

DAWES HICKS LECTURE

KANT'S MORAL INTUITIONISM

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THE appraisal of a philosophical system would be deprived of any title to objectivity were it not established on a criterion which, applying to a class of systems that fall under the same general principle, permits a fair comparison. Let us call intuitionist a philosophical system which makes its definitions of truth, good and beauty dependent on the method by which cognizance, moral consciousness and judgement of taste attain to them. In ethics intuitionism subordinates the sovereign good to rules of freedom. Or rather, as it is under the control of our will, the sovereign good is nothing else than the legislation of our freedom, while the deprivation of our free will is the principle of evil. Epicurean autarky, Cartesian self-mastery, Kantian autonomy result from a common acknowledgement of the primacy of freedom, in contrast to moral dogmatism and scepticism alike.¹

What distinguishes Kant's ethics within intuitionism is the opposition between practical and theoretical reason. I shall first examine how this opposition entails a remarkable asymmetry in moral consciousness: we know that we are wrong without ever knowing that we are right.

Going on then to analyse Kant's conception of duty as immediately decidable I shall show that it is not easy to reconcile this with the asymmetry of moral consciousness.

Finally, I shall seek the reason for this conflict within Kant's moral intuitionism in the specifically Evangelical content of practical reason.

¹ On some reasons for such a classification see 'Trois philosophes intuitionnistes: Epicure, Descartes et Kant', *Dialectica*, Vol. 35, Nos 1–2 (1981), pp. 21–41; J. Vuillemin, *Nécessité ou contingence, L'aporie de Diodore et les systèmes philosophiques*, Les Editions de Minuit (Paris, 1984), pp. 330–46, 390–9.

I

There are three stages in Kant's genealogy of morals. The first one is relevant to nature and psychology. What are we indeed aware of? Our actions obey our feelings and are ruled by causal laws through practical material principles which all come under the general principle of self-love or private happiness. A sequence of theorems or analytic judgements assures us that if we obey such material principles we have to renounce moral intuitionism, since they can by no means furnish us universal laws, either as objective rules of conduct, the concourse of which would constitute a legislation comparable to Newton's nature, or as subjective maxims we would feel obliged to follow in every circumstance. If laws are possible, the maxim of our will must be drawn for the mere sake of obedience to the form of a law, i.e. to universality, which *ipso facto* would mean that our will would be freed from the natural determinism of self-love.

The second stage of the genealogy comes down to a unique synthetic a priori proposition (*Satz*, not *Urteil*); namely, to use Plato's expression, a self-motion by which the possibility of moral law or of a purely formal determination of the will presents itself to the mind of the agent as an unconditional obligation to realize it. There is no ground of such an a priori synthesis in sensible intuition, since self-love exhausts the matter of our feelings. The synthesis has therefore nothing to do with a judgement, but is a practical proposition that Kant calls a *factum rationis* and by which reason commits its agent to its own modal transformation of ought into be, or rather, be done.

But, once we have accepted the first stage of the genealogy, it becomes impossible to suppose our will spontaneously and effectively determined by the mere representation of the form of the law. A spontaneous practical reason which would move a holy will without any resistance of our self-love is an ideal of morality that we do not experience in this world of ours. We are subject to self-love; hence practical laws reach us as an imperative call, imposed upon our phenomenal nature from without. There is no intellectual intuition at our disposal.

The moral principle of any duty is completely contained in the second stage of the genealogy. When Kant later admits duties of virtue as ends that are at the same time duties and require as such a special deduction, he does not properly extend the definition of duty. Ends by themselves are relevant to self-love and cannot be the principle of morality. There is no less selfishness in improving

one's mind than in living for pleasure. On the other hand, there are ends that are required by morality for their realization. We ought to improve our mind,² since a truer obedience to duty depends on this improvement. Hence what there is in duties of virtue that is over and above strict duties is indeed relevant to the third stage, according to which, since it would be contradictory to command the impossible, the categorical imperative must be the object of a possible behaviour. Kant calls *postulates* the propositions which state how we are allowed to posit as existent that which must be in order to make possible what we ought to do. Such existence escapes our knowledge deprived of intellectual intuition. Therefore in these new deductions, in my opinion often unfairly criticized as contradicting the principle of autonomy, knowledge is replaced by faith.

The most delicate junction in the *Critique* is to be found between the two last stages. It has to do with moral self-knowledge.

First, duty is given to our awareness by a clear and distinct idea inevitably accompanied by a painful feeling that expresses the resistance of our self-love. Moreover it is analytic that no duty would be possible without freedom, that is without an act of the practical legislation of reason. We, as reasonable beings, must be the authors of the duties to which we subject ourselves. However, in consequence of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I can immediately know my subjection as a phenomenon, even if this knowing (*kennen*), limited as it is to the internal sense of time, does not flourish into perfect phenomenal knowledge (*Erkennen*); but I have no cognitive access to my own freedom, either as a legislative power (*Wille*) or as an act of free will (*Willkür*) by which I make mine the maxim to obey the law. Thus, when we say that duty is the phenomenon of freedom—the only case where reason immediately determines the relation of phenomena with noumena—we only mean that freedom is the *ratio essendi* of duty, as duty is the *ratio cognoscendi* of freedom. The connection results from an analytical practical judgement: were we to deny its validity we should at the same time ascribe an effect to a noumenal cause and withdraw our ascription. But, in the absence of any intellectual intuition, it is impossible for us to know ourselves as authors of moral legislation or as obeying such a legislation for the sake of itself. The causality of reason, an

² Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten, Zweiter Teil, Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Tugendlehre*, Ak. Ausg., Vol. 6 p. 387.

unfathomable power³ without any theoretical meaning,⁴ cannot become the object of a synthetic a priori judgement. From the point of view of knowledge therefore, the existence of freedom is beyond the reach of psychology,⁵ and we must resort to the postulates of faith which alone make duty, freedom's correlate, possible.

It is true that the moral law affects our sensibility through the feeling of respect. But nothing is thus changed with regard to moral knowledge. In its negative aspect, in so far as it goes against our self-love and belittles our presumption,⁶ respect only humiliates human nature.⁷ On the other hand the feeling of sublimity depending on moral law has no connection with the choice we make of the maxim of our action. Once the separation is made between theoretical and practical reason, there is no hope that the two effects produced by freedom in our understanding and in our sensibility, namely, the representation of duty and the feeling of respect, open us a way to the substance and the efficiency of the noumenal cause itself.

There is no intellectual intuition to tell us who we are as moral agents and the feeling of respect discloses not what our maxim is, but what it ought to be. Hence we can never know whether we act from a sense of duty, although, since duties are always clear and distinct representations, we immediately know whether we have or have not acted in conformity with duty. From the external conformity of a behaviour to the law, no induction is authorized to the noumenal maxim which has really been obeyed. However, when an action contradicts moral legislation, we do immediately know that we are wrong without the need to compare our behaviour with what is expected to be in conformity with moral legislation. The maxim of self-love which is the ground of our action is present to our consciousness as a phenomenon as are the phenomenal effects produced upon our sensibility by the overturning (*Verkehrtheit*)⁸ of our maxims which makes us prefer self-love to duty. We know that we have acted out of interest or for pleasure; we feel remorse and shame. Being assured of our wickedness, we are even given the certitude that our free will has

³ Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Ak. Ausg., Vol. 5, pp. 47-72.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-6, 79.

⁸ Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, 2te Auflage 1794 (Nicolovius, Königsberg), p. 36.

chosen to act against the law. On the other hand, so long as we act in conformity with the law, we can explain the phenomenal production of our behaviour by motives of self-love and we can never be sure that we have acted for the sake of duty. The good will is therefore no psychological feeling, and the moral intention is not something which we have⁹ in the sense we have feelings but only something which we ought to will. Fichte correctly interprets Kant when he says that to be free is nothing, to become free is everything. Legality does not entail morality¹⁰ and is compatible with the overturning of the motives by our maxim,¹¹ whereas immorality is indeed entailed by illegality.

The paradoxical asymmetry of moral consciousness accords with the teaching of the Apostle. In his fight against religious and moral mysticism and fanaticism,¹² Kant reminds us of the difference between striving and holiness, obligation and merit, self-justification and self-knowledge. Practical reason thus decides in favour of salvation by faith as against salvation by works. All that can and must be reserved for the sake of knowledge is indeed connected to the postulates, i.e. what makes possible the accomplishment of duty. This accomplishment would indeed be prevented by the following suppositions: 1) respect would leave the agent unable to fight against the rebellion of his self-love and gain the victory; 2) phenomenally determined as he is in time,¹³ the agent would be like the roasting jack of Leibniz,¹⁴ and could receive no hint that he can when he will; 3) even his endeavour notwithstanding he would be forbidden any self-approval (*Selbstbilligung*)¹⁵ of his action and, always condemned to fear the sight of himself¹⁶ and without hope of making any progress, he would be deprived of the happiness which is necessary for morality,¹⁷ namely the internal quiet¹⁸ which results from the consciousness of our firmness in our maxims.¹⁹

⁹ Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Ak. Ausg., Vol. 5, p. 83.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 71–2.

¹¹ *Die Religion*, p. 34.

¹² *Kritik*, Vol. 5, pp. 84–5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁹ *Die Religion*, p. 92.

The postulates remove, though only negatively, all those alleged impossibilities. If we never attain to a state of holiness where respect would become our maxim²⁰ able by itself to move our will, as the Stoics believed,²¹ we feel different grades in the resistance of our self-love. When in circumstances similar to those which have formerly induced us to immoral decisions, we now act, though tempted not to and only reluctantly, in conformity with the law, this gives us cause for satisfaction which authorizes us to believe that we have just been moved by respect and have acted for the sake of duty, though it would be illusory for us to interpret this satisfaction as a justification. In the same way, the intelligible or noumenal conversion or revolution that is required of freedom in order to subordinate self-love to duty eludes us, since it has no relevance to time.²² But the virtue noumenon,²³ however inaccessible to our knowledge²⁴ and only open to God's penetration, produces for us, men, phenomena accessible to a continuous temporal reformation.²⁵ The ununderstandable conversion is therefore accompanied, through the implication of the I can from the I ought,²⁶ by all the necessary signs for allowing us, by comparison of the easiness in our fight against self-love, to overcome our weakness, our impurity and our wickedness.²⁷ That faith may not however be replaced by knowledge is shown by vices and illusions that such a substitution would produce in interpreting the legality of an action as its justification and in deceiving the agent by putting his mind at ease on the sole condition of the conformity of his act with moral legislation.²⁸

II

In the beginning of the *Critique of Practical Reason*²⁹ to show that it does not suffice for a maxim to be constant and firm in order to become a possible objective law, Kant brings in a fellow man who makes it a rule never to leave an injury unavenged but at the same time recognizes that such a rule could not be made a law valid for

²⁰ *Kritik*, Vol. 5, pp. 82, 84.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 97-8, 99, 101.

²³ *Die Religion*, p. 53.

²⁴ *Die Religion*, p. 61.

²⁵ *Die Religion*, p. 55.

²⁶ *Die Religion*, p. 50.

²⁷ *Die Religion*, p. 21-2.

²⁸ *Die Religion*, p. 38.

all reasonable beings. The philosopher does not grant the positive imperative which would express the required law. The case under examination as well as Kant's general concern invite us to turn to the Gospel. It is not so clear however whether and how the forgiveness of injuries may be put under the form of a universal law. We are told if we are struck on our right cheek to turn the left.³⁰ We are even ordered not to resist the wicked. The Kantian imperative indeed intends to express the evangelical precept. But, if so, we are threatened with the prompt defeat of any justice and with our being at a loss to reconcile such a concept of duty with the juridical legislation about self-defence and also with such explicit moral duties as the command to help other persons in danger. Could a member of an unjustly prosecuted community consider the evangelical precept as law? Does the Gospel recommend the same reserve in the face of those who scandalize and cause the Fall?

A way out could be sought by ranking the love of neighbour among duties of virtue (*Tugendpflichten*). Such duties deal not only with the form of the maxim, but also with its matter, that is, with an end which at the same time is thought as a duty.³¹ The love of neighbour is explicitly referred to the duties of virtue by Kant.³² Philanthropy in so far as it is concerned not only with wishes (*das Wohlwollen des Wunsches*),³³ but with the realization of the good of humanity as an end (in accordance with the definition of a duty of virtue), can no longer be susceptible to equal satisfaction but it admits of various grades according to the relative proximity of its object. This variety however must not destroy the universality of the maxim.³⁴

Even were we to refuse all likelihood of interpreting the first example of duty afforded in the *Critique* in the weak sense of a duty of virtue conciliating gradation with universality, would not exceptions taken to the universal forgiveness of injuries destroy universality in Kant's sense? But Kant's explicit reference to the Gospel leaves no room for hesitation. 'The sweet feeling of vengeance, he says, must be changed into patience (5: 39, 40) and

²⁹ Section 1, *Anmerkung*, Ak. Ausg., Vol. 5, p. 19.

³⁰ Matt. 5: 39; Luke 6: 29.

³¹ *Tugendlehre*, Einleitung IX, Ak. Ausg., Vol. 6, pp. 394–5.

³² *Ibid.*, Einleitung XIIc, p. 401.

³³ *Ibid.*, *Ethische Elementarlehre* II, 1 Hauptst. I Abschn., Section 28, p. 452.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

the hatred of his enemies into benevolence (5: 44)³⁵ (References to Matthew). Hence the positive duty that counterpoises the maxim never to leave an injury unavenged is identical to the evangelical commandment of practical love. Putting this commandment in operation in all its rigour, when we ought to love our enemies, suffices to show that it admits of no gradation and that, far from being accessory to the moral laws, it may be recognized as their common 'kernel', as 'the law of all laws'.³⁶

As is the case for Kant's first example of duty, conflicting situations arise every time the moral agent happens to deal with other agents who possibly overthrow legislation by using the expected obedience to law, or rather the empirical effects due to this obedience. When Kant, against Benjamin Constant,³⁷ refuses to make any exception to the duty of veraciousness, he constructs the case of a servant who, ignorant of the fact that his master is under police surveillance for his criminal schemes, and ordered to answer callers falsely that his master is not at home, follows instructions and thereby occasions his master's escape and subsequent commission of a grievous crime. Constant had alluded to a real case: Madame de Stael, who during the Terror had Mathieu de Montmorency in her town-house, lied to the spy who asked whether the enemy of the people was at her place. The real question is therefore whether we have the right or even the duty to lie in circumstances where keeping silent would amount to an avowal and speaking the truth is known to entail an unjust death. In all like situations, in which a special right is required by ordinary moral consciousness, the right of insurrection against an unjust government—for Kant the abomination of a self-contradiction in the constitution—the right of self-defence and the right to lie, we are aware of two universal laws. The first one prohibits a certain behaviour: rebelling against legal authorities, using violence against another citizen, lying. The second law obliges another behaviour: to enforce the law, to preserve oneself, to assist fellow men in danger. Some factual premise may happen to bind together these two laws thus producing a conflict between them. It may happen that a legal government trades upon a nation's obedience in order to violate its own constitution, to exact illegal decrees and to deliberately harm a part of the citizens with

³⁵ *Die Religion*, p. 241.

³⁶ *Kritik*, Vol. 5, p. 83.

³⁷ J. Vuillemin, 'On Lying: Kant and Benjamin Constant', *Kant-Studien*, 73 (Jg. 1982), pp. 413–24.

respect to their properties, their liberties, their existence. It may happen that a man exploits general peace in order to rob another of his goods or of his life. It may happen that advantage be taken of one's habitual truthfulness to obtain information by deceit and to perpetrate a crime. In the three cases there is a particular instance of someone's using the general obedience to a universal law as a means of accomplishing his own selfish interest.

It is thus by contradicting the testimony of common moral consciousness that Kant maintains that 'a *collision* of duties and obligations is entirely inconceivable; *obligationes non colliduntur*'.³⁸

A first argument in favour of Kant is afforded by the dubious services that the casuists ordinarily render to morals. But a Cicero, a Spinoza, in other respects stern enemies of lying, agree with common sense on possible exceptions. Kant himself in his *Metaphysical Principles of the Theory of Virtue*³⁹ formulates a casuistic question: is sexual pleasure permitted even when not for the sake of procreation, if it prevents a worse vice? As soon as the end and the matter of the maxim is given consideration, we cannot escape such questions, from which Benjamin Constant's contestation had probably arisen.

In his answer, Kant argued from juridical imputation. The consequences of an obligatory action such as telling the truth cannot, he says, be imputed to the agent. Hence, had Madame de Stael handed over Montmorency, she should have hurt him (*nocere*) as by accident, since she was unconditionally obliged to her action. Kant's servant on the contrary is responsible for the bad consequences resulting from his lie and bears the blame for the wrong (*laedere*) thus caused.⁴⁰ But this alleged juridical distinction is no more supported by the evidence of criminal law than by the testimony of common consciousness.

According to Kant, conflicting duties cannot be tolerated for fear of making the moral legislation self-contradictory. Conflicts in law however do not introduce contradictions into the dynamical system of norms, the hierarchy of which obeys definite procedures of precedence and annulment only prescribed by law.⁴¹ Why could not conflicts between moral duties be resolved by

³⁸ Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*, Einleitung, p. 224.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *Tugendl.*, Ethische Elementarlehre, I. 1 Buch. 1 Hauptst. 2 Art., 'Kasuistische Fragen', p. 426.

⁴⁰ Kant, *On an alleged right to lying by humanity* (1797) Ak. Ausg., Vol. 8, p. 428.

⁴¹ H. Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and State* (Harvard University Press, 1945), *passim*.

analogous moral procedures uniquely relevant to ethics, and therefore depending uniquely on a general moral legislation (or on a supreme moral law), though not on clear and distinct obligations endowed with a procedure of decision? Contrary to widespread opinion, Kantian rigorism has no more connection with this Kantian prejudice than law-abidingness has with the straightforward decidability of the legislation.

It is true that conflicts of duties grieve us with moral hardships. It is with no light heart that we lie to a criminal or that we disobey legal authorities. Craft and violence, the ordinary means of immorality, cannot be used for moral ends without regretting the bitter loss of the limpidity of the law, a loss which however must not be confused with an impurity in our maxim, since the commandment which we ought to obey does not by itself appeal to the motives of self-love nor harm the respect that we owe to ourselves.

There is another side of the same argument. 'The commonest intelligence, Kant says, can easily and without hesitation see what, on the principle of autonomy of the will, is required to be done.'⁴² The commonest intelligence indeed is on a par with the most distinguished one where duty matters. But even where theoretical reason is out of the question, genuine characters of moral consciousness, such as attentiveness, thoughtfulness, scruple, and moral education in general, are nevertheless still valued on their own. All these qualities belong to what is called the intelligence of the heart. They are necessary not only to settle how far competitive ends of duties of virtue range, but also to arbitrate conflicts of duties and to ponder their place in a universal legislation.

Kant's claim to a trivial procedure of decision in ethics is not founded. Above all it comes into conflict with the asymmetry of moral consciousness. Why indeed do I know that I am wrong, while I may only believe that I am right? The reason for this asymmetry lies in the general overturning of the maxim according to which our actions are spontaneously prompted by self-love in preference to the imperative call of the law. Practical reason, therefore, can never be immediately known as practical, but only indirectly through the variety of grade and strength in the resistance which is offered by self-love. But if original sin is our condition, if our free will does not naturally will what we are ordered to do, we should expect that a moral legislation thus edicted take account of the corruption of the human heart. In

⁴² *Kritik*, Vol. 5, pp. 27, 36.

consequence of this corruption the phenomenal expression of our good will may always be used against the legislation itself. Hence the moral agent must be prepared for a conflict of duties. Without renouncing Kant's principle of universality, he will have to face difficult decisions. For finding his way, phenomenal prudence, by which those whom Kant called men of the world seek to maximize expected utilities, is of no use. What is needed would be a specific moral prudence, alone able to make the maxim of one action to hold at the same time as the principle of a universal legislation in a world subject to the overturning of the maxims.

III

The enlarged legislation just contemplated seems a priori to be compatible with Kant's rigorism and even to be required by it. It is, however, definitely condemned by his unexpectedly connecting his admission of radical evil with a conception of a legislation subject to a strict decision procedure.

An explanation of this paradox may be sought by comparing Kant's system with its other intuitionist companions. This comparison leads immediately to the main specificity of Kant's system. While Epicurus and Descartes consider that a maxim is morally acceptable if it gives the moral agent a constant and firm rule for life, Kant requires instead that the maxim become, through its necessity and universality, an objective law.

When the Epicurean sage⁴³ confines himself to seeking the necessary pleasures, the only ones which he knows how to methodically control and which, being at rest, express genuine actions of his freedom, when he thus becomes conscious of his autarky through a specific feeling of proudness, the principle of his conduct may be universalized in the sense that anybody may make it his own. His maxim is even exemplary, because it furnishes a rule that everybody can imitate, though (except in particular cases such as that of friendship) it has no genuinely moral concern with the existence of his fellow men. (Social pleasure is natural but not necessary.) The intuitionist ideal is therefore entirely within his reach. He does not care—except for his contribution as citizen to the defence of positive law—whether

⁴³ 'Intuitionnisme et "critères" épicuriens' *Histoire et structure*, à la mémoire de Victor Goldschmidt, études réunies par J. Brunschwig, Cl. Imbert et A. Roger (Paris, Vrin, 1985), pp. 201–11.

other men do or do not embrace his maxim. Replace Epicurus by Descartes, and the necessary pleasures by desires which are completely dependent on us.⁴⁴ Though finite, our understanding has a clear and distinct perception of what depends only on us, namely, our good will as a firm intention of doing right, without taking account of the success which is dependent on fortune. On the other hand, the union between the soul and the body is such that the perceptions of the soul, as chiefly related to the soul but caused by the motions of the animal spirits, are arbitrary and may be changed by conditioning, that is, by new associations between soul perceptions and bodily movements. In so far as we excluded from the realm of our desires everything that does not depend entirely on us, such a conditioning is under our absolute control. It defines our self-mastery by which our will renounces any object of desire beyond the will itself. By restricting itself to its own form the will attains absolute freedom, as the *Cogito* does for certitude by concentrating on doubt. Descartes calls the feeling arising from self-mastery *generosity*, an acceptable middle term between Epicurus' proudness and Kant's respect. Moreover, if Kantians may not without a certain exaggeration bring the reproach against the Epicurean sages that in case of extreme scarcity they would fight in order to satisfy the triple cry of the flesh: hunger, thirst and cold (but what about Evangelical ministers in the same situation?), Cartesian ethics is not exposed to the objection at all. His own formalism is universal in so far as everybody is eligible to be the author of a universal legislation and at the same time it does admit of a decision procedure through clear and distinct ideas.

As far as the aim of freedom is to live in agreement with oneself, all forms of intuitionism meet the same difficulty: the consequences of a former weakness of the will may hamper the clarity and the firmness of a later decision. At least in all such cases the moral agent has been and still feels responsible for the hindrances which he himself has caused. Kant's specific conflicting situations, however, have another origin, and more seriously challenge intuitionism, since an innocent will may see its own obedience to duty used by others to overthrow moral legislation.

The comparison between Descartes and Kant may be summarized as follows:

(i) For both of them, choosing the maxim of our action is an act

⁴⁴ 'L'intuitionnisme moral de Descartes et le "Traité des passions de l'âme"', *Kant-Studien*, 79 (Jahrgang Heft 1, 1988), pp. 17-32.

of freedom, a freedom which is enlightened by reason or is identical with practical reason when it results in a universal legislation, and which is reduced to free will in the contrary case.

(ii) For Descartes there is no difference between freedom and the maxim choosing what strictly depends on us. This maxim is a law. By knowing it we know that we are free. For Kant, freedom is not accessible to knowledge, and law always differs from maxim, since morality consists in making law into our maxim.

(iii) The immediate knowledge of our maxim provides a complete symmetry, for Descartes, between knowledge that we are right and the knowledge that we are wrong. For Kant, we know that we are unconditionally obliged by the law, without knowing, even if we act in conformity with it, that we act for the sake of it; and it is this that entails the asymmetry of moral consciousness.

(iv) The Cartesian law or freedom is felt by generosity, a feeling which is at once a passion, the result of the union of the soul with its body, and a pure action of the soul as separate substance, an action which in this life we cannot feel in its purity. The Kantian law is felt by respect, which assures us of what we ought to do, never of what we do when we are right. Generosity is bound up with beatitude, respect with sin.

If moral intuitionism makes the good dependent on the laws of freedom, the consequences of the comparison for intuitionism are easily drawn. For Descartes, the final causes, that determine the sovereign good for dogmatic philosophers, are definitely concealed from our understanding. Even once God has been proved to exist, and these causes are known, in consequence of His goodness, to govern the union of the two substances and to assign our sensations the minimum of objective reality that is compatible with biological utility, they remain and become, so to speak, the object of a rational faith. But we know by a clear and distinct idea that we may master the desires which depend on us and that their utility for us, depending as it does on the final causes involved in the union, is mixed with no counterpart, so that self-mastery accomplishes the aim of intuitionism at once in both the theoretical and the practical domains. On the contrary Kant's dualism between theoretical and practical reason threatens the universal moral legislation with fear and trembling because of the abyss there is due to the categorical imperative between knowledge and action and therefore between knowledge and faith.

It is true that the Cartesian formalism just as well as the Epicurean autarky is accessible from Nature alone. What we ought to do originates from what we do. What introduces a

discontinuity for Kant between Nature and Duty is well expressed by the command to love our neighbour. If this command is not to be understood as a mere fervour apt to accompany all our duties, but as their proper and specific origin, and if, according to the common principle of intuitionism, this unworldly universal legislation must remain subject to a strict method, no way out was possible except by denying that duties conflict and by subjecting them to a decision procedure.

Intuitionism is a philosophy of criterion. The criterion clips the wings that dogmatism gives to reason. Descartes confines the truths of reason to within the realm of clear and distinct ideas which exclude infinite processes: mechanical curves and the calculus are beyond the domain of geometry. Kant goes further. Pure theoretical reason leads to illusions. A priori truths, if synthetic, require the help of sensible intuition, completely foreign to reason, and fixing its limits to the possibility of experience.

Kant's practical criteria confirm the same strengthening of intuitionism. Kantian duties are more specific than Cartesian self-mastery. But replacing knowledge by faith and cutting duty off from knowledge enforces the criterion only if the specific conditions imposed on action by the moral maxims are removed.

This difficulty is an integral part of Kant's system and it is not easy to remove it without abandoning some fundamental Kantian principle. We may wish to maintain the decision procedure that seems to accompany the evangelical simplicity of heart, and find a way out by renouncing Kant's rationalism. Or we may accommodate rationalism and evangelism while sacrificing intuitionism, as some of the Kantian philosophers did. Or we may accuse the Gospel's precept of being the cause of the conflict between intuitionism and rationalism. Such a return to Epicurus or Descartes, however, would amount to vindicating an idealism of our fellow men and giving up the letter and the spirit of the second *Critique*. A more Kantian solution seems still to be open, if we withdraw from intuitionism the supposition of an automatic decision procedure. The question would then remain however as to how to interpret the practical love of our neighbours in order to make it the principle of a universal legislation of moral agents subject to the primacy of self-love.