its operation, is void of moral dignity. The subjection to law in moral terms must be a self-imposed act of will, and, because the will is free to determine itself in accordance with a universal command, intrinsically binding on all rational beings by its mere form, it reveals in this respecting of the law the high dignity of its own nature, and, as Kant puts it, the basis of this moral sublimity* is the will's autonomy. If the will is prompted to accept any principle of action other than one capable of absolute application, it becomes merely a factor of circumstance, and degrades its self-originating power. Even though the object sought be universally desirable,† that does not save the situation: the sanction has an external source: it does not spring from the self-directing

* *Abbott*, pp. 180-82; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 214-16; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 86-88.

† *Abbott*, p. 123; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 146; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 34.

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reason of man, and cannot therefore give an unconditional practical law. Actions of this sort may involve general rules, holding good under specified limitations; but their principles cannot be ascribed to rational beings at all times without exception, and thus are without the objective necessity of that command, which is the distinctive feature of moral law. A maxim of general import may be of value as advice, but is never obligatory without qualification; and every principle of practical application, lacking categorical force, rests upon heteronomy, and is valueless for moral determination. A command of morality demands instant obedience and fulfilment on its recognition by the will, and its moral irresistibility arises directly from its absolute applicability to all rational beings.

If desires enter in at all, heteronomy (or outward compulsion) prevails at once, and Kant will not grant such considerations, whether prudential or otherwise, the dignity of morality. In his connotation he applies *Heteronomie* to *Willkür** (which admits of choice), and not to *Wille* (which is rational and capable only of inward determination according to necessary law). *Willkür* im-

* For a discussion on Kant's uses of *Wille* and *Willkür*, see *Abbott*, p. 268; *Kant's Philosophy of Law*, tr. Hastie, 1887, pp. 12-13; *Rosenkranz*, v. 9, p. 12; *Akad.*, v. 6, p. 213. Cf. V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, 1905, pp. 433-34 n.; H. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, 2nd ed., 1910, pp. 239-40; A. Hegler, *Die Psychologie in Kants Ethik*, 1891, pp. 165-67.

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plies liability to submission to desire, and cannot altogether exalt itself into the *Wille*, which is autonomous or self-legislating. A will, therefore, which expresses itself in complete harmony with the supreme law of morality as an original fact of reason, universally applicable to all rational intelligences, can do so only on the principle of autonomy or self-dependent constraint; for no unconditional command can be regarded as externally binding, as this would be a contradiction in terms. The moral law unconditionally commands the will just because the will, being independent of sense-determination, is free to accept the responsibility of the direction: in the case of a will which is no more than *Willkür*, this determination by the pure form of law would be void of meaning.

Heteronomy refers to all material practical principles in so far as they determine the will, and its designation implies an absence of moral value, the will being completely at the mercy of the varying solitudes of inclination. An autonomous action connotes the causality of freedom: an action under heteronomy implicates physical determination, and possesses no moral significance. The satisfaction of desire is completely cut off from moral approval, and is conditioned entirely by natural necessity, just as any ordinary event in the world of space and time. Emotional affection relates to the sensibility, and thus in-

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volves the forms of sense and the categories for its expression, and these are ontological determinations reflective of experience. The laws, which concern the fulfilment of natural wants, are therefore heteronomous, not carrying their own justification in themselves, but being externally related to the objects, whose realization is thought to be possible by means of them. They only apply under certain definite circumstances and for particular purposes, and possess no validity beyond these conditions. They are merely fitted to the occasion of their application with a view to gain the particular ends sought by the will. These determinations Kant calls "pathological," being mere physical affections.*

Material practical principles are all reduced by Kant to the principle of private happiness. Every determination of the will depending upon any consideration or interest whatsoever, however exalted in conception, is accordingly deprived of intrinsic moral significance: it is externally conditioned, being directed towards the existence of some object likely to give pleasure. The resulting action is due to a wish for something, and does not arise from sheer constraint of duty. In every instance such activity implies, in the last resort, —even though the circumstances may occasion ennobling feelings, the principle of individual hap-

* *Abbott*, p. 167 ff. ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 199 ff. ; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 75.

piness as the predisposing condition;* and this motive owes its origination to some object of desire, which of course is material in Kant's view. Every principle of the will, which is without the equivalence of self-direction and self-imposition, is thus void of moral worth, and is assigned a material origin; and, on Kant's showing, there is only one principle of fundamental importance for moral action, and that is the universal legislative power of a rational will, or moral autonomy. Every other practical principle comes under the heading of heteronomy, the maxim being given by the object to the will accepting it.

Kant classifies these material principles, which are founded upon heteronomy, according as they are empirical or rational.† They are all in some measure variants of the general principle of happiness, and their differences are due to the sources of their inspiration and direction.

The empirical principles are comprised under the pseudo-moral feelings, relating directly to the pleasure of the individual, and thus it is utterly impossible to build any self-consistent moral superstructure upon them. So-called moral feelings are no more than pleasurable emotions tinged with virtue, or self-respect, and as the element of agreeableness can only be aroused in

* *Abbott*, 123; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 146; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 34

† *Abbott*, p. 129; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 154; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 40.

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relation to sensibility, they cannot be ascribed unqualified moral worth, conformable with the Kantian distinction.

Perfectibility is the dominant note of the rational principles as material bases for morality. The idea of perfection cannot be given by the understanding: it abides in the intelligence or reason, and is therefore of objective significance. In this respect it takes the form of an ideal, and may relate either to itself, as the ultimate effect possible to a moral being, or to God himself, as a self-completed being, independent of all other rational beings. In the former instance it refers to the highest perfectibility of man as his true end, and this end must necessarily determine the means peculiarly fitted to subserve its realization. This is sufficient for Kant to gain his point: the determining principle of moral endeavour is here placed in the ideal perfection of human nature as end, and not in the self-legislating will, initiating maxims of unlimited scope, which, by their inward determination, resolve the will to fulfil itself in perfect conformance to absolute law. In principle, therefore, there is no distinction between the relation of personal perfection, as an end determining the will, and that of a desire for particular objects; for the source of the determining principle in both cases is similar in respect to its origin being external to the will.

Kant disowns the theological conception of

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God's perfection as the primal foundation for moral law; * for, though the external constraint is here most pronounced (and that is ample to vitiate the moral application of the principle), yet our very idea of God is derived from reason itself, and his existence, being problematic on theoretical grounds, can only be established practically through freedom, which, in its turn, only attains a positive service through moral law. Thus an explanation on these terms involves the very thing to be accounted for. But, even so, God's will, as a primal source of moral law, would, in Kant's view, exert extraneous compulsion, and associate its appeal with an object of desire: thus it would be dependent upon its agreeableness for its acceptance as a practical principle. Empirical origination of moral conceptions is positively abhorrent to Kant, and every variant of outward pressure is linked with the principle of self-love, and comes directly under the dominance of physical necessity. And this dependence on sense completely cuts off all moral relations.

Leaving for the present critical consideration of Kant's moral theology, we shall confine ourselves to a further discussion of his positive basis for freedom itself. Delbos has pointed out the distinctions involved in Kant's ideas of freedom.† In

* *Abbott*, p. 222; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 266; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 125.

† Cf. V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, pp. 455-57; A. Messer, *Kants Ethik*, 1904, pp. 327-38; O. Riedel,

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the Fundamental Principles of Morality (Grundlegung), the ruling idea is that of the autonomy of the will; in the Critique of Pure Reason that of the faculty of commencing of itself a series of events. Regarded negatively, there appears to be a common feature in these two phases of freedom—they express a power or authority independent of empirical events or sensible impulses. On the positive side, there is a distinct difference. The former leads to the idea of a universally legislative and intrinsically good will; the latter assists in explaining by an absolute spontaneity the primal origination of human actions, and in establishing the responsibility of the active subject. In his separation of these ideas of freedom, Delbos appears to treat the negative phase as something apart from Kant's final and positive conclusion. These conceptions would be radically distinct if, while the one implied that moral freedom was one and the same with the law, the other allowed it to be possible to act contrary to the law. But Kant did not so distinguish them. He had defined the will as the faculty of acting according to principles,

Die Bedeutung des Dinges an sich in der Kantischen Ethik, 1888, pp. 26-28, following Zange and Gerhard; H. Sidgwick, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Kant, etc.*, 1905, p. 170 ff.; also his *Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed., 1907, pp. 57-58, and Appendix, pp. 511-16, which deals with the verbal ambiguity of Kant's account of free will. Sidgwick attributes "neutral freedom," or liberty of choice, to Kant's noumenal causality. (See p. 110, *infra*.) Höfding is prolific in distinctions, cf. his *History of Modern Philosophy*, tr., 1900, p. 573, n. 23.

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which are formal and rational, being independent of all exterior conditions. Through them the will expresses its freedom as self-legislative. The moral law is thus identical with the autonomy of the will itself; and the power of acting contrary to the law does not belong to it. But this notion is positively consistent with Kant's idea of freedom as the faculty of spontaneous origination; for he does not mean to relate it to particular events in time. He holds it to be a rational necessity to assume this faculty to afford an explanation for the primal origin of an entire series of temporal events, taken together as a single completed whole.* The conception of this whole and the transcendental idea of freedom both belong to reason, and therefore their relation to one another is not demonstrable according to theoretical principles. It expresses the unity of the moral order, which is timeless. Moral responsibility does not therefore concern the actual production of phenomena, but conforms to the idea of a self-determining primal causality. Only such activity is morally free for Kant. The bringing into being of phenomena manifests what he calls the comparative notion of freedom,† which is derivable from experience,

* *Abbott*, pp. 192-93; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 230; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 99. Cf. Herbart, *Werke*, h. v. Hartenstein, 1851, v. 9, p. 282.

† *Abbott*, p. 189; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 226; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 96.

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and connotes movement in conformity with desires. It is the will, as faculty of desire, that has relation to impulses, originating in sense experience; and it may act either with, or contrary to, them. So far as it resolves these sense impulses into some form of unity, the will shows forth ability to choose means to rationally determined ends; but their realization belongs to sense experience, and therefore cannot unfold moral freedom. Mental activity is a fact of knowledge, and not an integral element in the transcendental idea of freedom; it is a factor in what are usually termed free actions, the movement of an arm, etc.; but these are not instances of the freedom of Kant's practical reason,* which, as a positive idea, goes beyond sense-determinations. This conception of freedom as one with moral law is, as we have pointed out, the crowning work of the Critiques.

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant started his investigation with sense data which, he affirmed, became resolved into objects of experience through the pure forms of space and time and the categories of the understanding; and he further declared that we could have no positive knowledge of objects which we may conceive as problematically existing beyond the limits of experience, though he admitted the necessary value of these conceptions as regulative ideas,

* *Abbott*, pp. 188-9; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 224-28; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 94-98.

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determining the bounds of phenomena. Kant, thus finding that the iron-bound necessities of knowledge could not allow for the exercise of moral freedom, sought to reveal limits to the sway of natural law, and so condition it that the idea of a free cause, acting within a sphere apart from that in which the laws of phenomena obtained, might not be inconsistent with natural necessity. This was regarded as an important contribution, secured by the limitations imposed by pure reason upon the operations of the understanding. But this negative idea of transcendental freedom becomes the means towards the establishment of freedom upon a positive and practical basis. In the *Fundamental Principles (Grundlegung)* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant starts with this hardly-won idea as a presupposition, enabling him to seek unfettered the positive determination of freedom. He is not so much expressing two different ideas under one term, as deepening, or rendering more complex, the idea of freedom itself. In the first place, in relation to morality, he must advance upon the conceptions of conditioned spontaneity to which the understanding was limited: he must rise to the idea of a self-originating activity or absolute spontaneity, and this is rather involved in the fact of autonomy than as being a form of freedom radically different. One may rightly question the theoretical foundations of Kant's

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position, but there is no doubt that in endeavouring to give a positive interpretation to freedom he was in no way disannulling the conclusions laid down in his former work,* and thus setting up further irreconcilable distinctions. We are more consistent to his thought in showing that he was developing the content of the idea of freedom, until it should find its ultimate expression in the form of an autonomous will.† Hence desires could have no immediate relation with Kant's idea of moral freedom. He unreservedly associates them with some object wished for on account of pleasure in its existence, the object being the determinant of the volition; and, if the will be motivated to action through desires, its activity is therefore aroused under an external control. There is certainly activity of will, but it is capricious, dependent upon occasional excitement. This conception of ideational compulsion, or, as Leibniz has it, of an *automaton spirituale*,‡ negates freedom as revealed in the activity of a self-determined subject, for the incentive to movement is not self-initiated, but is prompted by a source associated with sense-affectations. If th-

* Cf. Müller, p. 477 ; Rosenkranz, v. 2, p. 434 ; Akad., v. 3, p. 375.

† Cf. Kuno Fischer, *Critique of Kantian Philosophy*, tr., Ch. II., § II., 2—*Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, New York, v. 20, 1886, pp. 173-74.

‡ Abbott, p. 190 ; Rosenkranz, v. 3, p. 228 ; Akad., v. 5, p. 97.

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activity of the self be no more than this internal adjustment of volitions, even though the determining agencies be not physical, but elements within consciousness; and, even if we grant that their causality implies something different from a mechanical determination, still, Kant avers that it is merely the freedom of a turnspit,* and far from that of a morally self-respecting subject. This psychological causality, if we may call it so, resembles external causality, in so far as it is reducible to succession of events in time; it is therefore subsumed under natural necessity; and freedom, implying independence of sense-conditions, is impossible on these terms. Actions thus determined are not in the immediate power of the subject agent: they may be observed by him as going on within his empirical consciousness, but he is powerless to direct their movements, for their origin resides in an extra-mental source. It has been fundamental with Kant to separate the sensitive and rational aspects of man's nature, and, although he endeavours to construct ideal connecting links, they do not overcome the harshness of the original abstraction, which cannot be substantiated as a necessary psychological assumption. Kant does indeed modify the separation, but the artificiality remains. By disannulling sensibility, Kant is com-

* *Abbott*, p. 191; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 228; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 97.

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pelled to resolve the will's activity into that of a pure intelligence determined by universal law. In the psychology of will we do not abstract from sentiency, and consider will merely in relation to what is non-sentient or intellectual, but we consider will as a factor of the whole self.* "A life guided by will, . . . is a life in which each impelling idea, as it presents itself, is dealt with, and subdued to a larger ideal or conception of life's total meaning and purpose, in which for action of the reflex type there is substituted action which is the result of deliberate choice." † Voluntary action involves intelligent direction, and implies control and discrimination of desires according to a definite end or purpose. In this higher development of will power, we do not lose contact with sense-reality, but thread our way with circumspection through the fleeting aspects of sense-consciousness, manipulating them to the best advantage for moral progression. This act of deliberate selection is fundamental, and is meaningless dissociated from its connection with sense-stimulation; its growth in effectiveness is seen in the greater strength the will has, both over natural forces and insistent impulses, in reducing them to a more adequate expression of the upward endeavour of the soul.

* Cf. Herbart, *Werke*, h. v. Hartenstein, 1851, v. 9 (*Bemerkungen über die Ursachen, etc.*), p. 26.

† J. Seth, *Study of Ethical Principles*, 10th ed., 1908, p. 43.

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We cannot neglect these psychological facts concerning volition, when we enter upon the problems of ethics. By endeavouring to remain in a sphere transcending sense, though it strengthened his conclusion that man's freedom cannot be psychologically (empirically) established, Kant deprived himself of an essential factor in its real determination, which came to sight in man's immediate contact with nature or the external world. Whether the causality be originated from within or from without, we should be able to set forth the fact in terms conformable to our intelligence. An external direction is, according to Kant, sufficiently explained by natural causes, and is definitely limited to the range of the understanding with its categories. Such movement is not associated with constructional effort to realize an ideal; if the inner being of man be comprised of 'centres of indetermination,' his actions will merely be the reflexes of these psychological disturbances, and, strictly speaking, far from revealing indetermination, they manifest the irresistible pressure of naturally-determined causes. If the will be under the immediate influence of desires, undirected by some definitely-conceived end of action, self-determination is lacking,* and the activity is not "noumenal," and may be conformed to the interpretation of the understanding.

* Cf. J. Ward, *Psychology* in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., v. 22, p. 600.

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These inclinations are regarded as instances of psychological causation: they are not practical but "pathological." If they are said to have an inner compulsion, as lying within the acting thing itself,* or as being ideas within the mental texture of the man, Kant would repudiate the suggestion as a "wretched subterfuge." † These psychical propensions may by their nature be void of spatial externality, but they are still explicable by him as time-determinations, being states succeeding one another in sense-experience. This fact precludes their acceptance as evidence of free causation; and, further, they are definitely restricted to the sphere of knowable experience determinable by the categories of the understanding. But an act of spontaneity, or self-origination (which for Kant is the essence of moral freedom) exceeds these limits, or rather involves complete severance from sensuous impulsion. Kant insists on freeing moral conceptions from mechanical implications, and in endeavouring to render them pure, he abstracts from all connection with the world of sense, and strives to construct a system of intelligible realities under the direction of pure reason. The principles of scientific knowledge as formulated by him in the Critique of Pure Reason were not regarded as ultimate explanations of reality: they hold true within the area prescribed for

* *Abbott*, 189; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 226; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 96.

† *Ibid.*

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them; disconnected with sensibility, they are valueless. Desires, inclinations, etc., all involve elements of sense: they demand realization not as being of worth in themselves, but as means prompting the existence of objects which are likely to afford pleasure to the subject (*Willkür*), experiencing them. Even though the objects be not actualized in sense-experience, still the imagination of them affords pleasure. Being therefore referable to the forms of sensibility, desires and feelings cannot exemplify in themselves the activity of a free causality, which is by its nature independent of sense. This being so, moral action must be apart from movements aroused by a feeling-consciousness, and hence transcendent of physical and psychical necessity.

Thus we dissociate entirely the idea of morality from the world of mechanical causation. Nor can we explain it empirically as the growth of custom and traditionally-accepted lines of conduct. These theories involve habit as the basis of their explanation, and constantly repeated movements—unconsciously performed—reduce us finally to sense-reality for the source of moral conceptions.* Hence all volitions because of their psychological associations are denied moral worth by Kant. This decision of Kant's is indefensible, if we deny his assumption of the thing in itself,

* Cf. L. Stahlin, *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, tr., 1889, p. 73.

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and affirm the unity of reality as a whole, holding at the same time that, although it is not completely to be encompassed by our intelligence, we are yet in a position to state all we do know of it in terms consistent with the real itself. But we must not overlook Kant's effective stand against empiricism: he resolutely denied that we could establish freedom empirically from a mere observation of human behaviour. Accepting this conclusion, we may still object that it was unnecessary to disconnect moral determination from direct association with desire, and Kant's own effort towards a reconciliation between virtue and happiness* clearly points to the inutility of the abstraction.

Denying moral sanction to all actions performed by the will at the instance of desire, Kant accepted the pure form of law as alone capable of determining the will as a moral subject. He is careful to maintain that in morality we are not dealing with actions viewed as phenomena, but with their moral possibility. Hence his idea of self-activity relates to the moral conception of an action, not to the perceptual result. Untrammelled possibility connotes spontaneity, and implies a subject free and creative. The notion of spontaneity first arose in connection with the synthetical unity of consciousness as the

* Cf. *Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason*, ch. 2.

functional basis for the organization of the world of experience into a unified whole. Synthesis implies something to be held together in unity, and this mental synthesis was associated with sense data, without which it could not operate; and its universality obtained unrestrained validity within limiting conditions imposed by sense. But moral law—as the universal form of noumenal activity, is spontaneous in itself, and it operates purely within the sphere of reason, and its activity means the pure form of activity—not the activity of a self moulding its own inner experiences. The moral law does not express its inner determination through experience; this would contradict its essential feature as a self-motived law. Thus the synthesis of moral law is to be distinguished from the combining activity of the understanding, the latter being a form of mental freedom which, in Kant's view, is psychological, and unworthy of the name of freedom in its higher import. In itself as *a priori*, a law of the understanding belonged to pure reason, but its inherent activity only had positive meaning in so far as it transformed the elements of sense, and moulded them into objects of experience. Hence its spontaneity, being *known*, was conditioned, not absolute, and therefore not (intelligibly) free. This notion of conditioned spontaneity necessitated the idea of unconditioned or transcendental freedom, if a rational explanation of the ultimate determination

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of the world of experience were to be forthcoming. Instead of working out an organic connection between these two notions, Kant laid the former aside, as it were. The negative supposition of a transcendently free causality, demanded by it, was taken up, and being isolated or hypostasized, it was easy to find one's self in need of a justification for the conception of an unconditioned cause apart from the world of the understanding. And so Kant reached the idea of an *a priori* practical law, underived from experience, as an elemental fact of reason.

The idea of freedom, according to Kant, is identical with the idea of practical law. The will that is conditioned by a law, springing from pure reason and carrying its own necessity with it, is unconditionally free. Moral law is one and the same with the autonomy of the will. Hence it follows that the will that is moral cannot have the power to choose to act,* either in accordance with or contrary to the law; and yet is it not a fact that the will is empirically determined to action by desires in opposition to the law? We shall have to face this problem more fully when we treat of the objects of good and evil

* *Abbott*, p. 282; *Kant's Philosophy of Law*, tr. by W. Hastie, 1887, p. 36; *Rosenkranz*, v. 9, p. 28; *Akad.*, v. 6, p. 226. Cf. E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, 1889, v. 2, p. 255 ff.; Herbart, *Werke*, h. v. Hartenstein (*Gespräche über das Böse*), v. 9, p. 112-13; T. Desdouits, *La Philosophie de Kant d'après les Trois Critiques*, 1876, p. 342.

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in reference to Kant's principle of freedom. Here it will suffice to state that Kant finds a solution in the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. The sensible experience of man cannot give us the idea of his freedom as a supersensible being. The faculty of choice, as regards objects of desire, is irrevocably related to the sensibility, and belongs, as a fact of experience, to the sphere of natural necessity. Liberty of selection is only apparent: the choice is determined by external objects, having power upon the empirical self. The transcendental ego, or rational self-consciousness, is untouched by these considerations. In Kant's judgment, the freedom of the supersensible self is not capable of desiring particular objects: it has transcended these wants of the empirical nature: the freedom of the self-conscious ego is realized in its ideal constructive activity in fulfilling itself in a world adequate to itself, or in giving complete objective expression to its own inner determinations. It is just because man has a dual nature that he cannot work out this idea of himself unto perfection, and he is compelled to submit to the defects of an empirical consciousness, but this in no way impairs the fact of the supersensible world, in which he can completely realize his moral self in freedom.

This denial of choice, as a moral attribute of man, is a consequence from Kant's severance of

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desires from the pure activity of the will. If desire at all influences the will, heteronomy prevails: the will is under a power alien to its inherent nature. Or, rather, it is not the pure will that is thus active, it is the empirical will,* or self, which is no more than a phenomenon in the world of sense-experience. And the man, so acting, has refused to recognize the transcendent character of his moral nature. The morally-determined will, being an intelligible reality, is above the laws of change which only obtain in the empirical world: its character is abiding and fixed.† But it is clear that it is impossible to remain consistent here, for the power of actual choice in the determination of one's activities is essential to the exercise of human freedom, as we know it.‡ And yet, we may also agree with Kant that the mere choosing to seek objects of desire for the sake of happiness, and shunning others as likely to bring pain, are not the positive manifestations of a moral act. In moral freedom, the idea of choice rather relates intimately to the great issues involved in the realization of one's self (as a moral ideal) in reference to other selves in the same order of being, and the

* *Abbott*, p. 282; *Kant's Philosophy of Law*, tr. Hastie, 1887, pp. 35-36; *Rosenkranz*, v. 9, p. 28; *Akad.*, v. 6, p. 226.

† *Abbott*, p. 193; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 230-31; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 99.

‡ Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. iii., ch. 3.

complexity of these personal relations enhances the moral value of our freedom of choice, enlarging the scope of alternatives, and thus enriching the content of our spiritual experience.* The dictum of Kant that every other person must be regarded as an end in himself and never as a means towards one's own self-realization shows its weight here; but, nevertheless, Kant's denial of choice in matters non-sensuous is a serious infringement upon the idea of morality as ordinarily conceived. And we have learned that his justification rests upon a theoretical basis—the absolute distinction between phenomenal and noumenal worlds—which we cannot accept.

While we may agree that the most prominent feature in the moral life, as revealed by Kant, is the free activity of will in response to the inner constraints of law as against subservience to passion or external objects of desire, still we need not conclude, as he did, that such a principle of moral activity only obtained in a world transcending the limitations of sense and understanding. Self-determined action on the part of a living agent is positively essential to its moral being, but we are not bound to accept the fact of freedom as the result of the abstraction of selves

* Cf. W. Jerusalem, *Introduction to Philosophy*, tr., 1910, p. 257; Herbart, *Werke*, h. v. Hartenstein, 1851, v. 9. (*Freiheit des menschl. Willens*), p. 265; B. Bosanquet, *Prediction of Human Conduct*.—*International Journal of Ethics*, v. 21, p. 13.

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from things.* In the exercise of our moral freedom we have to reckon with a resisting external world; but the opposition is not final and absolute. Nature is under law. The universality of her laws may be relied on and organized. By this means what was seemingly a stubborn medium becomes an instrument for the expression of mind and its determinations. This fact is essential to the exercise of human freedom. If the sequences in nature were arbitrary and utterly at the mercy of blind chance and varying laws, man would have no means of control or direction. But he inevitably trusts in the intelligible response of nature to his demands. In spite of occasional lapses, more apparent than real, he still confides in the unalterable laws, and their systematization constitutes them an efficient factor for the display of his activities and for the overcoming of the opposition of environing conditions.† This organization of the external world is the unity of nature as object for self-consciousness; and abiding within the sphere of the self-conscious, it becomes the reflection of self-active being, revealing its spontaneity in a universe which it strives to reconcile with itself. The

* William James's conception of "free will" as the "character of novelty in fresh activity-situations" (*Essays in Radical Empiricism*, 1912, p. 185), is open to similar criticism, as omitting the fact of self-origination. Cf. also J. M'Kellar Stewart's *Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy*, 1911, pp. 252, 257.

† Cf. D. Munro, *Schleiermacher*, Paisley, 1903, p. 230.

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influences of external objects are not to be rejected without criticism as of no moral value. As stimuli to action, they have their place as natural wants, but they must be subordinated to the ethical direction of a mind capable of determining their worth and significance in moral action.* Without this principle of self-initiating, self-directing activity, moral life is impossible: it must simply be accepted as an ultimate fact of ethics. Its application must cover every individual being, and, as a primal condition of morality, it must find a place in any synthesis of life that is ultimate for man.

Morality and freedom, in Kant's system, mutually interpret one another. Freedom is the *ratio essendi* of the moral law: the moral law is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom.† Without freedom morality would be engulfed by natural law: and without moral approbation freedom would be no more than mere avoidance of sensuous contact. In its first signification as independence of external constraint, freedom becomes the instrumentality permitting the possibility of an analysis of moral principles, and the establishment of these foundations of morality would be clearly impossible without the rational presupposition of a free causality. We have as intelligences no

* Cf. J. R. Illingworth, *Divine Transcendence*, 1911, p. 71.

† *Abbott*, p. 88; *Watson*, p. 268; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 106; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 4.

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arbitrament in the matter: either there is no morality of any kind, or there is freedom. Mere mechanism cannot explain the insatiable desire of the understanding to pass beyond its limitations, and the fact that we do have conceptions, transcending sensible reality, implies at least a capacity to outstrip the restraints of a consciousness, dependent upon the presence of external objects for its original activity. And the mere assertion of this capacity is sufficient warrant to pursue the probability of reaching the idea of an unconditioned, consistent with the complete reduction of all phenomena to the determinations of natural law. This, as we have seen, is Kant's first glimpse of free causation, securing without contradiction the possibility of morality.

The fact that the idea of a free causality, derived from reason itself, could be accepted as problematic, being in no way inconsistent with the necessity of physical law within perceptual experience, thus became an important point of departure for the consideration of the problems of ethical freedom. Assuming this conclusion of the former Critique that we may deal at first hand with principles transcending sensible reality, Kant is enabled to conduct analytically an untrammelled investigation of morality and unfold its primary laws, being careful, of course, to emphasize their eminently practical character, and the

inability of claiming any positive knowledge of them according to his theoretical conclusions. The result of his inquiry into moral principles is that practical reason puts us in possession of a fact, an unconditional ought, which we cannot explain in terms of knowledge, but which we must accept as practically necessary in the world of intelligible reality. This is the moral law which is directly derived from reason, and is the supreme determining principle of the will. In this respect it expresses its formally universal legislative capacity, and thus exemplifies its positive character. Such a law requires no deduction or mediated proof: it bears within itself the affirmation of its rational necessity, and on mere recognition it is instantly accepted without further explanation. It has immediate reference only to the intelligible sphere, being absolutely unhindered by sense determinations. Operating thus, it is a free causality; and, being also universally binding on all noumenal beings, it shows forth the conception of freedom as a positive moral sanction.

CHAPTER VI

MORAL ACTION AND THE CAUSALITY OF FREEDOM

I.—OBJECTIVE CONDITION : GOOD WILL

KANT has now to prepare for the practical applicability of his moral principles. This requires him to mediate between them and the world of experience by means of concepts. Man has by nature a sensible existence, and reference to moral action on his part must take account of this material endowment. Hence the law cannot be expressed absolutely in terms of human nature: its operation may be exemplified therein, shadowed forth, as it were, but never positively unfolded in fulness. Though Kant has endeavoured to reach an ultimate statement of moral law, he is well aware that there are limitations in its applicability to man, whose will is liable, in its activity, to obstruction from desires within, and from the force of circumstances without. This fact compels the necessity of duty, or the obligation to act from reverence for law; and the will of man is accepted as good in so far as it is determined in its action by the pure form of the law, irrespective of any pleasurable accompaniment.

In his analysis of the moral consciousness, as

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worked out in the Fundamental Principles (Grundlegung), Kant laid down the dictum that there is nothing good in itself except a good will,* *i.e.*, a will that is good, purely as will, absolved of all material considerations, even the exalted ideals of culture. Solicitations, arising from likely results of the will's action in the way of happiness, are eschewed, however much it may be desirable that unbroken bliss should be the unfailing reward of good conduct. Speculation upon the ultimate effects of adhesion to the dictates of moral law can in no wise guarantee its faithful fulfilment. Only as the maxims conform to the supreme principle of morality is the moral law fulfilled; or, in other words, goodness of will is the immediate consequence of moral law as determining its activity. We must at least seek it just because it is good and for its own sake. The good then is the object of morality, and the will is good in so far as it is determined by moral law, and not in conformance with subjective wishes, or the external promptings of environment. Without a good will it is impossible to attain the good. In the Analytic, it is not Kant's purpose to detail what the good consists of, and how its fulfilment, as a moral object, may be secured: he is here only concerned with the *a priori* determination of its form as an object of pure practical reason.

* *Abbott*, p. 9; *Watson*, p. 225; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 11; *Akad.*, v. 4, p. 393.

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An object of experience is given in relation to consciousness, being determined by the categories of the understanding, working through the schemata furnished by the imagination. An object of will is not given : it is ideally sought, and may not even be actualized at all. The problem of the will is not so much one of material existence as of moral possibility.* We are not to consider whether the physical means for the realization of an object of desire are at hand or not : morally we are not directly concerned with the empirical conditions necessary for the production of an object. The will's action, in its activity, is all that is involved here. Grant we have the power to create an object desired, ought we to will the action which would achieve its realization? The actual creation of the object as a fact of experience is entirely a matter for determination by physical law, and the grounds of its existence may be theoretically formulated by the understanding as reflecting scientific knowledge. But the willing of the initiating action does not come within the province of experience, and cannot be stated in terms of natural law : it is a moral problem.

The action may be determined in two ways, either by the law itself or by desire for an object whose realization is sought. In the latter instance, the action is instrumental towards an object for

* *Abbott*, p. 148 : *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 177 ; *Akad.* v. 5, p. 58.

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the sake of anticipated pleasure in its existence, and is thus void of moral value.* On the other hand, an act of will which is the immediate consequence of practical law, irrespective of any empirical interest, inheres in the will itself, or expresses the formal nature of its activity under law. The conception of the object, thus willed in direct conformity with the practical law of reason, is the pure formal idea of good. Similarly, evil is formally the conception of an object shunned as not conforming to the universal principle of reason. The ideas of good and evil, therefore, have reference to the will under the determination of the supreme law of morality. Being moved to action of its own initiative, and relying solely upon its own internal organization for the means wherewith to act, the will completely conforms in its determination to rational law, for being positively self-dependent, it obviates all dealing with empirical conditions as instrumental to its activity. We are here concerned with will in its pure formal nature. Thus we cannot attribute the conceptions of good or evil to external objects, and remain within the sphere of morality. A will that is good in itself seeks to find its good within the sphere of self-determination, and reflect the supreme condition of the good in its internal activity. According to Kant's pre-

* *Abbott*, p. 149; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 177-8; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 58.

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supposition that a moral determination cannot possibly be implicated with sense, the condition of the possibility of good must be the law itself; or, in other words, a will whose activity expresses the universal form of the law is a good will, and this acceptance of the moral law as the objective principle of its action constitutes the supreme condition of good as an object of morality. Good is, therefore, according to Kant, the mode of a will's action,* that is, the action as expressing a universal law. Thus every moral determination is good because it takes on a universal form. Hence good is just the law in objectivity. Evil, on the other hand, may be formally expressed as aversion to law as a commanding imperative, avoidance of all inner determination. The conceptions of good and evil, then, as objects of moral action, relate to a rational agent as pure self-active will, not as striving towards an ideal, but as subsuming itself under the laws of its own causality.

Synthetic activity, on the part of a rational being, involves deliberation and adjustment of ends and means. This formal principle of consciousness enables Kant to refer to an action relatively good as distinct from an action good in itself.† Welfare is in this way distinguished

* *Abbott*, p. 156; *Watson*, p. 282; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 186; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65.

† *Abbott*, p. 153; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 182; *Akad.* v. 5, p. 62.

from good, and implies a reference to our physical condition. In regarding our welfare as a possible good, we are predisposed to seek an object of desire as instrumental to a pleasurable experience, but, provided the choice be the result of reasoned deliberation as to means and ends, we may account the object of our choice as a relative good, for upon reflection we have considered it to be good as likely to subserve the highest interests of a pleasurable existence. Kant does not deny the right to happiness, but affirms that morality of itself cannot be its guarantee. This relative aspect of good involving, as it does, the forms of the understanding, is phenomenal, and the maxims determining it are rational practical precepts, and not universal laws, being dependent upon particular judgments, which hold only of individual determinations.

Having shown that the notions of good and evil are consequences of the *a priori* determination of the will through moral law, and that they do not refer to actually existing objects—they are not objects within experience, but belong to the intelligible world of universal relations, Kant sums them up as *modi* of will-causality,* *i. e.*, of a causality determined by a rational conception of law. The good is therefore the activity of will inwardly responsive to universal law; it is a resultant of the operation of moral law through will.

* *Abbott*, p. 156; *Watson*, p. 282; *Rosenkranz*, τ. 8. p. 186; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65.

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Kant's notion of good and evil challenges all moral theories which regard an ideal, whether in the form of the perfection of our nature, the ultimate harmony of our activities, or the will of God, as the determining principle of morality. According to Kant, these ideals are the results, not the conditions of moral activity. His moral concept is just the idea of an object as an effect possible through freedom. The idea of good and evil simply expresses the formal objective of the reason as pure will, relating to intention or moral possibility—not subserving the concrete action as a manifestation of effort towards the realization of an ideal. The will is not good because of what it performs, nor by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end; but it reveals its intrinsic goodness by virtue of its rational submission to a moral imperative. Kant refuses to accept the conception of a moral ideal as a determining factor in morality.* But is it impossible to conceive an end the realization of which becomes for us a duty? Do we in real life divorce that which we aim at from the law of our striving? Kant's initial difficulty in this connection harks back to his severance of the theoretical and the practical aspects of consciousness. By limiting the knowable to the sensible, he denied the possibility of an intellectual interpretation of anything

* *Abbott*, pp. 130, 155; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 155, 184-5; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 41, 64.

which transcended natural laws, or, in other words, the only instruments for directly determining reality, so far as positive knowledge is concerned, lie within the categories of the understanding. Thus, in knowledge, the conception of causality is inextricably associated with the idea of natural necessity. Should the reason conceive a free cause, the idea is merely that of natural causation untrammelled by physical restrictions. We may use this conception in reference to an intelligible system of things, which we conceive ought to exist, but not in reference to a natural order already existing. We require these intelligible notions to get a point of view for explaining the phenomenal world by transcending it. And so we may conclude that whereas these practical determinations are only possible in relation to phenomena, we cannot by any means pass to them directly from phenomena themselves.

Now, a moral ideal implies that we conceive an object worthy of realization, interpretable in terms of what we have already attained, but viewed as completely transcending our present achievement. If the ideal informs our being with the power and strength of a spiritual end, if it possesses a rational inward compelling force, claiming the allegiance of the whole self, we shall, in responding to its demands, realize ourselves in being thus apprehended by it. But a primary condition to be emphasized is that the ideal

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possess elements common with our present condition, and carry the implication that we are progressively advancing towards it. Thus, what we are, and shall be, may not be positively separable from what we do. In this relation, we have passed beyond the notion of natural causation: we have added to it the conception of purpose and end; and will is the only form of causality known to us which subsumes these elements within itself as a principle of action, endeavouring to achieve an ideal in opposition to a resisting medium. In the realization of the purpose which the will holds before itself, it strives to conform its activity with the intellectual comprehension of the ideal, for we may certainly assume a rational relation between the law by which the will is moved to the effort and the ideal which is the object of its choice.* But, because of our finitude, the infinite amplitude of the ideal can never become in the whole specifically actualized.

But the recognition of an ideal and its acceptance as a motive by the will are rational acts, interpretable by the intelligence.† This implies then a self which may deliberately adopt the ideal as the goal of its efforts, and determine the means for its fulfilment. Practical judgment involves

* Cf. Hastings Rashdall, *Moral Objectivity and its Postulates*, in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, new series, v. 5, 1904-5, p. 11.

† Cf. W. Wundt, *Ethics*, v. 3; *Principles of Morality*, tr., 1901, p. 70.

choice, or freedom, exercised in determining how the resisting medium ought to conform to the accepted task of the moral self. Now, it is this rational service of the moral consciousness in judgment, which Kant uses to establish proof of a relative good as against what is good absolutely,* or in itself; for a good that is good only as a means to something other than itself is not genuinely moral in his view. In every act of deliberation, the object must be given and conformed to the synthetical determination of the theoretical self-consciousness. From our point of view the ideal is certainly an object for self-consciousness, if it is to be intelligible; and this is just what Kant denies is possible for a moral conception, which cannot be an object for understanding, but only a concept of reason. He viewed the imposition of an ideal upon the will as though it were an external constraint operating in a manner similar to natural law, and thus he refused to it the value of a moral sanction, as, on his terms, it would appear that a phenomenon determined a noumenal causality, and gave to it a reason for its activity. Kant maintained that the moral ideal is a consequence of the determination of will by law. It is only because man is roused to moral action by the imperative demands of an inward law that he can realize himself as an end, and,

* *Abbott*, p. 153; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 182; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 62.

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by universalizing the principle of his action, he comes to regard all others as ends also. Hence, the moral authority of law holds good in regard to rational beings who are ends in themselves.* Contingency is impossible in the intelligible sphere: there everything is rationally determined as an end in itself. But if man were wholly an intelligible being, he would transcend morality, for it relates to a being under the constraint of law—not to one who “intuits” law. Man needs the compulsion of an imperative because he is both an intelligible and a sensible being. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant averred how needful it was for reason to restrain the understanding within its boundaries; so also, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, it is necessary for moral law, as a rational principle, to curb the onrush of unbridled desires, and make way for the uninterrupted exercise by man of his freedom: and what constitutes the law as moral is just the fact that to be moral it must be self-imposed.

Though we have been concerned with the metaphysical treatment of Kant's ideas of good and evil, we may here mention that his doctrine is quite inadequate to account for the facts of good and evil, as we understand them in practical morality.† His formal conception of evil does not

* *Abbott*, pp. 180-81; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8. p. 215; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 87.

† Cf. N. Porter, *Kant's Ethics*, 2nd ed., Chicago, 1894, p. 215.

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allow for the recognition of a worthy and necessary end of conduct being deliberately refused, as a factor in self-development. The moral law truly is inward, and is not externally imposed, and that constitutes its liability to suffer violence, and be rejected with impunity. Its demands may be refused, and, by an evil choice, the subject may decline to put forth efforts to oppose and overcome, a resisting medium not conducive to his own highest end, or the general welfare of others.

In raising the problem of an object of morality, Kant is confronted with the difficulty of passing from an abstract statement of law and its activity to a concrete realization of it. We may remove the inconsistency by showing that no abstract law is possible as a live factor in a moral synthesis: it has no positive value apart from the acts in which it is manifested as an immanent principle. Kant has referred to this difficulty of his in what he calls the paradox of method in the *Critique of Practical Reason**—that the concept of good and evil must not be determined before the moral law, but only after it and by means of it. In his critical examination of morality, Kant began with the quasi-factum of moral law,† assuming the principles already laid down in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Having demonstrated the fact of

* *Abbott*, p. 154; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 183; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 62-63.

† Cf. E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2, p. 173.

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moral law, he deduces from it a positive conception of freedom, and, with this principle, he is enabled to maintain the intelligible existence of a moral order exemplifying universal law, for moral principles are in themselves rational laws of an intelligible order. This conception of morality is fundamental with Kant, and, on no other grounds, will he grant its possibility. Hence the explanation of his paradox of method. Other systems attempt to find the supreme principle of moral determination in perfection, happiness, feeling, or will of God. But all these are objects to be realized through moral law, and not determining principles of morality itself; and, further, the ideas of them vary in different individuals and races of men. But the form of law is common to all and fundamental; for laws are all identical as to form,* whatever be the matter of their origin, being universal and necessary. Kant endeavours to substantiate the paradox by considering the invalidity of supposing that he has not obtained *a priori* principles of morality. Hence he assumes that we may begin with the conception of goodness as a moral end. Can we deduce from it a law of universal application, determining the will of every rational being to seek the good for its own sake? He avers that it is impossible, for any object, having power over the will, manifests the impo-

* *Abbott*, p. 162; *Watson*, p. 283; *Rosenkranz*. v. 8, p. 193; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 70.

sition of an external sanction, whose appeal rests upon an experiential basis, associated with pleasure or pain.

It may be granted that the general welfare is a desirable end, and, therefore, any action which subserves this pleasurable result may be judged good to that extent, and the judgment would reflect a rational principle, though it could not claim the allegiance of a moral command. Hence the conception of good and evil must be determined, not with reference to the existence of an object of desire, but in relation to the action of a will under a universal law. We cannot deduce the law from the good as an end; but, given the law, the will, determined by it, resolves the necessary conditions for the realization of goodness. The ideas of what is morally good, and what is morally evil, therefore, spring from the will under law, and are revealed in its actions. Hence Kant refers to these conceptions as the consequences of the *a priori* determination of the will.*

Thus the conceptions of good and evil apply only to actions of a free will. The good is the idea of the consequence resulting to the will as a pure self-determining causality; but the cause is not to be considered as operating through an external medium. Hence the category of causation in its theoretical use is of no avail to explain the concep-

* *Watson*, p. 282; *Abbott*, p. 156; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 186; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65.

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tion of a good action as a derivation from moral law. But, considered in itself as a principle of pure thought, it belongs to noumenal reality, and is not dependent on experience for its *a priori* relation to the unity of self-consciousness, and thus it may be regarded as having a practical value in moral activity, which, though a pure expression of law, and reflective of will as a noumenal causality, is, at the same time, phenomenally manifested in the world of experience, seeing that every determination of the will reveals, in the fulfilment of its object, a reference to phenomena—but only on the grounds of analogy.*

Now, it is on this rational foundation of the principles of the understanding that Kant fastens in order to illustrate symbolically the subjection of desires (the moral manifold) to the unity of the practical consciousness.† These varying inclinations of the natural man are to be subservient to the direction of the will, and thus ordered into unity by relation to a self-dependent causality. Kant is precluded from illustrating the connection by means of the ordinary category of causation. Indeed, it is scarcely correct to speak of a causal relation at all from his standpoint, for that is entirely phenomenal. But Kant recognizes that

* Cf. V. Delbos, *La Philosophie Pratique de Kant*, p. 464.

† *Abbott*, p. 157; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 186: *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65; Cf. J. Seth, *Study of Ethical Principles*, 10th ed., 1908, pp. 169, 201-04; E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2. pp. 203-07.

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law is an element common both to the world of natural causes and effects and to the intelligible world of freedom. The realm of the understanding, which we know positively, is resolved into unity according to its categories, which are also natural laws, and so may be regarded as a representation of universal law, and it is through this common fact of law as such that we are asked to accept the *mundus sensibilis* as typical of the *mundus intelligibilis*, so far as the formal nature of their underlying laws are concerned.

This problem of mediating between the form of moral law, as universal and independent of phenomena, and the objective results of moral action is solved, according to Kant, by the symbolical* representation of the connection between them. Seeing that its realization cannot be a matter for scientific determination, the principle of unity necessitates a type of the law, not a schema involving actual contact with phenomena. Being shut off from direct association with sensible existence, Kant thus looks to the pure principles of the understanding to furnish suitable instruments to express the formal nature of the relation. They themselves are laws determining the phenomena, being applicable to actions in the world of sense, but, at the same time, these laws, if formally conceived apart from

* *Abbott*, pp. 160-62; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 194; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 70.

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their involution with sense material,* may be representative of a system of laws, obtaining in the intelligible world.† In this way we may consider the noumenal sphere under the form of law, involving an idea of causality dissociated from physical causation. Though Kant maintains the *a priori* principle of causality as such is the same in both cases, still the nature of its reference to noumena necessitates a synthetical relation to phenomena, and in this connection the application is not to phenomena directly, but through the understanding as reflecting in its activity the pure forms of natural laws.‡

This formal inter-relatedness of universal laws, as an intelligible system, we may find, on analysis, represented in the world of phenomena, when regarded apart from its "filling." The similarity resides in the inner gradings of the pure frame-work, as it were, immanent in the superstructures of the two spheres of reality. Belonging to the supersensible world we are capable, then, of acting in accordance with a

* Cf. A. Fouillée, *Le Moralisme de Kant et l'Amoralisme Contemporain*, 2nd ed., 1905, pp. 158-59.

† Cf. L. Stählin, *Kant, Lotze, and Ritschl*, tr., 1889, pp. 61-68, whose criticism rests upon the ground of the categories as set forth by Kant himself. See *supra*, p. 43, n.

‡ Cf. Fichte's fulfilment of this position in his doctrine of the self-subsistent reason. See his *Werke*, 1845, Bd. 4 (*System der Sittenlehre*), p. 229 ff. Also cf. O. Liebmann, *Kant und die Epigonen* (*Neudrucke, etc., h. v. d. Kantgesellschaft*, Bd. 2), 1912, pp. 80-81 (1865 ed., pp. 81-82).

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moral principle, as though the constraint came from an irresistible law of nature, assuming it were possible to realize the object of the action. Purposes, or ideals, as objectives, are excluded: the original spring of the action is the formal sanction of the law; and this activity, noumenally originated, takes on a phenomenal appearance through the understanding, whose principles of unity are, in themselves, intelligible relations, in formal community with the law of freedom.

From this analysis, it is seen that Kant's explanation of the connection between will as causality and material reality resides in the formal significance of law. The bond of union is just this abstract conception—the idea of inner consistency or unconditioned necessity. But undifferentiated necessity connotes sameness, and not real change, which is essential to the conception of cause, whether final or efficient. We cannot therefore accept as conclusive Kant's reconciliation of the connection of a world of noumenal reality, as the cause or ground, with a world of phenomena reality, as effect or consequence. He appears to justify moral synthesis on the basis of abstract law.*

But, if the will be noumenal causality, and if the moral law be the law of the working of that

* As regards the inability of "law" to exhaust the riches of "fact," cf. J. Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, tr., 1911, pp. 270-71.

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causality, how are we to state the effects of will? How can a formal law become an efficient determinant of will?

Kant has admitted that practical reason may relate itself to the phenomenal world.* This is involved in his idea of freedom as practical. Transcendental freedom is a negative idea, and its value consists in the supposition that it may be thought consistently with natural necessitation. But practically freedom is a positive idea, and, although we cannot state it in terms of the theoretical knowledge, we may infer its necessity for the intelligible world from the fact of the moral law. Through freedom, moral law becomes the fundamental principle of the supersensible world: in this sphere the will is at home with itself, and seeks to unfold an objective order, which will perfectly reflect its free activity. But, so far as natural necessity is concerned, freedom is an impossibility. Still, this form of necessity is not ultimate. Kant insisted upon the restricted operation of mechanical causation. Inasmuch as we may conceive a world beyond the range of physical law, we have warrant to maintain some form of distinction between the two worlds—the one given in theoretical experience, the other ideally constructed by the activity of consciousness. But the problem of their connection is not

* *Abbott*, p. 156; *Watson*, p. 282; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 186; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65.

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one for physical determination; for the phenomenal relations have been exhausted. But, if we consider these relations as the formal expressions of law, regarding them ideally as the "super-sensible substrate" of nature,* we may see in them a likeness to the element of law in the intelligible sphere; and this gives us an intelligible bond of connection.

From this it would appear that the world of noumena and the world of phenomena are not wholly separable, and that Kant somewhat retracts from his original position of absolute severance: but the measure of their dependence cannot be theoretically determined. Noumenal causality is admitted to be the efficient cause of its phenomenal manifestations,† but this idea of efficiency does not express a passing over of a cause as an element into its effect. Here the effect only "appears": the connection is not "real." If we analyze Kant's mode of union, we find the mechanistic relation predominates,‡ he is still under the influence of the idea of natural

* *Watson*, p. 310; *Kant's Kritik of Judgment*, tr., Bernard, p. 12; *Rosenkranz*, v. 4, p. 14; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 176.

† Cf. A. Fouillée, *Le Moralisme de Kant*, etc., 2nd ed., 1905, p. 158, who says, "c'est la formule commode des hypothèses arbitraires." Cf. also pp. 180-81.

‡ Cf. W. Wundt, *Ethics*, v. 3: *Principles of Morality*, tr., 1901, p. 39:—"Kant wholly ignored the fundamental difference between psychological and naturalistic causation, using as he did mechanical causality synonymously with causality at large." But Kant certainly recognized a distinction (cf. p. 140).

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cansation, for instead of elevating the causal conception, he removed the restrictions. Efficiency as real power is not explained: purposes, or ends, are not disclosed. If Kant, when he found it necessary to pass beyond the mechanical interpretation, had added this idea of purpose or end; or, if he had realized more adequately the meaning of efficiency, his setting of the two spheres over against one another as abstractions would have been improbable. It is to be noted that the disconnection is emphasized only from the point of view of the theoretical consciousness. In his *Critique of Judgment*,* he says that the sensible cannot determine the supersensible, yet the converse is not impossible, for it is involved in the idea of a free cause, the effect of which ought to be an event in the world.

Though the effects of free causality may not be conceived as realizable in experience, yet they ought to be, and would be, if the causality had the physical power. Or, as he otherwise puts it, the possibility of the realization is presupposed as existing in the nature of man as a sensible being.

But Kant's conception of teleology does not lead him to the further idea of a personality, which strives to organize inner experiences into a unity consonant with an objective ideal rationally

* *Watson*, p. 320; *Kant's Kritik of Judgment*, tr., Bernard, p. 38; *Rosenkranz*, v. 4. p. 37; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 195.

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determined upon, or whose whole self is projected in the realization of its end. If causal connection cannot ultimately explain the phenomenal world, if, indeed, a deeper significance is attached to causality in reference to biological conceptions as compared with physical,* might we not penetrate further into consciousness, and unfold in the human personality the highest principle of causality known to man,† and then, with this principle as a criterion, determine the validity of physical causation in the lower sphere. This would substantiate the assumption of an interaction between personality and that which manifests its activity. Indeed, it is only as will is revealed in overt action that its nature is made known. Personality, as a causal agency, is not to be viewed on the same plane as physical force, which operates externally, or as a transeunt causality.

The difficulties in Kant's solution come from the fact that he cut off the natural world in his rise towards an idea of personal causality, and, in afterwards endeavouring to get back the natural effects of a noumenal cause on the strength of phenomena being the appearance of noumena. But this latter aspect belongs to a different order of things, and is not a real demonstration of causal efficiency.

* Cf. W. Wundt, *System der Philosophie*, 3rd ed., 1907, v. 2, p. 170 ff.

† Cf. A. C. Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, 1st series, 1895, pp. 269-70.

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Kant admits moral activity implies a notion of causality* different from that of the physical relation, but seeks for the difference by the method of abstraction. We criticised his dynamical conceptions of causation in the physical world as lacking the essential element of efficiency, and this reduction of causation to an abstract relativeness between existing objects still vitiates his argument. This is also the weakness of his moral imperative—it merely conveys the idea of an abstract consistency, not the real consistency of moral effort as efficiently exerted under the constraint of an all-predominating ideal. A moral action is essentially synthetical: it is an element in the construction of an order, ideally conceived, but in the hope of concrete realization: the activity itself is not to be likened to what transpires in the physical realm—and Kant certainly held this, and it was one of his great services.†

Still, his method was not truly synthetical: he analyzed the relation of causal connection into the elements of consistency and variability, and afterwards treated them in their isolation as though having the same effectiveness as when united. It was open to him to show that causal connections in nature revealed an intelligible

* *Abbott*, p. 160; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 191; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 69.

† *Abbott*, p. 160, and *Watson*, p. 340; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, 191, v. 4, p. 299; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 69, 408.

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principle, or a method interpretable by self-consciousness, if nature be amenable to a rational interpretation, graspable by the intelligence of man. By this synthetical method, we may obtain a conception of will as causality, according to the idea of a purposeful efficiency, working through rational determination. So much so that we may come to regard the causal relations as derived from the activity of man as a self-conscious being.* Kant unfortunately confined himself to an abstract analysis instead of reaching unto a higher and concrete realization. So far from revealing interaction between determining subject and determined object, between the world of physical phenomena and moral activity, Kant's two spheres lay side by side, with only the abstract consistency of law common to them.

* Cf. W. Wundt, *Ethics*, tr., 1901, v. 3, pp. 48-49; also his *System der Philosophie*, 3rd ed., v. 1, 1907, pp. 306-07; J. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, 3rd ed., v. 2, 1906, lect. 19-20.

CHAPTER VII

MORAL ACTION AND THE CAUSALITY OF FREEDOM

II.—SUBJECTIVE CONDITION : MORAL LAW AS MOTIVE

WE have seen that a will, which seeks the fulfilment of its ends, independently of desire, constitutes itself a good will. Its goodness just resides in the fact of its determination by an unconditional imperative. Good and evil thus refer to will realizing itself under reason. The problem for the will here is not the actualization of what is desired, but its moral possibility according to a universal law. Conflicting desires must needs be brought under moral constraint, and the will's determination is good, or evil, according to the success, or failure, of its authority over them. A will, ruled by varying inclinations comes far short of Kant's conception of the dignified self-legislating moral consciousness, whose activity seeks to actualize, if possible, a perfect system of law.

The essential thing in moral action, as Kant puts it, is that the moral law should directly determine the will. Mere conformance with the conditions of the law will not suffice—though this is necessary—for the realization of an act of moral worth. Such compliance is no more than surface

obedience or legality : acceptance of the strictness of the letter without the enriching fulness of the spirit. An action may outwardly conform to all legal requirements, and yet its initiating principle may lack the element of determination by law, which alone can ensure its moral worthiness.* This inner spring of moral action is called a motive, and, as such, it must necessarily be uninfluenced by desires in its determination of will. It has reference to a finite will, which does not unfold, with perfect harmony, the immediateness of the law : and therefore an original subjective authority is required to effect this relation. The complete exclusion of material motivation leaves the moral law as the only motive for a will acting under reason.

Owing to his epistemological restrictions, Kant cannot state how a free will is possible,† though it is affirmed to be necessary to morality, seeing that without its practical acceptance moral law would be an absurdity. Even so, he cannot explain how a rational will can be subjectively determined by the moral law itself, for this, too, involves the practical reality of freedom. This conception of law, as a determining principle of the will, is so absolutely necessary for Kant's conception of morality that, although he can give no

* *Abbott*, p. 164 ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 195 ; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 71-2.

† *Abbott*, p. 165 ; *Watson*, p. 284 ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 196 ; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 72.

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explanation why it is so without implicating the very principle itself, he satisfies himself with the consideration of its effects upon the will. He has previously declared that a will, which acts according to a universal law, necessarily restrains all feelings prompted by external objects of desire: they must either be brought into conformity with a maxim possessing moral weight, or utterly destroyed altogether. Now, this subjection of sense impulses may be regarded as the negative effect of the law as a motive to the will. As the pure observance of moral law is not a matter of pleasure, but the formal recognition of its universal obligatoriness, the thwarting of desires must be loyally submitted to, though their non-fulfilment is fraught with feelings of pain; and thus they follow *a priori* from a practical sanction, and are not "pathological," *i. e.*, are not due to external excitation, though felt in the region of the sensibility.

While, therefore, the restraint of desire produces a negative feeling of humiliation or self-depreciation, this very lowering of self-esteem has a further practical effect in its elevating influence upon the mind,* inasmuch as the removal of hindrances to the moral life furthers its progression in the individual. This feeling is the positive result of obedience to the law, and Kant ascribes

* *Abbott*, p. 166; *Watson*, p. 285; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8. pp. 197-8; *Abad.*, v. 5, p. 73.

to it a moral significance. But we cannot estimate the moral value of actions from the feeling itself, nor can we deduce from its existence the conception of a universal rule of morality ; still, its recognition provides the will with a motive to accept the law as the original source of its activity.* This expression of respect for moral law rests simply on the ground of the law itself, and therein lies its claim to sanctity ; but such feelings as abide in the sensibility cannot be motives to moral action on the part of the will. In considering the significance of motives, Kant is led to notice that there must be some reason for their acceptance as instrumental to moral endeavour. By this Kant means the " interest " of will in that which prompts its moral activity. This idea of " interest " † relates to motives as adopted by reason, for the adoption of a moral principle by the will cannot reside in desire. Hence moral interest does not involve material issues or consequences : it rather reflects the pure resolution of reason, as practical, in submitting the will to an unconditional imperative as its immediate incentive to action. ‡ Thus Kant's conception of interest is rooted and grounded in his idea of motive. This fact of interest in the law as such, prompting the resolve

* Cf. A. Hägerström, *Kants Ethik, etc.*, 1902, pp. 228-29.

† Abbott, p. 172 ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 205 ; *Akad.*, v. 5., p. 79.

‡ Cf. H. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, 2nd ed., 1910, pp. 267, 269.

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to abide by it and seek its fulfilment, is therefore a fundamental feature of the good will.

Interest is thus closely allied with duty. The former relates to the subjective determination of the will by the law as its own motive, compelling instant respect, and the latter just reflects this feeling of reverence for the moral imperative. Moral interest is then inseparable from the subjective determination of the finite will by the law. The will, being free, unconditionally accepts the law as its own self-imposed rule for moral guidance. By arousing unqualified respect for its initiative, the law has set up of itself an effective motive to its continued acceptance by the will, and the constant activity of this motive reflects the will's interest in the moral uplift sustained by the feeling of respect, and this reflection takes the form of a maxim, or subjective principle, conforming to the universality of moral law. Moral interest is therefore a pure intellectual feeling void of sense reference.*

We note that here Kant discards sensible feelings altogether, for he is not concerned with the realization of an objective good, but with the pure formal sanctions of the law itself. In the *Dialectic*, Kant gives substance to the law, and

* Cf. Kant, *Fondemens de la Métaphysique des Mœurs*, tr., Delbos, pp. 103 n., 156 n. But this is a veritable abstraction; cf. A. Hegler, *Die Psychologie in Kants Ethik*, 1891, p. 179, and A. Fouillée, *Le Moralisme de Kant*, 2nd ed., 1905, pp. 144-46.

in his determination of the elements of the highest good, this idea of moral interest* becomes an important factor. The moral law loyally obeyed constitutes a subject worthy of enjoying happiness in proportion to his loyalty; this involves the idea of a union between intelligible and sensible facts, which cannot be positively determined by the theoretical consciousness: practical interests of morality demand the consummation of virtue and happiness to each individual, but the primary basis of the harmony of the two spheres rests, according to Kant, upon the will's pure interest in the observance of moral commands.

Duty requires on the part of the moral consciousness an inner agreement with moral law,† exclusive of any regard for natural inclinations. This direct submission to a law of universal application in the world of the intelligence awakens an intrinsic interest in the inherent righteousness of an order of conduct which shows forth a perfect system of law. It also uplifts mankind and prompts an elevated regard for the incomparable dignity of a self-legislative will. Such a feeling must not be resolved into mere sympathy, requiring some object to receive the outpouring of pent-up emotions; it is to be dissociated from any beneficent desire which yearns

* *Abbott*, pp. 214, 216 ff.; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 256, 258 ff.; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 117 ff.

† Cf. H. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, 2nd ed., p. 322.

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for a satisfaction beyond itself. This pure sanction of reverence, which inspires loyal service to what is highest within us, not for the sake of any material return, however exalted, but out of a pure devotedness to the law of duty, as binding upon all men absolutely, has a rational origin, as Kant points out,* being the practical effect induced upon will by the moral law. Thus in duty the disciplinary power of reason is made manifest, and its appeal is to the finite personality of man. Were practical reason to command the actual creation of material objects, its right to claim the submission of the will would be forfeited: the inevitability of this constraint resides in the fact that the moral law inwardly demands obedience to itself from the will of a person who is free to accept its obligations. A motive, as a moral principle, loses all weight if this autonomy of the will be disregarded: its only right to recognition as such rests upon the acceptance of this property of will, whereby it is a law unto itself, *i.e.*, always acting upon maxims which, in their operation, reveal themselves as rational laws. This capacity of self-legislation constitutes a rational being as an end in itself, and all such beings are members of a moral order, or kingdom of ends. Freedom is the fundamental condition for this union of intelligible persons;

* *Abbott*, p. 168; *Watson*, p. 286; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8. p. 200; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 75.

and in its final consummation, fulfilled in the ideal of holiness, duty dissolves into the absolute perfection of a self-determining will, *i.e.*, the will's activity becomes completely coincident with moral law, thus rendering the constraint of an imperative positively unnecessary: indeed, Kant would say, it passes beyond morality altogether.

In a fine panegyric upon the majesty of duty,* which, as he says, does not directly concern enjoyment, Kant unfolds, with impassioned feeling, how deep-seated is his conviction that the law of duty comprises the whole of moral endeavour. So insistent is he that he will not applaud the most exalted imitation of a good action. The exhortation to imitate great deeds on the ground of their nobility and grandeur is akin to a sort of "moral fanaticism,"† for it urges one to impart moral worth to a motive depending on a mere object of desire, and therefore only a pathological sanction; and, worst of all, such prompting encourages the idea of the possession of an innate goodness, which plumes itself upon its own righteousness, and therefore leads to the forgetfulness of duty's imperative, demanding obedience to the law as the only source of motives worthy of moral approbation. Unless this constraint of

* *Abbott*, p. 180; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 214; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 86.

† *Abbott*, p. 178; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 212; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 84-85.

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an absolute command is felt continuously and responded to, we rob ourselves of the most vital moral discipline, and reduce our efforts to mere conveniences for self-gratification. Humility as a virtue loses all significance, and is disowned; and the corresponding feeling of respect for the solemnity of law is deadened; and thus regard for one's obligations becomes lost in the vanity of self-love and inordinate desire.

In this exposition of Kant's conception of the motivation of the will, we have seen how he has striven to confine the moral motive to a purely formal sanction, intellectually derived. And so the crux of this problem of motives refers to his treatment of desire and feeling. He has endeavoured to lay bare a moral law as the constructive principle of the intelligible world, void of immediate relations to sense. In consequence, he denied moral worth to any action not exemplifying determination of will through law. Thus it would seem that we can only completely formulate man's moral life in terms of a universal rule. In Kant's statement, the appeal of the senses is absolutely excluded: the moral principle is a formal law of reason, being in itself both a subjective and an objective sanction.* Regarded as objective, the moral law is the determining condition of the objects of

* *Abbott*, p. 168; *Watson*, p. 286; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 200; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 75.

will-activity as good or evil. On the subjective side, it takes the form of a motive to the will's action, and, indeed, it is the only motive that is, as such, moral. Kant denied the acceptance of an ideal as determining moral action, though he recognized it, as a consequence, in the form of the highest good. An ideal, as such, could not establish an action as moral, for the conception of it as something which ought to exist, apart from being an external constraint, would render it in no better position than any other object of experience, inciting pleasurable emotions.

How does Kant establish the moral law as being the only motive to its universal observance? He distinguishes between moral observance and legal convention. Legality is mere outward conformance to law without an inwardly sustained resolution; it is the fulfilment of the bare requirements of the law, convenient to the prevailing practice of the community. But morality implies the immediate recognition of the law as the basis of all moral action. The ethical value of the constraint resides in its inwardness and rational direction. Thus it may be said, the moral law is its own motive for the determination of the will that is free. We agree with Kant as to the importance of finding an intrinsic sanction for moral action. If morality is to rise above physical psychology, if it is to imply reference to man as

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a self-directing intelligence, the consciousness of constraint must be inwardly determined, and not consequent upon any external stimulus. A moral sanction is self-impelled and self-imposed; and, as a motive, it necessitates the complete rejection of extraneous solicitation. Although Kant confines moral determination entirely within the higher world of intelligible reality, he does not lose sight of the fact that man, who is the moral subject, is also a being under natural law; yet, at the same time, his scheme of morality concerns, not so much the organization of desires to express man's moral activity—though occasionally it appears to carry this reference—but rather their complete rejection as constituents of his ethical being. And the strength of the moral imperative as the motive to this intelligible control lies in the exclusion of all desires.

But how may we signify the acknowledgment of the categorical imperative as the only motive to moral action? Kant believes he may discover this from a consideration of the feelings consequent upon the operation of the law.* The aboriginal tendency of our nature is to give free play to desire, but growth in moral conceptions leads us to restrain inclinations, and directly determine their value in relation to an objective moral order. But this moral insight is the result of develop-

* *Abbott*, p. 165; *Watson*, p. 284; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8. p. 196; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 72.

ment, and from the point of view of evolution Kant is not concerned with it. His purpose is to set forth the principles upon which we determine a moral act as such, and the attitude we should adopt towards all sensuous solicitations. On his theory, the action of the will is not concerned with actual results; its good does not relate to any existing object or order of objects, but purely to its own inner determination by a self-imposed law. But man's moral practice has important consequences upon the bearing of his will-activity to the natural world by which he is immediately surrounded and conditioned. He cannot lift himself bodily from his earthly limitations; he must inevitably subscribe to them; but can they be factors in his moral development? At first sight it would appear that this question would have no meaning for Kant. But we find that he distinguishes between feelings prompting an act of will and feelings resulting from its moral determination.* In the former case there is no deliberate self-directed activity, but complete submission to the sway of impelling desires: the action exhibits the strongest propensity existing, or in force, at any particular moment. In the latter, there is a direct exclusion of impulses from any exercise of power in the sphere beyond sense, but at the same time there arise positive feelings

* *Abbott*, p. 167; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 199-200; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 75.

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which are non-sensuous in their origin. Kant holds that the spring of desires is pleasure. If they are indulged, it is because they appear pleasant to the senses; if they are restrained, then we are conscious of pain. Hence, if moral law in determining will absolutely excludes the realization of objects of desire, the restraint produces a feeling—consciousness of pain—because certain desires are not satisfied. But if moral determination implies goodness of will, which, being intelligible, is beyond the call of the sensuous, how does Kant justify this restriction of desires as a source of pain, if, indeed, the sensible consciousness has been transcended? Where is the need for restriction? Pain and pleasure, as feelings, are related to objects of experience, which may be known to consciousness *qua* understanding; and therefore their realization and non-realization are matters of knowledge, and, on Kant's hypothesis, cannot be *directly* related to moral determination. Yet, Kant does so relate them.* Having worked in this negative effect of restraint upon desires, consequent upon the identification of will-causality with moral law, he proceeds further on the positive side. To give way to sensitive impulse is to lower one's personal worth, and reduce oneself to a state of animal existence; or, if we would allow a possibly higher view, the unimpeded satisfaction

* Cf. A. Hegler, *Die Psychologie in Kants Ethik*. 1891, pp. 179–81; N. Porter, *Kant's Ethics*, 2nd ed., 1894, p. 216 ff.

of desire, apart from the restraining authority of the moral law, constitutes, in popular parlance, the realization of individual happiness, which, on Kantian principles, is denied moral significance. Without consciousness of moral law there is no check upon these feelings. Now, when we consider their restraint, not merely as a negative feeling of pain, but recognize it also as an act of humiliation, revealing to us the lower tendencies of our nature, Kant maintains, we may come to acknowledge respect for the commands of the law, inasmuch as they point us to a higher sanction. This respect for the moral law Kant regards as a feeling, which has an intellectual origin. Being produced by reason, it is an undoubted moral motive,* though it is directed to no object, except on the ground of the law. When we thus see the practicability of the law in enforcing amongst inclinations a discipline of so salutary a kind, we must needs reverence it, if we are susceptible to Kant's idea of personal dignity.

But if the acceptance of the moral law, as determining the will, be due to the self-reasoned judgment of the moral consciousness, and, if that consciousness exclude sense-determination, how can Kant legitimately reinstate any form of feeling as an element in the motive? First of all, let us recollect that Kant has obtained the idea of moral

* *Abbott*, pp. 169, 171; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 201, 201; *Akad.*, v. 5, pp. 76, 78.

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law by abstracting from all sense-conditions: we have shown that, in its applicability to man as a moral imperative, it is void of content. How then can it be again related to that out of which it came, when it has been universalized as an objective form? The moral law is utterly dissociated from sense, and yet it is to be also an instrumentality in the resolution and organization of desires, which are unreservedly relegated to sensibility. Kant has presumed throughout that noumenal causality may determine phenomena, though not *vice versa*.* Hence, the consequences of noumenal activity may be phenomenal. But how can we phenomenalize non-sensuous activity when we are denied the direct use of the categories of the understanding? Under this presumption, Kant intrudes the moral law back upon the feelings, from which he had originally removed it; and thus the law may be causally related to a manifold of desires in a manner typical of the category of causality in the world of understanding, though this determination of desires as a consequence of noumenal causality has no moral value. The moral law is an underived fact of the intelligible world, and is completely in itself absolved of all sensuous dependence. But, being a law, it must necessarily imply things, or ideas, which it determines

* Cf. F. Adler, *Critique of Kant's Ethics*, in *Essays in Honor of William James*, 1908, p. 330.

as an integrative principle : it is only a law relatively to the facts which it unifies, or interprets. The moral law, being thus independent of sense relations, would necessarily refer to the facts of the intelligible system ; but Kant cannot avoid connecting it with sensible reality ; indeed, the very nature of man, the subject of morality, forces this inevitably upon him. Man's power of self-determination lifts him above the world of material necessitation : he has within the capacity of ordering his activities, and determining the significance of outward things for his inner life. Natural laws cannot wholly determine him : they may be exemplified externally in his bodily activity, but he is more than his appearance unto observers. He has a consciousness of himself for himself, and Kant recognized this,* and considered whether he could discover laws, capable of giving an objective interpretation of these higher altitudes of being. In the lower sphere, it was fundamental with him to place all aspects of experience, as determined by the categories of the understanding, under the dominance of natural necessity. These phases of existence were related to one another by laws, which implied that they were not inwardly determined, but dependent upon something beyond themselves, as individual objects, for their explanation. Now, the consciousness of self im-

* *Watson*, p. 186 ff. ; *Müller*, p. 471 ff. ; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 428 ff. ; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 370 ff.

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plied a determination not dependent upon outward things: there was a felt integrative movement within, self-dependent, and self-originated; but, in so far as this activity did not take on objective reference in experience, it would not come under the determinations of scientific thought; and it was, therefore, of no positive value in the organization of sensuous experience. This conception of a world transcending sense plainly indicated the demand for a system of laws not limited by sense reference; and the supreme universal law of this intelligible sphere of reality Kant called the moral law.

But how was he to determine that of which it was the moral law? Releasing man from his bodily presentations, as objects of sense, we find his inner being given up to various desires, inclinations, propensities. If he control these, and order them at his own discretion, he undoubtedly reveals a principle of action, not subordinated to empirical determination; but, if his desires, or feelings, flow on and rouse new inclinations, not directly solicited by his self-consciousness, as though his inner self were completely constituted by these constantly changing phases of feeling, each being determined by that which preceded it, these states of inner sense would resemble the outward in everything but their internal origin; and they would be, equally with external things, objects of sense experience. But

man can, and does, control these subjective states, and resolve them into unity: the very principle of self-consciousness signifies this. But the point for Kant is, can desires, being relegated to sense-experience, yet be under the control of the moral law? Working upon the principle that the reason is endowed with the forms, or unifying principles, of all experience, and abstracting from all sense contact. Kant obtained, as we have observed, his moral law and its subsidiary maxims. Being itself pure and intelligible, the moral law cannot work directly upon sense or outward things. But can it any more work upon psychological experiences, which, in Kant's system, are also objects of sense? No, the moral law does not sway them directly: its immediate purpose and significance is the complete determination of will, which, in itself, being independent of sense, is free to accept the law as the principle of its activity. But a law implies a constructive or integrative function. What then are the combining activities of a law-determined will? In what does moral synthesis consist? Now Kant admits that these psychological states, desires, &c., as belonging to inner sense, may be integrated by a self-unifying principle of the theoretical consciousness, and become objects of knowledge. But he also concludes that we may regard them from a practical point of view. Can they be ordered, or subordinated, to the commands of the moral conscious-

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ness?*

An analysis of consciousness immediately reveals this fact of subordinating desires, from a practical point of view. This simple everyday fact is laid hold on by Kant to contribute to his substantial verification of the practical effects of moral law in the inner regions of man's nature. Though he cannot state this activity in the positive terms of scientific determination, yet, he believes, he may rightly assume that any practical statement concerning it is at least negatively consistent, and allowable, with the natural interpretation of the same activity. The very acceptance by the will of the law determines the rejection of feelings as motives to moral action. Their exercise is relegated to the sphere of natural necessity: they are not constituents of moral determination. Morality, in this respect, excludes all desires, enabling free activity in an intelligible sphere, purified of all sense objects. But why should this restraint occasion respect for the law, if man is, by his very constitution, a moral being, and, therefore, capable of intelligibly revealing in action the moral law? And why should this feeling of reverence be just the strongest reason for continued acceptance of the moral law?

The questions would not be asked in this form

* *Abbott*, p. 157; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 186; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 65. Cf. *E. Caird, Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2. p. 282 ff.

were it not for the fact that Kant has obtained the law by abstraction from all sense relations;* and, if this be so, how then can it operate in the midst of these very relations themselves, and, that too, not as a connecting bond, or integrative function, but as limiting their scope? One is not disputing Kant's view of the practice of moral consciousness, or the needful observance of duty, without claims of reward. The difficulty arises from Kant's theoretical implications of the law, not from the fact that there is a law of absolute obligation. Kant does not deny that the positive feelings of respect are sensible; what he maintains is that the consciousness of them does not arise from the consciousness of an object of experience, as a realized effect of the law, but from the consciousness of the law itself in its unchallenged control of all desires, when once the will has identified itself with the law as the principle of its causality. His conclusion pays tribute to the fact that the moral life of man is a constructive process, and is reflected in his determined effort to control his desires, and mould them so as to become reflective of the higher flights of his moral consciousness. And the *felt* realization of this exalted aim of his conduct awakens in him the consciousness of satisfaction, combined with a

* Cf. A. Hegler, *Die Psychologie in Kants Ethik*, 1891, pp. 182-83; also A. Hägerström, *Kants Ethik, etc.*, 1902, pp. 228-29, for the opposite view.

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resolve to render the newly-acquired state a permanent possession, or instrument, for the attainment of even higher things. Kant undoubtedly teaches this,* but he has vitiated the value of his theoretical interpretation of the doctrine by originally divorcing feelings from moral determination; and, as we have seen, he is hard put to it to preserve the ideas of motive, interest, and maxim, from the *felt* satisfaction that comes from effort to realize a rationally accepted ideal.†

Kant's difficulty springs from his theory of knowledge. For him knowledge is positively the scientific formulation of phenomena, *i.e.*, of given material. Morality, on the other hand, relates to a world which ought to exist, and is not therefore given in knowledge. A moral sanction is inwardly directed—not externally imposed; it cannot be objectively known. Thus the will is motivated to activity from within; and no object of desire is in any way an element in moral determination. It was, therefore, Kant's separation of the world of understanding from that of the reason which necessitated his repudiation of moral significance to all actions motivated, whether by desire for an object, or by the consciousness of an ideal. Now, it is certain that the will is an active priu-

* Cf. R. Eucken, *Problem of Human Life*, tr., 1911, p. 447; and *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, 1912, p. 436 ff.

† Cf. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 4th ed., 1899 (§ 234), pp. 282-83.

ciple, and that morality concerns itself with acts that are willed. But, as soon as we endeavour to give an interpretation of the action, difficulties arise. The will's activity, being rational, involves reference to thought; and thought, as an active principle, is consequently related to the will: and some regard thought-activity as identical with the will.* This position was distinctly foreign to Kant's ethics, for with him thought-products were entirely phenomenal, and could not establish themselves as motives to moral action. On the other hand, by avoiding Kant's theoretical abstractions, and so regarding man as conscious of himself as an abiding self distinguished from, though related to, the objective world, Green† unfolded the motive in the conception of an ideal (personal) good in the realization of which the self-distinguishing consciousness would find satisfaction. Locke, for his part, viewing the mind as a *tabula rasa* upon which the external world records impressions which, in their turn, being reflected upon, became ideas, found it an easy matter to place the spring of moral action in uneasiness of mind for the want of some absent good.‡ Hence the moral worth

* Cf. T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, 4th ed., 1899, (§§151, 177), pp. 176-77. 208-09.

† *Ibid.* (§91), p. 108.

‡ Locke, *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, Bk. II., ch. xxi., §31.

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of will-motivation cannot avoid relations with the foundations of knowledge.

It may be of interest to contrast Locke's position with Kant's. Locke regarded the will as determined by mental uneasiness, or the consciousness of a felt want, which implied pain. The mind longs for an absent good, and is in a state of turbulence, until it is satisfied. If a man is content with his circumstances, no motive for change will present itself. We are not influenced by any good or ideal end, until the mind becomes uneasy by the want of it, and the will is the faculty, or power, of directing the consideration of an idea with a view to action. The resolve to act is willing, which follows necessarily upon the resolution. The power to do what is resolved constitutes liberty, which only applies to conscious agents. But the prompting to act resides in the pain felt because of an absent good; for what we immediately desire is the removal of all uneasiness. The fact that we may contemplate our own happiness, and actively seek its fulfilment, reveals in us the power to encourage, or suspend, desires, which do not accord with our felicity. In this power of choice, there is exemplified the true end of liberty, which is to attain to the good or happiness we choose. Locke seems rather to concern himself with the processes or the "exercise" of freedom, not primarily with the fact of its origination, as Kant. This difference of approach is due

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to their theoretical presuppositions. Thus in the earlier sections of his chapter, *Of Power*,* Locke discusses the idea of liberty merely in relation to the physical limitations of man. Provided a man is able to distinguish between what he can do and what he cannot do, according as he is placed, rather than trouble himself concerning his preferences or wishes, he is free to act, or to will: hence the willing follows, as a consequence, upon the impressions, made by the peculiar circumstances, which condition a man's movements: he is at liberty to exercise his power to move within certain limits. But what of his moral accountability? For Kant, the stimulus to moral action is self-originated: it is an inner determination, not following in line with the natural order of external events. In the fine passages, towards the end of this chapter, *Of Power*, in which Locke refers to restraint, it would appear that he recognizes the element of responsibility for the origination of volitions. But a closer examination shows what he has more immediately in mind, is intellectual discrimination as to the proper course to pursue, in order to achieve the end of true happiness; and that the choice of a wrong direction is due to a mistaken idea of what constituted the good for the particular individual, exercising his judgment in comparing the values (to himself) of future pleasures and

* *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, Bk. II., ch. xxi.

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pains. And, if we remember, in this connection, his statement that uneasiness of mind, owing to an absent good, prompts the will to action, we see how clearly Locke's moral conceptions are involved in mere psychical processes. Whether the desired mental change, or physical consequences, expected to proceed from a moral determination, be accomplished or not, the fact of self-responsibility for the choice is still to be considered. The material results may indeed be beyond the capacity of the individual to alter, but he is nevertheless accountable for the decision, or volition, which originally motivated the actions calling them into existence. It is not a question of moving one's limbs and such like—mobility of that character may be more perfectly exemplified in birds than in man. The ethical problem is rather, why was a particular preference determined upon originally.* How comes it that a man initiates an act of will at all? This question goes far deeper than the motive force of pain or pleasure. Locke himself has affirmed that freedom belongs to the man, not to the will as such, hence the exercise of freedom should involve not merely the willing of an action, but its reasonableness as well.† The resolve to act must be rational, and its accom-

* Cf. H. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, 2nd ed., 1910, p. 154.

† Cf. Descartes, *Meditations*, iv. (*Method, Meditations, etc.*, tr., Veitch, 1902, p. 133 ff.)

plishment should enrich the content of the moral ideal, which the agent is bent on achieving. Faithfulness to the ideal limits the range of one's movements, and gives a definite significance to their selection. And feelings of pain may reflect inward reaction at the non-fulfilment of some ethical purpose. At all events, the feelings, whether of pain or pleasure, have no moral value apart from their acceptance by a self-conscious subject as a means of expressing its character and worth. Locke's conception of the moral ideal contained just those features which were most contrary to Kant's idea of moral determination. Kant did not deny the human need for happiness, but maintained that the want of it possessed in itself no warrant for the establishment of man's freedom to will a moral action. Hence the question he had yet to consider was, how to guarantee to man the fulfilment of the behests of his moral nature. This leads to the material issues of the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason. In the concluding chapter, we shall briefly summarize Kant's ethical position, and open the pathway to the Dialectic.

CHAPTER VIII

SELF-DEPENDENCE AND THE MORAL IDEAL

IN the introduction to his Critique of Practical Reason, Kant informed us that in a critique of morality we must necessarily begin with principles and proceed from them to concepts and finally to the things of sense.* This procedure was in the reverse order to that in the Critique of Pure Reason. Hence the problem for Kant was to mediate between the *a priori* formal principles of morality and the expression of their activity in the empirical consciousness. The moral law, being universally true of all rational beings, is in itself beyond the actual plane of humanity; but, as practically effective in man, it takes the form of universal obligation, and the concept of this object of morality is formally the idea of the consequence, resulting from the will's determination through the moral law—and this is the conception of an action as good or evil. Assuming that noumenal causality may determine phenomena, and that all laws in the abstract are the same in kind, we obtain a form of correlation between the two spheres of reality. Though the main groundwork

* *Abbott*, p. 102 : *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 121 : *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 16.

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of the intelligible world rests upon the conception of moral freedom, yet the realm of phenomena, as compact of laws, may be regarded as a symbolical representation, or type, of the higher region. And, at the same time, it may be held that there is a form of causal relation between them, from the practical point of view. By this means, Kant sought to mediate between the law and the empirical consequences of its application to man, and thus to reveal them as elements in his moral life. Still, moral determinations are not necessarily realizable in the world of sense-experience: they do not all take on an objective presentation. And this is one of Kant's achievements that he held man to have an independent value as an individual: he could, relying completely on himself as an end, successfully withstand the compulsions of an external medium. The relentless resistance of the material world cannot annul his conception of himself as a self-determining being. In this effort to realize himself on the strength of an independent moral law, his natural desires are vigorously restrained.

But does Kant mean that they are merely pushed on one side, as it were, and left to themselves? Though he does not elaborate the point in detail, he has still said sufficient to convince us that he regarded the systematization of desires through the unity of man's consciousness as no unimportant service. The desires of man consti-

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tuted, one might say, an ideal manifold, and it was the work of the moral consciousness under the stress of a categorical imperative, or duty, to order this manifold into unity. We may deny the validity of the operation itself, on the basis of an abstract principle, such as Kant's conception of self-consciousness was, whether in moral or theoretical determination; but, what we have more particularly in view, is the fact that Kant was leading up to the Dialectic, which deals with the relations between the phenomenal needs of man and his will as in subjection to moral law. Desires are always associated in the mind with the object which prompts them. Kant does not deny that we should seek desirable objects; what he conclusively sets forth is that we should never be dominated by an object of desire as such. Our true good is to fulfil the law irrespective of consequences. They do not abide within our immediate power. But the law cannot be obeyed without consequences inevitably arising. And how are we to elaborate these results?

If man were completely self-determined, after the divine type, and were never in need of constraint to moral action, he would be above morality,* and this problem of phenomenal consequences would not arise: his moral activity would

* This is not quite Kant's position. Man would be above obligation rather: the moral law itself is applicable to all rational beings whatsoever: it is not a derivation from human nature as such.

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be completely resolved within the intelligible sphere. But his moral determinations do have a practical bearing upon what belongs to his phenomenal nature. His submission to the commands of the law conditions his desires or inclinations. How then may we systematize these effects of moral law through the imperative of duty, or how may they become ordered into unity through the moral consciousness? This implies as we have seen, a causal connection between the moral (noumenal) causality and the phenomenal world. Kant endeavours to show that moral freedom is not inconsistent with natural necessity, and that both spheres of existence are under law, and therefore inter-related, the lower being symbolical of the higher. These two ideas, it appears, are sufficient for him to maintain an independent sphere for morality, and, at the same time, to affirm the possibility of consequences obtaining in the natural world as the result of moral determinations. The mediation lay through the understanding with its original endowment of *a priori* laws. But Kant has not justified this assumption of ideal causality as a matter of the theoretical consciousness. Can he then establish its practical necessity? If he can, moral determination may have a positive relation to sensibility, and the unity of our whole nature may be preserved.

These considerations show that the feelings of

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sense are not introduced from nowhere into the problems consigned to the Dialectic,* but are undoubtedly in the main line of Kant's reasoning. They were formerly suppressed in view of the establishment of a moral principle of universal validity. Now, it is necessary that they should be reinstated, as we are called on to concern ourselves with the empirical consequences of moral determination. Kant has affirmed that every volition must have an object and, therefore, a matter, but it does not follow that this is the determining principle and the condition of the maxim.† Further, he has stated that we do not command happiness, for every one wishes it: the difficulty is with one's physical capacity to realize a desired object.‡

What Kant emphasizes, in this connection, is not the worthlessness of wishing to be happy but the utter inability of establishing a universal principle, or moral law, from a general aim to seek some object of desire. Happiness, as an end cannot therefore be held to be a determining principle of moral action: only the pure moral law in the form of a categorical imperative can effect moral issues: devotion to duty must be absolute.

* Cf. as against Paulsen in his *Immanuel Kant*. tr., 1902, p. 321.

† *Abbott*, p. 123; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 146; *Akad.*, v p. 34.

‡ *Abbott*, p. 126; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 150; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 37.

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Happiness may or may not be realized: it is dependent on physical causes which are beyond our power to control completely. We may become worthy of happiness through loyal observance of all that duty commands, but worthiness cannot of itself effect the realization of joy in doing. By thus directly associating happiness with the sensibility, Kant renders it as an object of desire entirely dependent upon physical causation, and therefore outside the immediate direction of moral law.

We have seen that the immediate consequence to a will under the instant control of moral law is that it becomes a will good in itself: this goodness is the object resulting from complete submission to law: it implies that the will suffices for itself in its own self-activity. Kant has laid this principle down as the supreme condition of a morally good will, but he has not affirmed it to be the complete statement of the highest good as the end of moral action.* If desires are to be utterly restrained and made organic to the moral consciousness, they must be made to conform to this self-directed activity of will under law, *i. e.*, they must be systematized to express moral direction: in this way we may legitimately regard them as the matter of a moral object, and the will as good in itself as the supreme condition of their accept-

* *Abbott*, p. 206; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 246; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 110.

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ance as such, but the condition of itself cannot guarantee the realization of the object, and this is the problem that is to be faced by Kant in the Dialectic. Seeing that even the will, good in itself, cannot render certain the fulfilment of a moral end, though it lay down the unalterable condition of moral good, it may be asked, Can we determine any relation between the condition and the resulting end? Ought the highest good, combining virtue with happiness, to be realizable by us in proportion to our faithfulness in observing the conditions of moral approbation? If this be so, it is necessary that effects of moral determination should conduce towards the happiness of the individual. This connection assumes that noumenal causality determines itself in relation to phenomena, but can only receive practical acknowledgment: its theoretical acceptance is an impossibility on Kant's premisses. Can its practical possibility rest upon a sufficient foundation?

We recognize the need of man to be happy as a practical necessity. As such it could not be completely dealt with in the Analytic, as there Kant was unfolding pure *a priori* principles. Now, when he is reflecting upon the achievements of the moral nature, he is bound to find a solution to satisfy this unceasing wish for happiness. According to Kant's previous conclusions, happiness must be a consequence, not a determinant of moral action. Hence he takes to the old paths

for his solution, which lies in the fact that man has both a noumenal and sentient existence, and that there is some form of causal correspondence between them. It is conceivable, therefore, that the noumenal causality may possibly affect his relations in the sensible sphere as to conduce towards his happiness. But there is no assurance of actual realization, which worthiness for a happy state demands. There may be sustained progress towards that condition; but its fulfilment cannot be posited. This requires the further assumptions of God's existence and an endless life* so as to effect, in unbroken continuance, the flow of satisfactions which constitute happiness for the individual. The existence of God is then an inevitable demand of our moral nature. Unconditioned submission to the moral law will not realize for us the full satisfaction of our needs. We require some Power to control the natural world for our good, to supplement our impotence that we may fulfil our life in endless contentment and joy.† This rational demand of our supersensible nature could not be substantiated by theoretical reason, and Kant was thus forced to find a practical foundation for its acceptance.

This attempt of Kant's to link virtue and happi-

* *Abbott*, pp. 215, 218 ff.; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, pp. 257, 258 ff.; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 118 ff.

† *Abbott*, p. 216; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 258; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 119.

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ness (virtue relating to form, and happiness to material) involves the question, What is the relation between nature and man's endeavour towards a self-dependent moral life? Kant has based the moral life upon a law completely independent of sense. This state of moral self-dependence is the true goal of man's life. But, occupying, as he does, a position mediate between God and the animal creation, he partakes of both forms, and so moral law must express itself in the form of an imperative. But how is this restraint to become of constructive value in the moral life of man? This question posits a relation between nature and moral endeavour. Kant's tendency has been to exclude the natural world from all positive association with moral determination. Moral principles are internal: they have their source in the reason.

We agree with Kant's aim to set up a conception of self-dependence as a moral necessity; for it is a principle without which we could not conceive morality, nor distinguish it from natural phenomena. Man cannot be dependent upon an external source for the explanation of his moral being. But, even so, why should the natural world be excluded as a factor in moral development? Seeking to render moral values independent in themselves, Kant denied their direct association with phenomena, as it would render their sanctions external, and thus deprive them of

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universal significance as laws of freedom. Sense-experience particularizes laws, and limits their service. Hence, as natural necessity implicates externality, then, morality, as reflecting the inward life, excludes the former, and is completely independent of sense. If Kant's position is to stand, we must show that the law of natural necessity is synonymous with externality, and that the moral law is objectively valid. But natural laws are not couplings which connect one object with another: they are principles of unity which enable us more adequately to explain natural phenomena as dependent upon the intelligence. So far from being external relations between things, they are rather the reflections of intelligence in material determinations. The more perfect the intelligence, the more systematic is the conception of nature as under law. If these laws were merely external couplings, only relating isolated individuals, they would not be laws at all, in the strict sense of the term; for law implies universality within the sphere of its reference, and universality is the antithesis of externality. Synthesis, or combination, is not an external process, but reflects the constructive activity of mind, revealing the unifying principles in the natural world. And this was Kant's own conclusion. But his refusal in accepting a moral value for determinations which arise from ideals harks back to his initial difficulty in the Critique of

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Pure Reason, where he uncritically acquiesced in a psychological treatment of sense phenomena as given to mind.* Knowledge was limited to the determination of these material facts. Morality, being exclusive of the natural world, transcended the application of the principles of the understanding.

How, then, did Kant ascribe objective validity to moral law? This freedom from sense phenomena dissociated moral principles from particular references, which were inseparable from the former, and thus rendered them valid for all rational intelligences. But this form of objective universality is a mere abstraction, being the residuum obtained by removing sense restrictions: it lacks the objective constraint of a world order. If, as Kant affirms, man is not a product of nature, but rather determines nature in accordance with positive laws,† may we not go further and say that the whole person of man is directly concerned with natural processes? Do the laws of natural necessity satisfy as an explanation of the external world around us? May not the systems of nature become an instrument in the realization of the purposes of a moral agent? Such questions cut clean across Kant's position.

* Cf. A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *Philosophy as Criticism of Categories*, in his *Philosophical Radicals*, 1907, pp. 297-98.

† *Watson*, pp. 80-81; *Müller*, v. 1, p. 458; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, pp. 754-55; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 126.

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A critical analysis, in the complete sense, would investigate the problem here set forth, but Kant was too subservient to his psychological starting point to raise himself above his initial dualism, which consequently affected his entire philosophy. In the *Analytic*, Kant recognized a common form of law between the sphere of morality and the natural world, but he did not establish a truly organic union between them. In the *Dialectic* he rather resorted to a third term in which they might abide side by side. This formal unity corresponds to the ultimate position of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There, nature is just the system of objects under law, whether material or psychical, and the totality of such objects requires for its explanation the conception of a cause beyond them as a completed series. This original cause he unfolds as an absolutely necessary being, or God.* Man as a moral being is under the constraint of the categorical imperative, or unconditional obligation, and is freed from the limitations of sense. The operation of law here resembles that of natural law without its restrictions. In God the moral law finds its completest expression: it is one with holiness. In man it operates through the constraint of obligation. The laws of both spheres, we see, reach their ultimate form in God: but

* *Watson*, p. 198; *Müller*, p. 498; *Rosenkranz*, v. 2, p. 452; *Akad.*, v. 3, p. 389.

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real unity is not established, only a side-by-side consistency. Kant's assumption of God's existence is a rational necessity to satisfy the demands of the moral law. But the moral law does not depend upon God: its justification rests with itself as a fact of reason. If Kant can connect the necessity of God's existence with the moral law, he believes he has given it practical justification, the underlying implicate being the positive idea of moral freedom.

Thus freedom is Kant's supreme postulate of the moral life, and the idea of God affords him a practical basis for co-ordinating the rational needs of the world of freedom with the world of nature: and by this it is assured to man that the possibility of his ultimately attaining the highest good is not a fantastic dream.* For, if the aim of moral endeavour did not reach unto holiness, but merely conformed to the particular associations of his earthly estate, with acquiescence in all its indulgent conveniences,† the moral law would be shorn of its majesty and awe. It is necessary for man's good that his life's pathway lie towards holiness or moral perfection, and this ideal is consequent upon his undeviating adherence to the supreme behests of the imperative of duty.

* *Abbott*, p. 219; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 262; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 123.

† *Abbott*, p. 219; *Rosenkranz*, v. 8, p. 262; *Akad.*, v. 5, p. 122.

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While we may accept the fact of God's existence, and the need of an immortal hope as necessary postulates for the realization of the moral ideal by man, it is not incumbent upon us to follow Kant in his method of securing them, if we deny his dualistic starting point.* If we recognize the ideal, not as something set over against us to be achieved, but as the rational end of our own being, for the realization of which we are directly responsible, its expression in our life will not be separable from the divine order of the universe of which we form a part. For the reality of the whole fundamentally postulates a Moral Power as its guiding principle, comparable to our own moral nature. To unfold this unity is the supreme task laid upon us in the conception of a moral ideal, and this deepening of the self in moral development, in which it becomes more and more self-sustained, reveals human freedom, not only as an indispensable condition of morality, but also as an achievement of the self's own activity.† For the enrichment of the content of a man's experience in life increases his power to show forth the fact of his freedom, the highest form of which is expressed in complete spiritual self-dependence.

* Cf. E. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, 1889, v. 2, p. 303.

† Cf. J. Lindsay, *Studies in European Philosophy*, 1909, p. 354; R. Eucken, *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*, tr., 1911, p. 108.

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