RETHINKING HAPPINESS AND DUTY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ARISTOTLE AND KANT

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "**Rethinking Happiness and Duty: A Comparative Study of Aristotle and Kant**" by **Rajesh Kumar**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is his original work. It has not been submitted in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of this or any other university, to the best of our knowledge.

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DECLARATION

I, Rajesh Kumar, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "Rethinking Happiness and Duty: A Comparative Study of Aristotle and Kant", submitted by me, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy,** is an original work and has not been submitted by me or anyone else, in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University or Institution to the best of my knowledge.

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CONTENTS

Preface

I set out to write a dissertation on happiness and duty because I feel there is perhaps no more fundamental issue in moral philosophy than that between the ethics of happiness and the ethics of duty. According to the morality of duty, every act is to be judged for its obedience or disobedience to law and the basic moral distinction is between right and wrong, regardless of its consequences. Theories which, on the basis of consideration like these, take rightness and wrongness to be intrinsic properties of actions are called *deontological* theories. But, on the other hand, where happiness is central, the basic distinction is between good and bad, and consequences rather than law sets the standard of appraisal. According to this tradition, the morality of an action depends on its consequences: an action is right if it leads to good consequences, wrong if it leads to bad. Ethical theories which determine the rightness of an action in terms of the good it promotes are called *teleological* theories. An analysis of means and ends is prominent in the ethics of happiness, as a theory of conscience and sanctions is usually found in the ethics of duty.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to examine happiness and duty, critically and constructively. In the present work, the aim of my study would be to propose an amalgamation between happiness and duty, knowledge and morality. It is for this purpose that I seek to rethink on happiness and duty with a special reference to Aristotle and Kant.

In order to facilitate grasp of the structure of this dissertation, it is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 gives a brief outline of the dissertation and introduces the concept of happiness and duty. Aristotle is contrasted with Epicurus (Part I), and Kant is contrasted with Bentham and Mill (Part II). Chapter 2 sets the stage for investigation by examining Aristotelian conception of happiness and duty, focusing in particular on Aristotle's ontological position on *eudaimonia*, his notion of happiness as virtue, and an evaluation of Aristotle's idea of good. Chapter 3 begins the examination of dichotomy between happiness and duty in Kant's philosophy. At this point, an attempt is made to discuss critically the significance of Kant's treatment of happiness as hypothetical imperative and duty as categorical imperative. Chapter 4 turns to a comparison of Aristotle and Kant, focusing in particular their shared views and differences on happiness and duty. In Chapter 5, the connection between happiness and duty is brought about and light is thrown upon the possible foundations for moral principles that draw upon Aristotelian and Kantian perspectives.

CHAPTER 1
Introduction

In an enquiry concerning moral issues it seems there are two most operative terms, namely, happiness and duty. Philosophers since Aristotle (384-322 BC) have made attempts to define these terms in context of their specific epistemology and ontology. In the present dissertation I shall attempt to critically evaluate and examine and thereby to propose a rethinking on happiness and duty with special reference to Aristotle and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). In *Nichomachean Ethics,* Aristotle has proposed a synthesis between happiness and duty. But Kant in *Critique of Practical Reason* has proposed a dualism between happiness and duty. Happiness is considered to be hypothetical in nature whereas duty is regarded as categorical. Duty is in contrast with happiness which is governed by the formal principles and it is regarded as a categorical imperative.

This could properly be examined in the light of epistemology and ontology. In case of Aristotle, we come across an amalgamation between knowledge and opinion, reason and sensibility, form and matter, potential and actual being and finally between happiness and duty. In case of Kant, we come across a dualism between knowledge and faith, phenomena and noumena, freedom and causality, and between happiness and duty. In comparing and contrasting Aristotle with Kant, my emphasis will be that

the arguments given by Aristotle and Kant can be used in such a way that the dichotomy between happiness and duty gets resolved.

It is significant that the problem of moral life had a prominent place in philosophical discourse. Some of the most notable beginnings of reflection about those problems are to be found in *Ten Commandments*[1] in which some of the main principles of right conduct were summed up by Moses in Judea. But, on the whole, reflective thought on moral issues first took definite shape among the Greeks. The earliest thinkers among the Greeks, Socrates thought it to be necessary to give a more systematic account. "He believed that if anyone fully understood the nature of the Moral end, he should not fail to pursue it".[2] Thus, Socrates saw a connection between epistemology and ethics. Carrying it further on the discussion of morality, Plato put forward a metaphysical view of the world, upon which he endeavoured to rest his ethical conceptions. Plato in his book *'Republic'* tried for the elucidation of the answer to the question of what is the type of practical activity which our nature demands, and which can be counted on to yield a lasting satisfaction.[3] For Plato, the True and the Good are aspects of the one object of the same passion, and rather than calling the love of truth a contemplative rather than a practical passion, his

[1] http://en.wikepedia.org/wiki/Messianic_Judaism retrieved on 2007.10.04.
[2] Mackenzie, J.S; *A Manual of Ethics* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp.119-121.
[3] Lofthouse, W.F., "The Good as Means and as End"; *Philosophy*, Vol. 16, No. 64. (Oct.,1941), pp.381. URL: http://www.jstor.org. Retrieved on Apr 13, 2007.

dramatization of the life of Socrates invites us to rethink that contrast,[4] which Socrates expresses in his famous remark that an unexamined life is unworthy of a human being.

Aristotle carried this analysis further. Aristotle's own definition of happiness is that it is 'an activity of the soul in accordance with the perfect virtue'.[5] By virtue or goodness, Aristotle meant that a right condition of the soul and by happiness a condition of soul. Aristotle held that 'it is the direction of the soul's energies on sound moral principles that make us happy'.[6] Aristotle attempted a synthesis between goodness or virtue and happiness which was later taken up by Kant. Kant was successful in giving a formal principle to morality and attempted to synthesize between his concept of happiness and duty which does not seem to be consistent. However, from Aristotle's account it is clear that the exercise of moral virtues can be the final good of an individual's life.

The view that Aristotle suggested seems sometimes influenced hedonists like Epicureans who regarded pleasure as not only an important component but a necessity for the good life. The Epicurean's principle was based on that what each ought to seek is his own greatest pleasure.

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[4] Gaita, Raimond, "Goodness and Truth", *Philosophy*, Vol. 67, No.262. (Oct.,1992), p.520. URL: http://www.jstor.org. Retrieved on Apr 12, 2007.
[5] Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, tr. by J.A.K.Thompson, (London: Penguin Books, 1958), p.87.
[6] Ibid. p.46.

However, egoistic hedonism proposed by Epicureans was replaced by universalistic hedonism or utilitarianism in the modern times. The chief exponents of this theory are J. Benthem (1784-1832) and J.S. Mill (1806-1873). The principle of utility says that actions are right in so far as they tend to promote happiness. According to Mill, "the central issue of ethical theory is to show that the general happiness (the maximum happiness) is the ultimate moral end".[7] For utilitarians, pleasure or happiness is the kind of feeling which stimulates the will to actions tending to sustain or produce it. It seems utilitarians pass unconsciously from the greatest pleasure to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, have chosen to speak of pleasure or enjoyment in terms of quantity. Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* opens with the claim that 'the only thing that can be found anywhere of unconditional value is a good will".[8] For Kant, virtues such as intelligence and calmness must be directed by the good will. Happiness must be deserved by good will and any particular ends must be chosen in accordance with good will. For Kant, good will is the source of value. On Kant's view, a good will is a perfectly rational will. He held that it must be possible to formulate the moral law in terms of the rational nature of mankind. Kant succeeded in giving a formal principle to the moral law in the form of categorical imperative. Kant's basic preoccupation behind the categorical imperative is to formulate normative

[7] Mill, J.S; *Utilitarianism*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1957), pp 3 & 10.
[8] Kant, I; *Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals*, tr. by H.J Paton (London: Hutchinson University Press, 1969), p.59.

principles of action.[9] Thus expression in the categorical imperative characterized by means of 'ought' is of the nature of a norm and standard. Thus, according to Kant, "act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law".[10] In Kant's formulation, an action is duty, not when it attains or seeks to attain an object of inclination, but when it is done upon a maxim can also be willed to become a universal law. An action is duty when it proceeds from the law of duty which is purely formal, empty of content and is formulated by reason alone. Kant's conception of practical reason holds that reason must determine ethical principles of conduct apart from considerations of interest and inclination.[11] Thus, in Kant's formulation, "duty is the necessity of an action done from the respect for law".[12] Kant further says that "Respect for law is not for the incentive of morality but morality itself.[13] Kant rules out happiness as well as any form of pleasure or of satisfaction from motives of obedience to the moral imperative.

Aristotle attempts to construct a theory of moral life on the idea of virtue interpreted in terms of certain natural dispositions towards human well-beings; Kant, in contrast, denies the appropriateness of giving regard to natural dispositions in the determination of moral judgement, and

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[9] Audi, Robert. *Practical Reasoning*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp.180.
[10] Kant, I; *Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals,* tr. by H.J Paton, etc, p.67.
[11] Kant, I; *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals,* tr. by H.J Paton (New York: Harper, 1948), pp.71-74.
[12] Cited in Beck, L.W; *A Commentary on Critique of Practical Reason*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960, p.226.
[13] Ibid.

emphasizes instead the importance of duty and obligation, as these are standardly expressed. Both of these two perspectives contain a central problematic as they stand as tools for moral principles – the Aristotelian tradition lacks the structure of cognitive development, and the Kantian lacks an effective component. To examine the lacuna in these two traditions, an epistemological and ontological foundation will be established from which the themes of cognition and virtue, generally viewed dichotomously, may be viewed interrelated. Therefore, the dissertation emphasizes to promote mutual understanding on happiness and duty.

This dissertation acknowledges the antithetical nature of these perspectives, and the dichotomous nature of their philosophical roots. The main task of this dissertation is to reconcile this dichotomy, and to allow these perspectives to mutually inform and reinforce each other. This task is accompanied by providing responses to an epistemological and ontological basis. What I would like to do is to examine the ontological and epistemological basis in order to look for a rapprochement between the two perspectives.

On the one hand, we have a plea for the intrinsic value and intelligibility of an order that being that precedes, outstrips and encompasses the subject. On the other hand, we have a plea for the

subjectivity, a plea for the active, practical subject who projects itself onto the world, who organizes the world according to its interests and concerns. The battle over epistemology and ontology is really the battle over transcendentals. If ontology and epistemology is to do justice to both the alterity of being and the sense-giving activity of the subject, then it must account for both the Aristotelian and the Kantian senses of transcendental. While too much emphasis on the objectivity (givenness) of being can fail to account for the various ways in which reality is delivered up to a subjective point of view (i.e., the work of the transcendental imagination), too much emphasis on the *a priori* conditions within the subject can easily lead to the conclusion that reality is swallowed up in the subject's transcendental will.

(I) Aristotle with reference to Epicurus

During the Hellinistic Greek period, Aristotle's account of happiness competed with rival theories of pleasure, particularly those offered by Epicurus (341-270 BC). In Aristotle and Epicurus, epistemological issues about true and false pleasures are central, though the two thinkers adopt apparently opposed positions on issues of justification. Aristotle cites the experience of a trained, practically wise individual, Epicurus that of an uncorrupted child, as the criterion for judgement about what is truly pleasant.

The followers of Epicurus emphasized the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain as the highest principle. Martha C. Nussbaum writes: "Epicurus' account of the ethical end is inseparable from his general epistemology, according to which the senses are themselves entirely reliable, and all error comes from belief".[14] On Nussbaum's account, "Epicurus shrewdly grasps his moral epistemology by saying that the end is not something to be demonstrated by subtle arguments, rather we should asses it consulting our senses and feelings".[15] Epicurus defined pleasure as 'consciousness of the movement of the displaced atoms back to their proper place'.[16] To Epicurus, the soul is of similar structure to the body, differing only in the fineness and mobility of the component atoms. Body and soul work as a team. The soul bestows sensitivity upon the body and the body in turn bestows it upon the soul.[17] Epicurus holds that he who has a clear and certain understanding of these things will direct every preference and aversion toward securing health of body and tranquillity of mind, seeing that this is the sum and end of a blessed life. On Epicurus view, the end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and, when once we have attained all this, the tempest of the soul is laid. For Epicurus, Pleasure is our first and kindred good. To this end, the Epicureans promoted the moral virtue of prudence, which is

[14] Nussbaum, Martha C., *The Therapy of Desire,* (USA: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.108.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Gosling, J.C.B., Taylor, C.C.B., *The Greeks on Pleasure,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.405.
[17] Norman W. DeWitt, "Epicurus: Philosophy for the Millions", *The Classical Journal,* Vol. 42, No. 4, (Jan., 1947), pp. 195-201 URL: http://www.jstor.org/ Retrieved on Apr 28, 2008

practiced by the wise man. Criticizing Epicurus, Kant says: The Epicurean seeks happiness in emotional, sensuous, and physical pleasure.[18]

Aristotle's account of pleasure is set forth in Books VII and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle makes judgement about pleasure depend metaphysically and epistemically on facts about moral individual's choices. Perhaps, Aristotle regards pleasure as an awareness causally produced by some unimpeded activity. Aristotle believes *eudaimonia* is the *telos* of human life, for it can be seen to affect all of our choices and decisions.

(II) Kant with reference to Bentham and Mill

Kant argues that moral activity is about doing our duty, whereas utilitarians such as J. Bentham and J.S. Mill believe that it is primarily concerned with doing that which benefits the greatest number of people This means that a moral act for Kant, is acting according to our duty, whereas for utilitarians it occurs when we maximise the amount of pleasure our actions will bring to people.

Jeremy Bentham defined happiness in terms of pleasure. He defines the good in terms of the greatest happiness or pleasure for the greatest number of people. In talking about the good, unlike Kant and

[18] Grayeff, Felix., *A Short Treatise on Ethics*, (London: Gerald Duckworth & Company Limited, 1980), p.30.

Aristotle; Bentham evaluates goodness or rightness in terms of particular acts, in contrast to talking about goodness in terms of ways of life. While Kant and Aristotle each were interested in determining the good life for mankind, Bentham is more concerned with evaluating the good in terms of individual acts.

Like Bentham, Mill defines a good or right act in terms of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people and defines happiness in terms of pleasure. But, from there, their particular approaches to Utilitarianism differ significantly. Here, a couple of ways is to be mentioned in which their approaches differ. First, whereas Bentham writes about pleasure in general, Mill makes a distinction between higher and lower pleasures. The former are pleasures associated with the mental faculties; examples of such pleasures include: reading, doing problem-solving activities, and art. The latter are associated with physical pleasures, including sexual intercourse, massages, sleeping, and pleasures associated with eating and drinking. Mill says: A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering and certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence.[19] In making a distinction between higher pleasures and lower pleasures, Mill avoids the objection that Utilitarianism

[19] Mill. J.S., *Utilitarianism*, (Great Britain: William Collins Sons & Co.Ltd, 1962), pp. 259-60.

is a doctrine worthy of swine. Mill is not suggesting that we pursue pleasures like swine do exclusively — eat, drink, and sleep. Rather, we must also pursue and enjoy higher pleasures. In fact, according to Mill, we actually and ought to prefer higher pleasures to lower pleasures.

Mill defines a good or right act in terms of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people and defines happiness in terms of pleasure. Mill writes: According to the Greatest Happiness Principle, the ultimate end, with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable (whether we are considering our own good or that of other people), is an existence exempt as far as possible from pain, and as rich as possible in enjoyment, both in point of quantity and quality; the test of quality, and the rule for measuring it against quantity, being the preference felt by those who in opportunities of experience, to which must be added their habits of self-consciousness and self-observation being, according to the utilitarian opinion, the end of human action is necessarily also the standard of morality; which may accordingly be defined, the rules and precepts of human conduct, by the observance of which an existence such has been described might be, to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation.[20]

[20] Ibid., pp.262-63.

Mill's ethical theory is entirely consequentialist. The goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, of an action is determined only by its fruits. Thus, he professes a doctrine diametrically opposed to Kant's. As with the ancient Greeks, Mill holds that the good for a human being is happiness, and like Epicurus, he locates happiness in pleasure and the avoidance of pain. His advance on the Epicurean doctrine is to introduce the element of universality. It is not my particular pleasure or averted pain that makes an act good, but rather that of humanity as a whole. The principle of utility calls an act good when it contributes to the overall promotion of human happiness. The popular slogan for this principle is that a good act results in the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

It is Mill's contention that all moral systems have always had this principle in mind, though they have not properly understood it role. Thus he seeks to clear up misunderstandings which he thought are the basis for objections to utilitarianism. We shall discuss a number of them.

According to Mill, an act is right or wrong based on the consequences of an act. In particular, an act is right if and only if it maximizes the greatest amount of pleasure for everyone involved. For Kant, an act is right or wrong based on the motives with which the act is performed. An act is right if and only if it is performed for the sake of duty.

Mill thought that what really drives the use of the categorical imperative, despite all the talk about pure reason, is the desirability of the consequences of making a law universal. No one is secure in the state of nature, life is nasty, and it is in everyone's interests to renounce the egoistic principle. According to Mill, Kant should admit that happiness is relevant to moral evaluation, despite Kant's statement that consequences are irrelevant. Even in Kant's own examples, it is the potential undesirable consequences of universal adoption of certain rules ("Leave everyone else alone, even if you are in a position to help them," for example) that makes it "contradictory."

The ideas that pleasure and pain are determinants of moral goodness is shocking to some, who hold that the base of human responses are elevated to the highest status. Is a life of wanton indulgence to be promoted, at the expense of more refined virtues? Certainly Aristotle was very cautious about the role of pleasure and pain in human excellence, recognizing that what is pleasurable often leads us away from excellence. Mill responded by claiming that there is a hierarchy of pleasures, with the base pleasures at the bottom and the more refined pleasures (e.g., music appreciation) at the top. A basic principle for Mill is that what is desirable is a function of what is desired, so that the most desirable pleasures are those that are most desired. If few people in reality desire the refined

pleasures, it is because they lack acquaintance with them or the capacity to appreciate them. Those with the proper acquaintance and capacity prefer a way of life that uses the higher faculties. Here, we may compare Aristotle's view that the contemplative life is the highest as well as most pleasurable.

A further objection to the utilitarian identification of the good with happiness is the alleged unattainablity of happiness in this world of woes. For the most part, Mill believes, the impediments to happiness are of our own making, e.g. the result of bad education or unjust social structures. In particular, he opposed inequalities based on race, ethnicity and gender.

What counts as happiness is crucial to the response. The happy life is a matter of degree. It is not a continual state of highly pleasurable excitement, for this is indeed unsustainable. Excitement and tranquility must follow each other. The pleasurable life for the human being consists of some moments of pleasurable excitement, few and short-lived pains, variety in pleasures, and an active life.

Yet another objection to utilitarianism is due to its quantitative character. The objection is that to conform to the principle of utility, human action should be based entirely on cold, hard calculation of consequences. But Mill rebutted the objection by pointing out that most of

human action is not concerned with the promotion of pleasure and avoidance of pain for all of humanity. At any rate, the principle of utility is used to evaluate actions. It does not matter what the motive of the person may be, whether calculation is involved in carrying it out or not.

The quantitative nature of utilitarianism does give rise to a more serious objection that is not so easily swept aside. The greatest happiness for humanity as a whole might involve the sacrifice of a few for the pleasure of the many. If this is in fact what it requires, if human happiness really would be served by, say, the torture of twenty people out of five billion, it seems that the principle of utility endorses this action. Mill himself stated that everyone has a right to equality of treatment, "except when some recognized social expediency requires the reverse."

Perhaps there is a way around this problem by appealing to the vagueness of the notion of 'general' in the principle of utility. It may be said, for example, that the general happiness cannot be promoted by anything that makes any person miserable. But then the question arises one of implementation: how can one then formulate the principle precisely in such a way that it is attainable. It seems practically impossible that general happiness in this sense is anywhere nearly attainable. At any rate, utilitarian theorists are always performing a delicate balancing act in trying to find the formula for general happiness.

In general, Utilitarianism appears to be morally attractive than Kantianism in cases that are in some senses marginal or exceptional, cases where we are inclined to depart from ordinary standard in the face of mitigating circumstances. But Kantianism, on the other hand, seems more attractive in core cases where we are inclined to keep our promises or tell the truth, independent of any implicit or explicit calculation of the benefit to be achieved or the harm to be averted by doing so. Given that the two theories face complementary problems, there is asymmetry in the amount of sustained philosophical attention accorded to each.

Kant's view stands in a stark contrast to utilitarianism and its stress on the need to ground philosophy of morality on strictly empirical concerns, for instance on what people actually prefer to do. Utilitarians, on the one hand, have long been troubled by the apparent excess of act utilitarianism and have responded by attempting to develop a coherent form of rule utilitarianism that would be able to capture the uncompromising character of common sense morality.[21] Kantians, on the other hand, have addressed the problem of rigorism in a relatively piecemeal and haphazard fashion.[22] The tendency towards rigorism stems from the basic thinking that the actions prohibited by categorical

[21] Ursman, J.O., "The Interpretation of the Moral Philosophy of J.S. Mill", *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.3, No.10 (Jan,1953), pp.33-39.
[22] Schapiro, Tamar, "Kantian Rigorism and Mitigating Circumstances", *Ethics*, Vol.117 (Oct, 2006), p.33.

imperative are wrong in virtue of the features that make them count as the kinds of actions they are. On this account, if an action is wrong in itself, then variations in external circumstances cannot make it right. For Kant, moral philosophy is about binding obligations and not about actual feelings and natural inclinations (the value of pleasures). This explains a difference in self-perception of these two concurring moral philosophies. While Mill denies that the philosophy which describes actual preferences should be regarded as a novelty, Kant does not shun from claiming to create an entirely new construction that would enlighten people about the true nature of morality.

However, something seems to be missing from these theories of ethics. What about the person who is performing the acts? The character of the person is important. Persons should have the sort of character that consistently participates in intellectual activity, performs virtuous acts, and forms virtuous friendships. The sort of character a person has, should not be ignored in discussions concerning ethics. As children, our parents and teachers teach us to act a certain way. We are taught to share with others, to help others when they need our help, to tell the truth, to be nice to others, etc. And, if all goes well, we develop the habit of responding in those ways. We learn to help others for their sake. We call people who have developed such habits good people. So, a good person is not simply one who performs a single right act. But rather, a good person is an

individual who has the disposition to do the good act or the virtuous act in various circumstances and habitually does what is virtuous. Aristotle realizes that character has some bearing on happiness. For this reason, I find Aristotle's approach to ethics particularly attractive. Not only does he recognize the importance of character in ethics, but also, he explicates a good life. Happiness is the highest good, according to Aristotle. Thus, a person that is happy has achieved the highest good. Happiness frequently is taken to mean pleasure or some similar sort of sensation. But, what Aristotle means by happiness is totally different. When Aristotle claims that the highest good is happiness, he is not referring to happiness merely as some sort of sensation. Rather, happiness, he claims, is a complex notion involving much more. Aristotle believes that everything in nature has a unique purpose. And, happiness, in part, has to do with the characteristic function of human beings. Amongst other things, a person that is happy is performing or utilizing a function that is unique to human beings.

CHAPTER 2
An Examination of Happiness and Duty in Aristotle

Introduction:

In this chapter, I shall examine and explicate Aristotle's conception of Happiness and Duty. Historically, Aristotle is the first philosopher who could give a systematic account of living a good life. A good life involves consistently participating in activities that make a person good. Aristotle is concerned with the good for mankind. Seeking the good of humankind involves consistently and habitually performing acts that develop good character. Such acts include performing virtuous activity and doing what is appropriate. Aristotle's ethics is based on his general philosophical view points. He sees it as a hierarchy in which everything has a function. The highest form of existence is the life of the rational being. For the sake of clarity and precision, I shall divide the present chapter into the following three parts:

Part I Aristotle's ontological position on *Eudaimonia*.

Part II Aristotle's notion of Happiness as virtue.

Part III Aristotle's idea of Good.

Before I come to the basic issues which I shall be discussing in the above three parts, I would like to point out that Aristotle with respect to

his specific moral philosophy has over-emphasized on the moments of abstraction. For instance, Aristotle takes the happiness -a highly abstract notion-to be the highest good. In *Nichomachean Ethics,* Aristotle defines the highest good or humankind in terms of happiness. The ideal of the mean gave men a norm by which to choose not only the middle path between profligacy and insensibility, prodigality and stinginess, buffoonery and boorishness, bashfulness and shamelessness, directing them toward temperance, liberality, wittiness, and modesty; it gave them the clue by which they could avoid exactly the same. True refinement was a law unto itself in Arisotle's morality. With this brief remark regarding the procedure I have adopted, I shall come the Part I of the chapter.

(I) Aristotle's ontological position on *Eudaimonia*

In *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book I, Chap 7), Aristotle addresses himself to the question 'What is *Eudaimonia?' Eudaimonia*, often translated as happiness or well-doing deals with a central issue in the study of Aristotle's ethics. *Eudaimonia* is Aristotle's notion of what makes an individual's life go well. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle addresses the basic question of morality - 'What is the very best and most worthwhile life that a human could possibly lead?' He approaches this question by enquiring the distinctive nature of human being, and what powers and activities distinguish human beings from other living beings. Aristotle defines happiness as 'an activity of soul in accordance with perfect

goodness'.[1] By goodness, Aristotle meant a right condition of the soul and by happiness a condition of the soul. Aristotle held that 'it is the direction of the soul's energies on sound moral principles that makes us happy'.[2] When Aristotle tells us that good actions are for the sake of *eudaimonia*, he means that they serve as its constituents. It is the final and self-sufficient end to which all other ends serve as mere means. *Eudaimonia* or 'happiness is the highest of all practical goods'[3]. Aristotle goes on to at once to explain how, among ends all of which are final, one end can be more final than other: A is more final than B though B is sought for its own sake (and hence is indeed a final and not merely intermediate goal) it is also sought or the sake of A. And that end is more final than any other, final without qualification, which is always sought or its own sake and never for the sake of anything else. Such, he continues is *eudaimonia*: there may be plenty of things (such as pleasure and virtue) that we value or ourselves, but yet we say too that we value them for the sake of *eudaimonia*, whereas nobody ever aims at *eudaimonia* or the sake of one of them (or, in general, or anything other than itself).[4] When Aristotle says that A is or the sake of B, he means to say that A contributes as a constituents to B. What he does mean when he says that good actions are for the sake of *eudaimonia* is that *eudaimonia* does not consist in a single

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[1] Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, tr. by J.A.K.Thompson, (London: Penguin books, 1958).p.51.

[2] Ibid. p.46.

[3] Ibid. p.66.

[4] Akrill, J.L., "Aristotle on Eudaimonia," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (US: University of California Press, 1980), p.21.

activity, contemplation. For Aristotle, *eudaimonia* was not to be sought for any particular reason, but was an end in itself. In other words, we should not desire *eudaimonia* because it is our duty to seek it, or in order to increase the amount of happiness in the world. The ideas is that by living in a way that reaches one's full potential one bloom or flourish and so display the best version of one that one can be. Aristotle thought that the practice of virtues would equate to happiness, in the sense of being all one could be. By virtues, Aristotle meant the act of achieving balance and moderation.

The main point we have seen so far is that, for Aristotle, a happy life is a good life. In other words, happiness is good. But other things are good, too -- such things as health and wealth, knowledge and friendship, and a good moral character. We recognize all these things as good. All of us want them, and would regret being deprived of them. How does happiness stand in relation to all these other goods? And how are they all related to happiness? Aristotle tells us a number of things which enable us to answer this question. He says, in the first place, that all men agree in speaking of happiness as the ultimate good, the highest good, the supreme good. We can understand what this means when we realize that happiness is that state of human well-being which leaves nothing more to be desired.

A happy man, Aristotle says, is the man who has everything he really needs. He has those things which he needs to realize his potentials.

That is why Aristotle says that the happy man wants for nothing. Aristotle then points out that this cannot be said of other goods. This leads Aristotle to his definition of the happy life as a life made perfect by the possession of all good things such as health, wealth, friendship, knowledge, virtue -- all these are constituent parts of happiness. And happiness is the whole good of which they are component parts. That is how happiness is related to all the other goods.

According to Aristotle, pleasure is not the aim of every human action, because not every pleasure is good. "Since activities differ in goodness and badness, and some are to be chosen, some to be avoided and some neutral, their pleasure can be classed similarly, because each activity has a pleasure proper to it. Thus the pleasure proper to a serious activity is virtuous, and that which is proper to a bad one is vicious; or desires too are laudable if their objects are noble, but censurable if they are base."[5] The pleasure which is found in some forms of activity may be good, and the pleasure which is found in other forms of activity may be bad. Pleasure is found in various forms of activity, and a proper pleasure or pain may belong to any activity. The pleasure which is found in some forms of activity may be good, and the pleasure which is found in other forms of activity may be bad.

[5] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, (U.K: Penguin Books, 2004), pp.265-26.

Aristotle criticized Plato's view that "the paradigm case of pleasure is eating and drinking; the pleasure comes from noticing that we are being restored to our natural state of fullness."[6] On Plato's view, the good is a state of fullness and the pleasure cannot be regarded as good, because it is only a means toward some end which is good. Unlike Plato, Aristotle hold that "the paradigm case of pleasure is being aware of something that holds our attention, e.g., listening to good music"[7] or understanding a philosophical concept. When we are aware of what we are doing, and find it interesting or enjoyable, then pleasure helps in perfecting our activities. On Aristotle's view, "The pleasure perfects the activities not as the formed state that issues in that activity perfects it, by being immanent in it, but as a sort of supervening perfection like the bloom that graces the flower of youth (1174b30)."[8] For the pleasure proper to an activity intensifies it; because those who work with pleasure show better judgement and greater precision in dealing with each class of object: e.g. those who enjoy philosophy become good at it and understands its various aspects better, and similarly those who like music, and all the other occupations improve in heir proper function if they enjoy it. Thus pleasures intensify their activities; and what intensifies an activity is proper to it."[9]

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[6] Barnes, Jonathan, *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle,* (U.S.: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 211.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, etc., p.263.

[9] Ibid., pp.264-65.

Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* is not completely devoid of pleasure. Though pleasure is not the goal of *eudaimonia*, according to Aristotle, pleasure comes as a result of pursuing what is necessary for *eudaimonia*. For instance, pleasure comes as a result of pursuing friendships, doing virtuous acts, or participating in intellectual activity. More accurately, an *eudaimon* person experiences pleasure from pursuing friendships, doing virtuous acts, and participating in intellectual activity. Just as happiness is thought of, in part, as a fulfillment of the achievement of various goals, likewise, Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* involves the achievement of particular goals. In the case of *eudaimonia*, it involves the attainment of virtuous friendships, pursuit of virtuous activity, participation in intellectual activity, and the possession of certain external goods.

One significant point of difference between our ordinary conception of happiness and Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* concerns how we judge a person to be happy or to be *eudaimon*. Frequently, happiness is interpreted as a subjective conception, but *eudaimonia* is thought of as an objective conception. That is, happiness is achieved by a person, given that she fulfills, to some extent, her desires and achieves goals she has set for herself. The desires and goals vary from person to person. Thus, what is necessary for persons to be happy varies,

according to particular desires and goals of the individuals. On the contrary, *eudaimonia*, for Aristotle, is attained by persons that fulfill certain necessary conditions for *eudaimonia*. For persons to be *eudaimon*, they must have virtuous friends, engage in virtuous activity, participate in intellectual activity, and possess particular external goods. To a large extent, what is necessary for persons to be *eudaimon* is the same for everyone. That is, everyone must pursue virtuous friendships, engage in virtuous activity, participate in intellectual activity, and possess external goods to be *eudaimon*. The exact details of those activities can vary, depending on the person and circumstance. For instance, insofar as virtuous activity is concerned, how a virtue plays out depends on the situation. Take one virtue for example. Friendliness, a virtue related to social intercourse, involves exercising an appropriate amount of passion or affection for one's associate, for the right person, at the right time. The details of exhibiting friendliness in one situation may differ from the details of demonstrating friendliness in another situation.

Back to the topic of happiness as a good translation of *eudaimonia*, an important inquiry is whether the difference in conceptions of *eudaimonia* and happiness, one being objective and the other subjective, is sufficient to demonstrate that happiness is not a good translation of *eudaimonia*. The short answer to that question is no. Such a difference merely demonstrates a difference in conceptions of happiness. A number

of philosophers accept the translation of *eudaimonia* as happiness. For instance, James Dybikowski, in "Is Aristotelian 'Eudaimonia' Happiness," accepts happiness as an adequate translation of *eudaimonia.*[10] Richard Kraut, in "Two Conceptions of Happiness," accepts *eudaimonia*'s translation as happiness but presents what he believes to be a preferred conception of happiness. He argues in favor of a subjective conception of happiness over Aristotle's objective conception of happiness.[11]

Kraut argues that Aristotle's conception of happiness is not as preferable because persons do not qualify as *eudaimon* unless they fulfill all that is necessary for happiness: having virtuous friendships, participating in virtuous activity, etc. To use Kraut's words, "To summarize, let me turn back once more to Aristotle: his differences from us stem from the fact that he calls someone *eudaimon* only if that person comes fairly close to the ideal life for all human beings, whereas our standard of happiness is more subjective and flexible."[12] Given that Kraut's conception of happiness is more flexible insofar as it allows for severely handicapped individuals and slaves to be happy. Back to the point of whether the difference in conceptions, one being subjective and the other being objective, is sufficient to claim that happiness is not a good

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[10] James C. Dybikowski, "Is Aristotelian 'Eudaimonia' Happiness?" Dialogue: *Canadian Philosophical Review* (June 1981), pp.185-200.
[11] Richard Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol 88 (April 1979), pp. 167-197.
[12] Ibid., 196.

other being objective, is sufficient to claim that happiness is not a good translation of *eudaimonia*, I think not. What philosophers are debating, on this matter, is not that happiness fails to work as a good translation of *eudaimonia*, but rather, that Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* has a problematic consequence.

Another important point to consider in favor of using happiness as an acceptable and good translation of *eudaimonia* is that whatever the dispute in interpreting Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* may be, what is required for *eudaimonia* and for happiness are one and the same. Whether Aristotelian scholars are talking about what is needed for *eudaimonia* or what is needed for happiness in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, they examine the same text or passages and consider the same criteria.[13] I will talk about what that material is or what those criteria are later. Since *eudaimonia* and happiness point toward the same requirements, I shall henceforth use happiness to refer to Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia*.

Aristotle defines happiness as the highest good or the supreme good for humankind. Aristotle points out that the supreme good is final. But then, he distinguishes different degrees of finality. In speaking of degrees of finality, we mean that a thing pursued as an end in itself is more

[13] These are just a few examples – Howard Curzer, "Criteria for Happiness in Nichomachean Ethics I.7 and X.6-8," *Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 40, (1990), pp.421-423.

final than one pursued as a means to something else, and that a thing never chosen as a means to anything else is more final than things chosen both as ends in themselves and as means to that thing; and accordingly a thing chosen always as an end and never as a means we call absolutely final.[14]

Happiness, according to Aristotle, is absolutely final. "Now happiness above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense, since we always choose it for its own sake and never as a means to something else . . . "[15] A happy person is not one who does some acts here and there, and as a result, is happy. Rather, a person cultivates a life of happiness by consistently doing various actions and living life a certain way. In particular, Aristotle defines happiness, in part, in terms of some function unique to human beings. For he says, "Perhaps then we may arrive at (more explicit account of what constitutes happiness) by ascertaining what is man's function."[16] By process of elimination, Aristotle reaches the conclusion that what is characteristic to human beings has to do with our reasoning capacity. "There remains therefore what may be called the practical life of the rational part of man."[17] Being happy, at the very least, involves reasoning well, whether about philosophical concerns or practical matters. Happiness involves participating in intellectual activity and in virtuous activity, respectively.

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[14] Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, in The Loeb Classical Library, trans. by H. Rackham, ed. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 27.
[15] Ibid., pp. 27 & 29.
[16] Ibid., p. 31.
[17] Ibid., p. 31.

matters. Happiness involves participating in intellectual activity and in virtuous activity, respectively.

Happiness is not possible without the community. Intellectual activity is part of the nature of happiness. Aristotle says this on a number of occasions. For instance, he says, "And that happiness consists in contemplation may be accepted as agreeing both with the results already reached and with the truth."[18] Strictly speaking, a person can engage in intellectual activity without the presence of others. However, people are better able to engage in intellectual activity, such as philosophical contemplation, when they are able to discuss such matters with others. Another good necessary for happiness is virtuous activity. "Now with those who pronounce happiness to be virtue, or some particular virtue," claims Aristotle, "our definition is in agreement; for 'activity in conformity with virtue' involves virtue."[19] Concerning a number of the virtues, the presence of others is necessary for a person to participate in virtuous activity; that is, there needs to be people at the receiving end of the virtuous activity. A person does not have the chance to be courageous if there are no people to fight in battle. A person cannot be liberal, giving the right amount of money to the right person at the right time, if there are no persons to who money can be given. A third good that constitutes the nature of happiness is virtuous friendships.

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[18] Ibid., p. 613.

[19] Ibid., p. 39.

According to Aristotle, "Therefore to be happy a man needs virtuous friends."[20] Obviously, a person needs another person with whom to be friends. But, friendships offer further benefits. Friendships among virtuous persons provide excellent opportunities for people to engage in philosophical contemplation and to participate in practical deliberation together. Besides talking about what constitutes the nature of happiness, certain other goods are necessary for happiness to be possible. "Nevertheless it is manifest that happiness also requires external goods, in addition, as we said; for it is impossible, or at least not easy, to play a noble part unless furnished with the necessary equipment." [21] From examples that have been mentioned of – it should be obvious that the good life was definitely of concern to Aristotle.

Though Plato does not say much on happiness explicitly; but there are passages in *Republic* from which his view of happiness can be gathered. In *Republic*, he seems to suppose that happiness is good for human beings, and different conceptions of happiness can be built from different conceptions of the human good. On Plato's view, happiness depends on the knowledge of the good. He presents a reasonable proposition given the priority of the nature of the good over the nature of happiness. Plato seems to view 'happiness as the development of human

[20] Ibid., p. 565.
[21] Ibid., p. 43.

beings greater capabilities and the best possible performance of social and psychic human functions'.[22] Aristotle criticized the transcendence of the good and argued that knowledge of such good has no relevance for the philosophy of human practice. Aristotle convinces his reader that the transcendence of the good is a mythical form which he strove to translate into conceptual language, or into the least metaphorical form possible. However, in their moral philosophy, both philosophers, in the end, agree: The quality of the practical life depends on the relationship of the human life to the divine; but, human beings are composite: the possibility of the theoretical life is "limited and conditional".

What Aristotle is indicating is that there is a conceptual diversity in goodness. 'Happiness is acquired by moral goodness and by some kind of training'[23]. The good for Aristotle is whatever is in fact aimed at. Aristotle makes happiness central and is thus *eudaimonistic.* We all desire happiness for its own sake, and everything else we desire is desired, directly or indirectly, at least for its contribution to our happiness.[24] This leads Aristotle to his definition of the happy life as a life made perfect by the possession of all good things such as health wealth, friendship, knowledge, virtue -- all these are constituent parts of happiness. And

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[22] Sanas, Gerasimos. *Goodness and Jusice: Plato, Arisotle and he Moderns*, (UK: Blackwell Publishers Ld., 2001), p.64.
[23] Ibid.p.80.
[24] Audi, Robert. *Practical Reasoning*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp.36.

happiness is the whole good of which they are component parts. That is how happiness is related to all the other goods.

So the good for human is what a human being by nature he is seeking. The desire to achieve *eudaimonia* is a defining characteristic of what it means to be human. In other words, it is something humans do, because we see them doing it all the time. For everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, seek to develop skills, qualities, obtain objects and even get to know people that will enable them to live a successful, prosperous, happy and contented life. This is why Aristotle believed *eudaimonia* was the *telos* of human life, for it can be seen to affect all of our choices and decisions. There is an objective fact of the matter with reference to which we act and judge. So, in Aristotle's view, there is a relationship between virtue and happiness to lead a good life.

It seems that Aristotle considered happiness as a quality of intellectual beings. On Aristotle's view, the best ways to live is up to one's own nature, or in a rational way, by being a creature directed by rational soul. Living a well-lived life is the best possible "good" for a man; this is what it is to succeed as a human being, and living well means living virtuously. "Living well means living one's life under the guidance of the virtues of the soul. Since success is a perfect and self-sufficient objective, it must include the whole of life and all the most important virtues.

Success in life, the best possible good for man, is therefore living one's whole life in a rational way, under the guidance of the best virtues of the rational soul".[25] Happiness (*eudaimonia*) is virtuous activity, which is guided by the intellect and by reason. Thus, happiness is also a contemplative activity. Happiness is not merely a means to an end, but is an end in itself. Happiness is a unity of will and action, of intellect and reason. Happiness is not merely a feeling of pleasure or contentment, but is a fulfillment of the human soul. Aristotle says that human beings are happiest when they are guided by reason. Thus, for Aristotle (in agreement with Plato), the happiest life is that of the philosopher. Perfect happiness is achieved by a unity of practical and theoretical (philosophic) wisdom.

Aristotle is much more consistent than us by suggesting an intellectual definition of that quality. An intellectual being likes "virtue" and dislikes "evil," or prefers virtue to the lack of it. Thus, an intellectual being can be happy only if he acts virtuous. However, the problem with this theory lays in a situational, contextual and universal definition of virtue and evil.

[25]Barnes, Jonathan, *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle,* etc., p. 202.

(b)The notion of Happiness as Virtue

This section explicates how intellectual activity and virtuous activity are parts of the nature of happiness, according to Aristotle's conception of happiness. To begin with, both of those activities have to do with the *ergon* of human beings or what is characteristic to human beings. When we engage in intellectual activity and virtuous activity, we utilize our reasoning capacity, albeit in different ways. The former is more theoretical, and the latter is more practical.

On Aristotle's view, happiness is the most important virtue. His notion of goal-directed, teleological striving as the basis for all life, the notion of happiness (*eudaimonia*), and of the excellence of human life (*arete*) linked to a distinctively human function (*ergon*), Aristotle offers us his fundamental moral principle in the following definition: "If the function of man is an activity of soul in accordance with, or implying, a rational principle, and if we hold that the function of an individual and of a good individual o the same kind – e.g. of a harpist and of a good harpist and so on generally – is generally the same, the latter's distinctive excellence being attached to the name of the function (because the function of the harpist is to play the harp, but that of the good harpist is to play it well); and if we assume that the function of man is a kind of life, namely, an activity or series of actions of the soul, implying a rational

principle; and if the function of a good man is to perform these well and rightly, and if every function is performed well when performed in accordance with its proper excellence: if all this is so, the conclusion is that the good for man is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, in accordance with the best and most perfect kind".[26]

However, there are some important problems with the argument up to this point, notably with the function argument. For example, social roles (artisans, musicians, soldier, housewives) have functions, but how to we speak of a human function? If we had recourse to divine revelation we might understand something about a uniquely human function, but Aristotle makes no such appeal. Just because a certain activity is particularly human, that does not mean we have an obligation to engage in it. Human beings, for example, are the only creatures who can with words tell lies to each other. That does not mean we are obliged to carry out that activity in order to be fully human.

The doubts about the function argument have led to suggest that the main emphasis in the *Ethics* is not strictly on what we might consider ethics and more on success: "the immediate aim of the *Ethics* is to make us 'good men'—not morally good men, but expert or successful human

[26] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, etc., p.16.

beings."[27] On this reading, the *Ethics* "is not directly telling us how to be morally good men, or even how to be humanly happy: it is telling us how to live successful lives, how to fulfill ourselves as men".[28]

We recognize that there is a significant difference between being successful and being morally good. But if we recall the team analogy, the way Aristotle brings the two more or less together begins to make sense. After all, to the extent that we identify people as team players, to that extent we tend to acknowledge that their excellence as human beings rests on the success that they demonstrate in the social environment, a group of activities which involves guiding actions by the standards of excellence established by the group. Since Aristotle, as we have seen, claims that human beings are, first and foremost, social and political beings, it is probably not so surprising that they gauges their excellence in social terms. What enables someone to contribute well to the group and to be recognized by the group as an excellent contributor (that is, to be a success) is a measure of the human being's worth or excellence.

Whatever these difficulties, this definition of the good life shows just how much Aristotle, like Plato, identifies moral excellence with the possession of a certain kind of character, with a sense of a full and rich life constituted by the best virtues in the individual. The central moral concern

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[27] Barnes, Jonathan, *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle,* etc., p.29
[28] Ibid. p.34.

of human life, therefore, is going to rest on the appropriate relationship between the individual's character, desires, thought process, and choices, as these manifest themselves in action, rather than on, say, the consequences of certain actions or the fidelity with which the person follows certain carefully established rules.

Aristotle tells us that the most important factor in the effort to achieve happiness is a good moral character -- what he calls "complete virtue." But a man must not only be virtuous, he must also act in accordance with virtue. And it is not enough to have one or a few virtues. He must be completely virtuous and live in accordance with complete virtue. Aristotle makes this point most emphatically. He is happy who lives in accordance with complete virtue and is adequately furnished with external goods, and not for some unspecified period but throughout a complete life.[29]

Aristotle explains that the virtuous individual, by nature, enjoys acting virtuously. The virtuous individual may act virtuously because virtuous actions make him or her happy, and/or because virtuous actions make others happy. The virtuous individual may also act virtuously because he or she believes that virtuous actions are intrinsically good. The virtues are those states which inspire activities that work out best for the human being. Furthermore, the intelligent person knows what's good for him, in an objective sense. A person flourishes because of the kinds of

[29] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, etc., p24.

things he does and the ways he does them. He acts in accordance with reason, and chooses what is expedient, pleasant, and fine.

According to Aristotle, virtue is a principle of temperance and moderation, which achieves a mean between the vice of excess and the vice of deficiency of a moral quality. Thus, bravery as a moral virtue achieves a mean between recklessness and cowardice. Generosity as a moral virtue achieves a mean between wastefulness and greed. 'Generosity has to do with giving. The virtue of generosity does not require – or even allow – that one should give away all one has to everyone on all occasions; giving can be excessive and inappropriate. The right state of character is that from which on each occasion the appropriate feeling and action results'.[30]

However, Aristotle's doctrine of the mean has little practical implication and advisory force. For example, if my friend asks me how much money I should need for a whole life, and I reply 'neither too much nor too little', my friend's puzzle has hardly been eased. Its not that Aristotle was not aware of the practical difficulty of the doctrine of the mean, he did recognize that his doctrine of the mean is practically unhelpful: "We have already said that one should choose the mean...But although to say this is true, it is not at all explicit, because as matter of fact in all the other occupations about which there is a science it is true to say that one should exert oneself and relax neither to much nor too little, but to

[30] Ackrill, J.L., *Aristotle the Philosopher*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p.137.

a mean extend as the right principle dictates; but if you grasped only this , you would know nothing more – e.g. you would not know what remedies to apply to your body if someone told you to take what medical science prescribes and as a medical man prescribes it."[31]

It hardly helps if my friend asks for my advice about how he should act and I advice him to observe the mean. My friend is no better off than he was before. In other words, my advice didn't help my friend at all. The notion of virtue as a mean is not a good account of virtue for at least two reasons. First, the opposite excessive ends vary according to situations, context, cultures, and individuals. There can be endless possible situation for each action. An excessive behavior, sometimes, can become virtuous or even deficient. Thus, this notion of virtue is virtually useless. Second, there are some virtuous actions that can be placed on one of the extreme ends, instead of intermediary place. Let's assume that the government in a democratic set up issued ten rules to be obeyed by consensus. Obviously, obeying all these rules should be considered as virtue. However, 'obeying all the rules' is not the mean of excessive ends. In fact, 'obeying some of the rules' is the mean of 'obeying all the rules' and 'disobeying all the rules'.

At the beginning of Book 2 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of virtue: moral virtue and intellectual virtue. "Virtue is of two kinds, intellectual and moral. Intellectual virtue

[31] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson , etc., p.xxiv.

owes both its inception and its growth chiefly to instruction, and for this reason needs time and experience. Moral goodness, on the other hand, is the result of habit, from which it has actually got its name, being a slight modification of the word *ethos*."[32]

According to Aristotle, the moral virtues include: liberality and temperance. Courage, temperance, self-discipline, moderation, modesty, humility, generosity, friendliness, truthfulness, honesty, justice are moral virtues. The moral vices include: cowardice, self-indulgence, greed, untruthfulness, dishonesty, injustice. Acts of virtue bring honor to an individual, acts of vice bring dishonor to an individual. For in speaking about a man's character we do not say that he is wise or has understanding but that he is good-tempered or temperate; yet we praise the wise man also with respect to his state of mind; and of states of mind we all those which merit praise virtues. Aristotle says that 'moral virtues are not innate, but that they are acquired by developing the habit of exercising them'.[33] An individual becomes truthful by acting truthfully, or becomes unselfish by acting unselfishly. Aristotle notes that it may be difficult for an individual to become virtuous if he or she has not acquired the habit of acting virtuously. For example, it may be difficult for an individual to become tactful, if he or she has not acquired the habit of acting tactfully. It may also be difficult for an individual to become unselfish, if he or she has acquired the habit of acting selfishly.

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[32] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, etc., p31.
[33] Ackrill, J.L., *Aristotle the Philosopher*, etc., p.55.

A morally virtuous action requires an individual to be able to choose how to respond to his or her own thoughts and feelings. Thus, the concept of moral responsibility implies that an individual has some freedom to choose his or her own actions. Moral responsibility for an action may be partly determined by whether the action is voluntary or involuntary. An individual may not be morally responsible for having performed an action, if the individual was forced to perform the action against his or her own will. An individual may also not be morally responsible for having performed an action, if the individual has no control over the action.

It may be partly determined by whether an individual, prior to performing an action, was aware of the possible consequences of the action. Moral responsibility may also be partly determined by whether an individual, prior to performing an action, should have known the possible consequences of the action. It may also be partly determined by whether an action is impulsive or deliberate. Impulsive actions may be voluntary but may not be as purposeful and planned as deliberate actions. An individual may have a responsibility to control his or her impulses, but the individual who acts impulsively may not be as aware of the possible consequences of his or her actions as the individual who acts deliberately.

Just as an individual may be responsible for his or her actions in a situation, an individual may be responsible for his or her inaction in a

situation. A lack of action by an individual in a situation may imply his or her responsibility for not having acted in that situation. An action by an individual in a given situation may be judged according to the way in which the individual could have acted in that situation.

According to Aristotle, the intellectual virtues include: understanding (scientific knowledge (*episteme*), artistic or technical knowledge (*techne*), intuitive reason (*nous*)), practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and philosophic wisdom. (*sophia*). Scientific knowledge is knowledge of what is necessary and universal. Artistic or technical knowledge is knowledge of how to make things, or of how to develop a craft. Intuitive reason is the process that establishes the first principles of knowledge. Practical wisdom is the capacity to act in accordance with the good of humanity. Philosophic wisdom is the combination of intuitive reason and scientific knowledge.

In Book 7 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between moral incontinence and moral vice by saying that moral incontinence is involuntary and that moral vice is voluntary. Moral incontinence is an excessive and involuntary pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. Aristotle says, 'hence we should more correctly call incontinence (licentious) the man who pursues excessive pleasures and avoids moderate pains under little, if any, impulse of desire, than the man who does so

under a powerful impulse.'[34] Both continence and incontinence may cause involuntary actions. The morally continent individual can adhere to his or her own standards of conduct, but the morally incontinent individual cannot adhere to his or her own standards of conduct.

For Aristotle, happiness is a virtue. Though in amusement, we can sense the presence of happiness, that is, something that is allowing us to feel happiness, in the end, we must decide to turn away from the amusement in order to maintain our happiness. Therefore, true and lasting happiness, in this sense cannot ultimately be found in amusement.

Aristotle argued that the goal of human life is happiness, and that we achieve happiness when we fulfill our function. Aristotle declared that the human being as the 'rational animal' whose function is to reason. Thus according to Aristotle, a happy life for human beings is a life governed by reason. Human beings have the ability to utilize this reasoning capacity, whether by engaging in intellectual activity or practical reasoning. The former includes using one's reasoning capacity in a more abstract fashion, say, by participating in philosophical contemplation and philosophical discussions. The latter involves a more practical application of one's reasoning ability, such as knowing how to act virtuously and actually acting virtuously.

[34] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, etc, p.177.

Besides defining happiness partially in terms of the *ergon* of human beings, the nature of happiness also includes virtues of character. Virtue of character is intimately tied with practical wisdom. By employing practical wisdom, a person figures out what to do — taking into account the right persons, the right amount, at the right time, for the right cause, in the right way. Also, a morally mature person, by employing practical wisdom, in addition to knowing what the virtuous act is in a given circumstance, knows why (or how) the act is virtuous.

His stressing of the importance of moral virtues as the key to happiness and successful governance is awesome. His message of virtue and moderation transcend time and still are a great influence on modern western thought.

(II) Idea of Good

Aristotle's ethics is an ethics of the good life. How does one achieve the good life? In order to answer this question, we must have some understanding of what is meant by "the good". We begin with a description of "the good" as it is commonly understood by most of us. We speak of a good pen, a good computer, a good pair of skates, a good car, a lousy car, a lousy computer, etc. If we look very carefully, the good is directly linked to a thing's operation. When a thing has a proper operation, the good of the thing and its well being consist in that operation. The

proper operation of a pen is to write, and so a good pen writes well. The proper operation of a knife is to cut food, so a good knife will cut well. The proper operation of a car is to drive efficiently, safely, smoothly, etc. So, a good car is one that drives well, that is, efficiently, safely, smoothly, etc.

At the beginning of the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle tries to discover what the good is, or the chief good (book I, chapter 2). In Book I chapter 6 of *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle gives a thorough examination of 'the good' and what it consists of. Aristotle begins his inquiry into 'the good' by proposing that the good is "that for the sake of which the other things are done."[35] Ends pursued for some further purpose, such as wealth, can be said to be incomplete, because they have not yet reached the final goal. And there must be some final goal, or else action would be pointless—as Aristotle points out in chapter 2, if something is not sought for its own sake, there must be some final end, otherwise all such action would go on without limit, making desire empty and futile. Surely, Aristotle argues, the good must be something complete, that is not desired for some further end. So it seems that the good is the most complete end, which is pursued wholly for itself and at which all other action aims. Aristotle claims that the most complete end is that which is always choiceworthy in itself, which is just to say that the most complete end is intrinsically valuable.

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[35] Mckeon, Richrd, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, (USA: Modern Library Paperback Edition, 2001), p.940.

Along the way he discusses the relationship between happiness and the human function and the nature of virtue. On Aristotle's view, the purpose of every human action is to achieve something which is good. The good for the human being as such, according to Aristotle, is happiness or flourishing (*eudaemonia*). Happiness has two components, which might be called external and internal. External goods such as an attractive appearance, wealth, etc. are the less important aspects of happiness. Indeed, the highest form of happiness (found in contemplation, discussed in Book X) is that which requires the minimum of external goods. The internal component is the excellence of the soul, and it is to this that we now turn. In searching for the overall good, Aristotle separates what may be called instrumental goods from intrinsic goods. The former are good only because they lead to something else that is good; the latter are good in themselves.

The idea of good is an area in which Aristotle did not agree with Plato. Plato said that good is the best thing in the world, but his idea was abstract. Aristotle criticized the transcendence of the good and argued that knowledge of such good has no relevance for the philosophy of human practice. Aristotle convinced his reader that Plato's transcendence of good is a mythical form which Aristotle strove to translate into conceptual language, or into the least metaphorical form possible, which he explicitly handles in his teleology. However, in their moral philosophy, both philosophers, in the end, agree: The quality of practical lie depends on the

relationship of the human life to the divine; but human beings are composite: the possibility of theoretical life is 'limited and conditional'. "Human beings cannot devote themselves persistently and uninterruptedly to thought's pure seeing".[36]

Aristotle felt that knowing what is good would help in discerning what goods to attempt to achieve. The question is therefore how the term 'good' is to be defined. Lot many people may define goodness as happiness, pleasure, honor, wealth, power, knowledge, wisdom, or virtue. But Aristotle simply defines the 'good' as that at which every action is aimed. Plato had defined "good" in terms of an absolute, divine Form to which the world should aspire but for Aristotle the good is an end in itself. It is not desired for the sake of any thing else but it is the final end beyond which nothing exists. 'It is generally accepted view that the final good is self-sufficient'.[37] 'Happiness then, the end to which all our conscious acts are directed, is found to be something final and self-sufficient'.[38] While investigating the nature of happiness, Aristotle suggests us to examine the nature of goodness. However, the question arises as to whether there is a single Idea of 'good' which determines the moral quality of an action, or whether there are many Ideas of 'good' which are independent in determining the moral quality of an action. Thus, there may be some actions which are good in themselves, and other actions which are good

[36] Hans-Georg Gadamar, *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy*, translated by P. Christopher Smith, (Yale:Yale University Press, 1986), p.17.
[37] Ibid. p.37.
[38] Ibid.

because they are performed for the purpose of something other than themselves which is good. An individual may choose to perform an action because the action is good in itself, and/or because the action will make him or her happy. If goodness is seen as pleasure or happiness, then actions which are performed for the sake of honor, benevolence, justice, or other virtues may be judged as good because they bring pleasure and happiness. The point is that whatever a human does, he does for the good.

Aristotle advocates for a life that is both good and self-sufficient. Aristotle sets out to find the final cause of a thing is part of what the thing *is*, so the human function will be some sort of perfection of human nature. The good in any craft is to perform the function of that craft well. It seems the same should hold true for humans in general. Aristotle argues that humans in general does have a function,[39] just as body parts and various human pursuits have a function. 'The function of a man is the exercise of his non-corporeal faculties or soul in accordance with, or at least not divorced from, a rational principle. The function of an individual and of a good individual in the same class – a harp player, for example, and a good harp player, and so through the classes – is generally the same, except that we must add superiority in accomplishment to the function, the function of the harp player being merely to play on the harp, while the function of good harp player is to play on it well. The function of man is certain orm of life, namely an activity of the soulexercised in combination with a

[39] Ibid. p.38.

rational principle or reasonable ground of action. The function of a good man is to exert such ativity well. A unction is performed well when performed in accordance with the excellence proper to it.'[40] Here, what Aristotle is trying to convey to the mankind that being human as a rational animal a man must try to perform best according to his potential. On Aristotle's view, it is possible for man to transform his potential into acuality. Aristotle considers true human nature of man to be divine. By becoming good, one can become a God like person which can be the ultimate potential that anyone can realize.

We can say that "the Good is one of the fundamental ethical concepts, and does not of itself yield a complete and rounded ethical theory. While it is the primary concept, which must in a sense be the key to all the others, the notions of duty, virtue, moral law, and freedom, must all be pressed for their meaning if one is to explain all our moral judgments in an articulated system of thought. That the Good, or ethical end, is the basal concept is indicated in part by the fact that, were there no good of happiness and perfection, the idea of duty would be meaningless."[41] Only in Aristotle's teleological view can thought find rest.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines the highest good for h uman-kind in terms of happiness; and happiness is 'an activity of the soul

[40] Ibid. p.38-39.

[41] Walter G. Everett, "The Concept of the Good", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 7, No. 5. (Sep., 1898), p.517. URL: http://www.jstor.org. Retrieved on Oct 4, 2007.

in accordance with virtue'. The nature of happiness includes intellectual activity, virtuous activity and friendship; and certain external goods are needed for happiness. A good life involves consistently participating in activities that make a person good: intellectual activity, virtuous activity, and pursuing friendships. Seeking the good of humankind involves consistently and habitually performing acts that develop good character. Such acts include performing virtuous acts and doing what is appropriate.

On Aristotle's view, the ultimate goal in life must be complete and unable to be improved upon. It cannot be pleasure, since something that is pleasurable can be improved upon if it is also good for you, for instance. 'Pleasure, as Aristotle uses the word, is distinct from happiness, though there can be no happiness without pleasure'.[42] Not all pleasure is good, and not all good things bring pleasure. So pleasure is part of a complete life, but not the main ingredient. True happiness is a life of activity in accordance with virtue.

Aristotle, by and large, says we must concentrate on human conduct as we find it in the world around us and deal with it as best we can, setting aside utopian schemes for moral improvement and universal rules of conduct. His arguments that questions about good and bad conduct are not merely relative but that, on the other hand, they cannot be

[42] Russel, Bertrand, *A History of Western Philosophy*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), p.180.

defined with scientific precision, that moral behaviour requires early training in good habits, that central to moral behaviour is a good character in which the individual's desires are educated to want to do the right thing, and that this is in keeping with human nature, all these match fairly closely the standards we continue to use in the education of our children because they make the most sense to us.

The notion that human life is purposeful and that the end point we should seek is a realization of our full potential as human beings in a community, that we should work towards having a fully educated character in which intelligent thinking, educated desires, and good executive skills enable us to work towards a successful active social existence which will include material well being, many friends, and the absence of moral tensions in our decision making, such a goal of living seems to many very attractive, far more so, in some people's eyes, that the more austere model with Plato appears to hold out for us in the *Republic*.

The importance which Aristotle places on human life as only acquiring moral meaning in the context of a community with a shared sense of the structure of goods and on the idea that we can discover only in such a community identity the appropriate starting points for rational moral behaviour and the final fulfillment of the good life has again always appealed to the common sense notion that human beings are, in some

essential ways, dependent on each other in the wider social context and that, without such a rich and identifiable social context, our moral lives are significantly diminished. In Brief, Aristotle's contention is that through experience we can learn both our limits and our opportunities. Men have learned, for example, that they cannot live satisfactorily by trying to live a kind of life inappropriate to their fundamental nature: we cannot live like beasts nor can we live as gods. Through both personal experience and the cumulative experience of others, then, we learn what it is to have a specifically human nature, and the potentialities and needs of this nature provide an objective basis for understanding how best to live as a human being.

Hence, Aristotle's view of moral life has always appealed to those who speak in the name of the community and its traditional values, and in recent years, as many people have become disillusioned with the individualistic ethos we have developed since the Renaissance, the notion that the good life is primarily a matter of emancipating the individual from traditional communal restraints, interest in Aristotle as a spokesperson for a community-based moral life has grown.

CHAPTER 3
An Examination of the Dichotomy between Happiness and Duty in Kant's Philosophy

Introduction:

In this chapter, I shall examine and critically analyze the issues concerning the dichotomy between duty and happiness. Kant's view of hypothetical and categorical imperatives in order to determine if his reasons render sufficiently why we ought to and do accept a practical moral point of view, it is necessary to mention his distinction between is and ought, fact and norm, and descriptive and prescriptive. Historically, Hume is the first philosopher who could differentiate is from ought. This distinction has its basis in Hume's division of knowledge into relations of ideas and matters of fact. Kant incorporates this distinction, and in the most creative and original manner, he distinguishes ought statements from synthetic *a priori* propositions. Kant's distinction between *is* and *ought* gives an insight into the very source of difference between a fact of conduct or a factual proposition and a standard of conduct or a normative proposition. A fact of conduct refers to the actual conduct of a man under given situation. A factual proposition is descriptive in nature. A descriptive enterprise is one that simply observes and describes what happens. By contrast, a prescriptive enterprise is one that attempts to articulate the correct principles that people ought to apply, and it is normative in nature. A normative proposition has a reference to the

consideration of the nature of an ideal or a standard on the basis of which a conduct is pronounced to be right or wrong, good or evil. Kant's definition of normative proposition can be illustrated by taking up a maxim from his formulation of categorical imperative. For example, suppose one says, 'one ought to act on that maxim through which one can at the same time will that it should become a universal law'. In what way does this proposition differ from the one like, 'one does act on that maxim through which one can at the same time will that it become a universal law'. In his formulation of the notion of ought, Kant not only articulates it in terms of the former example, but also in the most original manner distinguishes from the later. 'One ought to act on that maxim' does not mean the same as 'one does act on that maxim'. Thus, here emerges an unbridgeable gulf between ought and is. The *ought* statements in their formulation do not require any help from synthetic *apriori* judgements.

The dichotomy between *is* and *ought* has a reference to Hume who in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* says: "In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked that author proceeds from sometime in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or make observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprised to find that instead of the usual copulations of proposition *is*, and *is not,* I met with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is,

however, of the last consequence. For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it".[1]

In the above passage, Hume argues that the premises contain *is* while the conclusion contains an *ought* proposition, which is a new term not already contained in the premises. Such an argument is defective. There is a logical gap between the premises and the conclusion.

The distinction between *is* and *ought* developed by Hume has its basis in his ontology and epistemology. Existence of self, material substance and status of values are problematic, since one is not confronted directly by them in impressions. One may know them through less problematic modes of existence like behaviour, impressions, feelings of pleasure and pain, and so on. And all our feelings of pleasure and pain are mutually separate just like, "all our perceptions are different from each other, and from everything else in the universe, they are also distinct and separable, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything else to support their existence".[2]

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[1] Hume, David, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book Two and Three, ed. by Pall S. Ardal, (Fontana/Collins, 1978), p.203.
[2] Hume, David, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book One, ed. by O.G.C. Macrabb, (Fontana/Collins, 1978), pp.283-4.

Hume, in the first two section of his *Treatise*, argues that the basis of morality is sense perception and reason can help us to justify the claims of sensibility and reason is only the maid servant of sensibility. His basic contention is that morality is practical, that morals have and influence on the actions and affections, and there is nothing that is made up of demonstrative reasoning, causal knowledge, and factual information of ordinary sorts of can by itself influence action without the help of some passion or desire. And since passions, volitions, and actions are original facts and realities, complete in themselves with no representative function – they cannot be true or false, and hence cannot derive their merit from conformity to reason.

The view which Hume is propounding can be illuminated by a comparison with the position of Kant. For Kant, 'one ought to act on that maxim through which one can at the same time will that it should become a universal law' is the supreme principle which it would be morally wrong to deny. Whereas for Hume to deny this statement would be senseless, for it would detach 'ought' from the notion of a consensus of interest and so evacuate it o meaning. Roughly speaking, for Kant such a principle would be a contingent truth; for Hume it would be a necessary truth underlying morality.

Moreover, Hume and Kant can be usefully contrasted in another respect. Kant's basic principle in ethics is a moral principle, and is an affirmation independent of the facts which provides at least some sort of effective moral criterion, but Hume's is a definition of morality which appeal to the facts.

While attempting to examine Kant's position on happiness and Duty, it is necessary to clarify his meanings of hypothetical and categorical imperatives. Kant supposed that only rational beings are capable of acting in accordance with law consciously, in obedience to the objective principles determined by practical reason. Of course, human agents also have subjective impulses—desires and inclinations that may contradict the dictates of reason. So we experience the claim of reason as an obligation, a command that we act in a particular way, or an imperative. Such imperatives may occur in either of two distinct forms, hypothetical or categorical. For Kant, a hypothetical imperative means "a possible action to be practically necessary as a means to the attainment of something else that one wills".[3] A hypothetical imperative can relate to an action commanded for the attainment of something else; that is to say, it is used as a means to the attainment of some end.

[3]Kant, I., *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals: Moral Law*, trans. by H. J. Paton, (London:Hutchinson University Press, 1969), p.78.

Unlike the moral law, it is a hypothetical and not a categorical imperative. Further, Kant points out that a hypothetical imperative cannot help being empirical, for it is only by experience that one can learn what kind of inclination he has and which desire to be satisfied. In Kant's view, such empirical knowledge can not have universal solution, for it is available for each individual in his own way. Therefore, there is need to search for a moral law which are both universal and *a priori*.

In sharp opposition to this rule, Kant sets his moral or ethical law, the motive of which is not to be happy, but rather to be worthy of happiness. In addition of being a categorical imperative, it imposes on us an absolute obligation to us. A categorical imperative imposes law abidingness, that is to say, moral laws ought to be obeyed for their own sake, and only then a human action can be regarded as morally good. "A human action is morally good, not because it is done from immediate inclination – still less because it is done from self-interest – but because it is done for the sake of duty".[4] This law takes no account of our desire or the means of satisfying them. Rather, it demands an unconditional obedience to the moral laws for their own sake and not for the sake of any other higher end. It says how we ought to act in order to deserve happiness. It is drawn from pure reason, and not from experience. Therefore, it has

[4] Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., p.19.

the universality of an *a priori* principle. In order to seek clarity and precision, I shall divide this chapter into the following two parts:

Part (I) Kant's position on Happiness as a hypothetical imperative

Part (II) Kant's notion of duty as a categorical imperative

Before I come to Part I of the chapter, I would like to clarify briefly Kant's ontological and epistemological position. This is important because moral issues can properly be examined in the context of the epistemological and ontological positions.

In the written announcement of lectures given from 1765 to 1766, Kant says, 'In ontology, I discuss the more general properties of things, the difference between spiritual and material beings'. For this, Kant, in the sphere of ontology, draws a distinction between noumenon and thing-in-itself. The sphere of noumenon is what constitutes the spiritual aspect of Kant's ontology wherein lies the basis of his moral laws. He advocates the possibility of moral laws by postulating immortality of soul, freedom of will, and the existence of God. Kant calls these postulates as 'ideas of reason' and, thereby, postulates of moral laws. Different from noumenon is the sphere on thing-in-iteslf which presents the materialist aspect of Kant's ontology. It is the ground and cause of the appearances. It affects our senses and thereby furnishes the material element in our cognition. Though, on various occasions in *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant uses

noumenon and thing-in-itself as identical concepts but the distinction between them cannot be undermined.

Kant distinguishes the concept of noumenon from the phenomenon. These are the two completely separate spheres with no mediating transitions. The noumenon is completely free from the applicability of the categories like quantity, quality, cause-effect, etc. The distinction between noumenon and phenomenon is based on Kant's fundamental thesis that scientific knowledge has its jurisdiction within the world of phenonmenon and there is a realm of the spiritual into which science cannot penetrate. He limits the sphere of scientific knowledge to phenonmenon 'in order to leave room for faith'. The sphere of faith, where scientific knowledge cannot penetrate, is what is known as noumenon.

Further, Kant regards noumenon to be merely problematic, roughly in terms of its affirmation or negation is taken as merely possible or optional; that its objective validity cannot be established in any way; that it is free from contradictions; that its function is to limit the validity of certain other concepts. Kant writes: "The concept of noumenon – that is of a thing which is not to be thought as the object of the senses but as thing-in-itself, solely through a pure understanding – is not in any way contradictory. For, we cannot assert of sensibility that it is the sole possible kind of intuition. Further, the concept of a noumenon is necessary

to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things in themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge. The remaining things, to which it does not apply, are entitled noumenon, in order to show that this knowledge cannot extend its domain over everything which the understanding thinks".[5]

In the above passage, Kant explains the concept of noumenon in two different ways. On the one hand, he says that noumenon is a thing-in-itself and it can be thought only through pure understanding and can never be regarded as an object of senses. This conception of noumenon is based on Kant's thesis that sensible intuition cannot be regarded as the only possible kind of intuition. Kant, therefore, conceives a kind of intellectual intuition and asserts that noumenon as a thing-in-itself can be given the intellectual intuition.

Therefore, in the general ontological framework of Kant's philosophy, noumenon represents the idealist aspect of it. Different from noumenon is the thing-in-itself which presents the materialist aspect of Kant's ontology.

Here, I would like to point out that Kant's morality can only be discussed in the light of his epistemology and ontology. In his ontology,

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[5] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. L.W. Beck (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), pp.271-2.

Kant makes a fundamental distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. In Kant's view, the sphere of epistemology is confined to the sphere of phenomenon. He conceives the basis of moral laws in the sphere of noumenon in which the categories of scientific cognition have no application. In contrast with Kant, I propose an amalgamation between knowledge and morality and being. I have tried to show that the cognitive aspect of objective reality is indispensable for the formulation and obedience of moral laws and it is the cognition of objective reality which, through its process of development, bridges the gulf between the is and ought, between action and willing, between necessity and freedom, and thereby actualizes the ideality of ought, willing and freedom in the reality of concrete human affairs. On this basis, epistemology, ontology, and morality can be regarded as dialectically interrelated.

(I) Happiness as hypothetical imperative

A hypothetical imperative conditionally demands performance of an action for the sake of some other end or purpose; it has the form "Do A in order to achieve X." In other words, a hypothetical imperative is a principle of conduct that states that some action is an effective means to some end. A hypothetical imperative will, in turn, state a principle of conduct that an agent ought to follow only if (a) the action is in fact an effective means to the satisfaction of the stated need or desire and (b) the agent actually has that stated need or desire. For example, 'if you want to pass then study for it'. This example shows that the antecedent the "if"-part)

describes some condition of need or desire that an agent might have; the consequent (the "then"-part) enjoins the agent to perform some action.

Thus a hypothetical imperative can fail to apply to an agent if the agent lacks the stated need or desire. If, for instance, I do not want to pass, then I have no reason to study. In that case the hypothetical imperative "if you want to pass, then study for it" will not apply to me. It will give me no reason to study.

Moral principles, according to Kant, cannot be hypothetical imperatives. They cannot depend for their applicability to us on our having some need or desire that we might have lacked. The application of hypothetical imperatives to ethical decisions is mildly troublesome: in such cases it is clear that we are morally obliged to perform the action A only if we are sure both that X is a legitimate goal and that doing A will in fact produce this desirable result. For a perfectly rational being, all of this would be analytic, but given the general limitations of human knowledge, the joint conditions may rarely be satisfied. For if they did, then they would not be universally applicable, and it would always be possible for someone to evade a moral obligation simply by not having the requisite needs or desires. To see this point, suppose that moral principles were hypothetical imperatives. Then each moral principle would enjoin us to perform some action simply as a means to the satisfaction of some need or desire. The only reason that any such principle would offer us to perform

the action would be that the action is an effective means to the satisfaction of that need or desire. If someone did not have that need or desire, then he would have no reason to act on the principle. He would not be obligated to do as the principle says.

On Kant's view, if the desire for happiness were to be admitted as the principle for the determination of the will, no necessary law could be formulated; since pleasurable consciousness is the result of experience, from no examination of which could any necessary law be derived. In other words, the principle would be Heteronomy instead of Autonomy, which alone gives a basis for distinctly moral judgment. To allow a material principle such as pleasure to determine the will would be to place the Ego under natural laws in which no freedom is possible -and if no freedom, then for Kant, no morality is possible, since the essence of the moral law is freedom," i.e., self legislation. The moral law, then, must be purely formal and given by the subject. The good will must consist in willing the good out of pure respect for law.[6]

To have moral value the action must be done from a sense of obligation, not from any regard for another's rights, nor for sanctions or penalties that might arise from the non-performance of the duty. Thus an agent must ensure the development of a good will in himself/herself. It is

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[6] Norman Wilde, "Kant's Relation to Utilitarianism", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 3, No. 3. (May, 1894), pp. 293-294. http://www.jstor.org Retrieved on Oct 4, 2007.

not unreasonable to suppose that a person's duties to himself/herself are directed to this end. For Kant, devotion to the Moral Law is closely associated with a person's conception of himself as a noumenal being, which, as I understand it, involves self valuation.

Kant, however, thinks that our obligation to obey moral principles does not depend upon our having any such needs or desires. He thinks that happiness, the satisfaction of all our desires, is too indeterminate to be a workable guide. We are obligated to obey moral principles, he thinks, regardless of what we might want or need.

In this context, Kant's position is different from that of Mill. Mill regards happiness as a psychological fact. "Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to promote the reverse of happiness". [7] The thesis that happiness is the only thing intrinsically good, and suffering and pain is the only thing evil, is a factual statement for Mill, not an *a priori* insight. The psychological state of happiness may be, but is not necessarily the good for man, and what is true of the one may not be true of the other. And a theory cannot hold if it does not have universal nature. Mills appeals us to decide what kinds of actions should be considered right and wrong, since this means the tendency of the action to promote pleasure or pain, and this tendency can be known from experience. His proof of the principle of utility argues that "since

[7] Mill, J.S., *Utilitarianism*, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1953), p.7.

everyone values his own happiness for its own sake, the general happiness is valuable for its own sake".[8] Mill not only defines happiness in terms of pleasure, but seems at times to use the words interchangeably. In order to justify his original dictum that happiness consists in a balance of pleasure over pain committed himself to a reduction of morality in terms of pleasure.

Kant, on the other hand, stresses on the moral element. It is perhaps the necessary truth that it is a socially desirable thing that morality should flourish. Whether or not it is necessary truth that we desire pleasure, people do not generally require to be persuaded of the delights of pleasure. They may well need to be convinced that there are delights in performing duty for its own sake. Starting at the other hand from Mill, Kant stresses on the need to be worthy of happiness. Kant's dutiful man acts gladly, not with pleasure or enjoyment. Mill likes the most virtuous man to be he who has the largest share of the right kind of pleasure and is therefore the happiest. Though psychological state of happiness has considerable influence on our views about what happiness the good for man really is, but the ultimate decision must be not a psychological one but the moral one.

Kant's principles of duty could best be regarded as private but the public morality maxim regards that duty is to be regarded as situational and contextual in nature. Kant's principles of duty are formal but actions

[8] Mill, J.S., *Utilitarianism*, etc. pp. 37-38.

are to be performed in society, therefore, we need to contextualize or give context and specifications to principles. This implies that moral principles can be properly generalized in the light of ontological and epistemological issues. Knowledge should complement moral issues.

In Kant's terminology moral principles must be categorical rather than hypothetical imperatives. So, moral principles cannot be hypothetical imperatives. They must be categorical imperatives. They must be imperatives, principles of conduct, that every rational being, on account of being rational and on account of nothing further, has reason, and hence an obligation, to obey. According to Kant, "rational men define universal rules of conduct, called categorical imperative".[9] Necessarily, these rules must be conceived apart from matters of interest and inclination; otherwise, they would merely serve as rationalizations for self-interest. Consequently, "reason must discern universal principles of right conduct (moral maxims) without regard for any particular end or desire at issue in a given situation where the moral maxim is considered relevant".[10]

According to Kant, a hypothetical imperative operates as means to an end, and that only if someone is interested in the end result, will these imperatives have any ability to cause people to act. Means/end rationality is only hypothetical, and the end of the use of reason in this way (happiness, pleasure, etc.) has been rejected as the source of the good. On

[9] Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., pp.69-71
[10] Ibid. pp.67-68.

Kant's view, the answer is that we should look at the motivation of the will. The general Kantian notion that the pursuit of happiness is framed by a lexically higher moral value has it source not in the emotions, but in principles of practical reason. "Moral thinking makes us aware that we have an indirect duty to pursue our own happiness, since we will have more difficulty in doing our duty if we are miserable."[11] Moral thinking also leads to the conclusion that we have a direct duty to promote the happiness of others.[12] It is also evident that progress in morality increases the likelihood of achieving happiness. Insofar as an individual makes progress in morality, he is more and more able to master discordant passion and is thus in a better position to satisfy more of his inclinations. Moreover, morally mature individuals treat each other with respect and are interested in each other's fulfillment. Instead of being threats or obstacles to happiness, social relations will gradually become sustainers and reinforcers of happiness.

The highest good for man, says Kant, is universal happiness in accordance with morality. In his analysis of the foundations of morality, Kant invokes, as a postulate of practical reason, the existence of God as moral world governor to provide for what seems to be humanly

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[11] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. L.W. Beck, etc., p. 96 ; Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., *p.* 67.

[12] Kant, I., *Metaphysical Principles of Virtue,* tr. J. Ellington (Library of Liberal Arts, 1964), pp. 45f and 52f.

impossible: the reconciliation of happiness with duty.[13] According to Aristotle, the good for the human being as such, is happiness or flourishing (*eudaemonia*). Happiness has two components, which might be called external and internal. External goods such as an attractive appearance, wealth, etc. are the less important aspects of happiness. Indeed, the highest form of happiness (found in contemplation, discussed in Book X) is that which requires the minimum of external goods. The internal component is the excellence of the soul. Aristotle's conceptions of virtue give a prominent role to cultivation of proper emotions and appetites, whereas Kant insists that a good will be determined by reverence for the moral law, not emotion or inclination.

So Kant says: "And since none the less reason has been imparted to us as a practical power, i.e., as one which is to have influence on the *will*; its true function must be to produce a *will* which is good...Such a will need not on this purpose be the sole and complete good, but it must be the highest good and the condition of all the rest, even of all our demands for happiness. In that case we can easily reconcile with the wisdom of nature our observation that the cultivation of reason which is required for the first and unconditioned purpose may in many ways, at least in this life, restrict the attainment of second purpose, namely, happiness, which is always conditioned".[14] Practical reason involves us in choosing ends for

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[13] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. L.W. Beck etc. pp. 128-136.

[14]Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., p.64.

action in the sense of arranging priorities and working out balances among competing inclinations. But we manifest our rationality in the full sense (Pure Practical Reason) by articulating a formal law to govern our choices; this law leads us to adopt some ends as obligatory, reject others as forbidden, in complete independence of inclinations. In tiffs activity we transcend the constraints of animal nature and manifest our freedom and dignity. And, in this activity, the unequal distribution of the gifts of fortune becomes irrelevant to one's claim to humanity.[15]

Kant never showed any temptation to minimize the value of happiness as a human good, but he came to see it as a conditioned good, subject like all goods to the integrity of willing. However, for Aristotle, the point of view is always that of human excellence, constituted, as it is, by emotional as well as rational capacities.

In Kant's formulation, the laws of duty are derived from freedom of will which consists in obeying self-imposed laws. The performance of an action is a duty, not when it attains or seeks to attain an object of inclination, but when it is done upon a maxim which can also be willed to become a universal law. In the light of Kant's theory on moral laws, it will

[15] Ibid. pp. 104-7

be useful o state and discuss briefly the first three theorems and their corollaries from Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*[16]:

Th first theorem is: All practical principles, which presuppose an object of t e faculty of desire as the ground of determination of a will, are all of them empirical and cannot furnish practical laws. Happiness is, Kant says, "an i leal of imagination, not an ideal of reason."[17]However, Kant's conceptio of practical reason holds that reason must determine ethical principles of conduct apart from considerations of inclination and interest.[18]

Th s we cannot act on determinate principles in order to be happy, but only o empirical counsels, for example, of diet, frugality, politeness, reserve, a d so on - things which experience shows contribute most to well-being on the average....the problem of determining certainly and universall what action will promote the happiness of a rational being is completel insoluble.[19]

On Kant's view, a principle derived from desires or inclinations are always material or empirical in nature. Such a principle cannot become

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[16] Kant, I., C itique of *Practical Reason,* trans. by T.K.Abott, (London: Longmans, Sixth edition, 1909) pp. 107-20.

[17]Kant, I, Gr undwork of *the Metaphysic of Morals.* tr. by H.J Paton, etc., p.86.
[18] Ibid. pp.71 74
[19] Ibid. p.86

necessary - i.e., binding on all persons under all circumstances – because, being empirical, it is contingent and probable.

The second theorem is, all material practical principles as such are all of them of one and the same kind and fall under the general principle of Self-Love or Private Happiness. In this context Prof. R.P.Singh says: "Kant defines happiness as a state of continuous pleasure throughout one's life. All material objects are desired for the sake of pleasure. Therefore, all material principles fall under the Principle of Self-Love or Private Happiness."[20]

A corollary to the second theorem is: all material practical rules place the ground of determination of a will in the lower faculty of desire, and if there were no purely formal laws of a will, which would adequately determine it, then there could not also be admitted a higher faculty of desire.

In his remarks, Kant draws a distinction between a lower faculty of desire and a higher faculty of desire; the former being the source of sensible pleasure, and the later of an intellectual pleasure. For the lower faculty of sensible pleasure, the ground is empirical. And if there is to be higher faculty of, the purely formal laws of reason must be the sole ground of determination of a will. Kant says, "For the human will is not

[20] Singh, R.P., *Dialectic of Reason,* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House), p. 150.

determined by that alone which stimulates, that is, immediately affects the senses, we have the power to overcome the impressions on our faculty of sensuous desire, by calling up representations of what, in a more indirect manner, is useful or injurious. But these considerations, as to what is desirable in respect of our whole state, that is, as to what is good and useful, are based on reason".[21]

It is always possible to talk oneself out of the pursuit of immediate satisfaction. This makes it possible to plan rationally. We plan, of course, in the light of some vision of the shape of our proximate future, if not of our whole lives. "As far as our nature as sensible beings is concerned, our happiness is the only thing of importance, provided this is judged, as reason especially requires, not according to transitory sensation but according to the influence which this contingency has on our whole existence and our satisfaction with it".[22]

In Kant's conception of duty, to live well is to do one's duty and set aside all contrary desires and inclinations. Kant attempts to derive duty from the right of humanity in one's own person and also from the obligatory end of self-perfection; similarly, the various duties to others

[21] Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason,* tr. N.K. Smith (Macmillan, 1929), p.633.
[22] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. L.W. Beck , etc., p. 63.

must, on Kant's view, be derivable from the right of other men *qua* human beings or from the obligatory end of promoting other's happiness.[23]

On Kant's view, happiness can be viewed as a hypothetical imperative, in so far as happiness is based on emotion and inclination. While we do not have a duty to happiness, happiness is constrained by moral considerations. Equally, happiness may figure as the means for promoting other duties such as beneficence, and in general as a means for sustaining and nurturing our capacities as a moral agent.

(II) Duty as Categorical Imperative

Kant, in order to formulate his categorical imperative, follows Copernicus revolution. Kant follows a Copernican hypothesis not only in the sphere of epistemology but also in the realm of morality. Like Copernicus, Kant sought to explain his moral laws through the properties of observed phenomena by postulating a kind of activity in the observer. This is the 'Copernicus Revolution'. Kant openly asserts a similarity between himself and Copernicus in but one respect; each of them made a trial of an alternative hypothesis when existent theories proved unsatisfactory. What Kant takes to be essential to this revolution is that the ancient geometer's mind is not concerned just with the empirical object, some particular equilateral triangle; or even with the concept 'equilateral triangle' derived by abstraction from such objects. It is concerned rather

[23] Beck, L.W.(ed.), *Proceedings of the Third International Kant Congress*, (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1972), pp.275-280.

with its own act of construction, with what is put into the figure in accordance with the concept. *A priori* knowledge in mathematics arises from the mind's awareness of its own special operations. Mathematics and natural science had become what they were in Kant's day by a tremendously rapid advance, remarkable enough to make Kant reflect upon the essential character of this new way of forming concepts. Can metaphysics imitate mathematics and physics in this manner? Kant is not looking for some sort of new hypothesis which will extricate the philosopher from the chaos of existent epistemological theories. He is looking for a revolution which has the same fundamental character as that which he had implicitly outlined for mathematics and natural science.

In the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant says, 'We shall be proceeding precisely on the lines of Copernicus' primary hypothesis'. The analogy is as follows: While the pre-Copernican astronomy – the Ptolemeic – had supposed that earth was the centre and the sun revolved around the earth, Copernicus tried a hypothesis that earth revolved and the sun remained at rest. The pre-Kantian epistemology is like the pre-Copernican astronomy. It regards human mind merely as a mirror which passively reflects the objects, just as the old astronomers thought that the earth was at rest and that the apparent movements of the planets were identical with their own proper motion. Just as Copernicus dared in a manner contradictory of the senses, but yet true, to seek the

observer movements, not in the heavenly bodies, but in the spectator; similarly Kant puts transcendental consciousness at the centre of cognitive process. Kant, thus, introduces a radical change in his interpretation of knowledge situation. He brings a Copernican Revolution, not only in epistemology, but also in the realm of morality because here Kant puts 'freedom of will' as the law-giver of morality just as he makes transcendental consciousness the law-giver of nature. The importance of freedom in the scheme of human thinking is as essential as the establishment of causal laws operating in natural things and events. Kant's initial position on position on freedom and causality involves dualism. Though it ahs been Kant's philosophical preoccupation, it comes out explicitly in the third antinomy of Transcendental Dialectic in the Critique of Pure Reason. The antinomy goes as follows:

Thesis: "Causality in accordance with the laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearance of the world can one and all be derived. To explain appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.

Antithesis: "There is no freedom everything in the world taken place solely in accordance with the laws of nature".[24] In the thesis, nature is taken as the unity of all objects of possible experience and is determined

[24] Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. by N.K. Smith, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973) A444/B472, A445/B473, p.409.

as a whole by laws. These are the laws of causality which decisively explain the existence of an effect as the consequence of the existence of the cause. Every event in the world is caused by a preceding event, and that in turn by another preceding event and so on. In order to avoid infinite regress, there must be first caused by anything else. This, Kant says, is free-causality or freedom. Freedom of will, in act, lies at the centre of Kantian dichotomy between is and ought.

Before Kant, metaphysics had proceeded on the assumption that all knowledge must conform to the objects. But on this assumption all attempts to acquire a priori knowledge of objects must end in failure if mathematics and natural science are to stand on what Kant felt to be a firm foundation. Kant, therefore, suggests that we at least try the hypothesis that objects must somehow conform to the structure of knowledge. The proposed revolution in metaphysics, therefore, is to allow the line suggested by the revolutions in mathematics and physics. Kant thinks that not only will a new hypothesis be put on trial in the place the older enervated theories, but now we may consider that perhaps the mind, in all these cases, 'puts something into' its objects, imposes certain properties upon them necessarily. Here appears the first reference to Copernicus. He, too, swept aside older theories and tried a relatively new hypothesis.

Kant says that categorical imperative as "a rule of morality that should be observed for its own sake, since it is a statement of the most moral position acceptable to rational people".[25]It means a law valid for the will of every rational being and therefore valid unconditionally. A categorical imperative unconditionally demands performance of an action for its own sake; it has the form "Do A." An absolute moral demand of this sort gives rise to familiar difficulties: since it expresses moral obligation with the perfect necessity that would directly bind any will uncluttered by subjective inclinations, the categorical imperative must be known *a priori*; yet it cannot be an analytic judgment, since its content is not contained in the concept of a rational agent as such. According to Kant, the supreme principle of morality must be a synthetic *a priori* proposition. It is categorical in that it requires a way of acting in obedience to law which is independent of any end other than lawfulness itself.

Kant's law is a way of expressing the conditions under which alone a principle can have the character of a categorical demand. The categorical imperative is thus conceived as the fundamental principle determining which possible principles can be objectively valid for the decisions of our will as such. When we say it is our duty to do something or to refrain from doing it, we manifestly have in mind such a categorical demand or such an objectively valid principle. Hence we can also say that on Kant's view the

[25] Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., pp.68-71.

categorical imperative contains nothing but the concept of being under a possible moral obligation as such.

Kant offers us a defense of reasonableness in action: he reminds us that, however much the applications of morality may vary with varying circumstances, a good man is one who acts on the supposition that there is an unconditioned and objective moral standard holding for all men in virtue of their rationality as human beings. If I am to act morally, then reason and not my likes and dislikes should be the motive of my conduct. The function of Reason is to take an objective standpoint. If we are to act consistently with our nature as rational beings, we must not measure the value of an act and judge its right to be effected by its appeal to our feelings, prejudices, and self-interest. We must transcend the subjective point of view and try to discover if an act is really worth while doing whether we like it or not.

According to Kant, reason's goal isn't to produce happiness (it's a poor means to this end), but to produce a will that's good in itself. His claim to establish this is worth the serious consideration of all who are not content to regard themselves as victims of instinctive movements over which they have no intelligent control.[26]

Kant's first proposition about duty – An action is morally good, not because it is done from immediate inclination-still less it is done from

[26] Ibid., pp.7-8.

self interest –but because it is done for the sake of duty.[27] Kant's second proposition is this: An action done from duty has its moral worth, not from the results it attains or seeks to attain, but from a formal principle or maxim-the principle of doing one's duty whatever that may be.[28] Thus moral laws, according to Kant, cannot be derived from the laws of the phenomenal world, but from the noumenal world. Men as a conscious willing beings belong to the noumenal world, but as an agent performing the moral actions belong to the phenomenal world. In other words, men derive moral laws from the noumenal world and then acts in accordance with those laws in the phenomenal world. In so far as they belong to the noumenal world, they are regarded by Kant as a rational being. And the will of every rational being is a rational will. Kant defines will as, "a kind of causality (a power of causal action belonging to living beings so far as they are rational."[29]

In his mature thought, Kant holds that the only truly good thing is good will, and the only truly pure motive for moral action is the rational determination of duty. He observes that only a good will is good without qualification (always good). A good will is good in itself, not just for what it produces. A will is good if it acts from the sense of duty (and other moral motives), and not just in conformity with duty, or not from inclination. To act from duty is to act out of respect for the moral law.

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[27] Ibid., p.19.
[28] Ibid., p.20.
[29] Ibid., p.39.

Kant says, "good will is manifested in acting for the sake of duty".[30] Good will lies at the moment of willing a maxim and "it is good through its willing alone that is good in itself".[31] The goodness of will, according to Kant, does not depend on the results it produces. Rather, it lies in the form of maxim which has a law for its own sake. It possesses universality and necessity, and is performed for its own sake. This is what he means by categorical imperative and the concept of duty. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* Kant gives three such maxims and he also interrelates them.

The first maxim: "Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."[32]

Every moral action is fundamentally a consciousness of the difference between duty and inclination, between doing what we ought to whether we like to or not, and doing merely what we like whether we ought to or not. The general nature of law is that it holds universally. We ought only to do that act which we can will to be a universal law. Kant illustrates this maxim through the example of breaking promises and committing suicide. A promise "with the intention of not keeping it,"[33] is not a duty, because the maxim underlying it is a device to extricate oneself

[30] Ibid., p.18.
[31] Ibid., p.60.
[32] ibid. p.84.
[33] Ibid., p.67

from current difficulties. Moreover, if everyone makes false promises then promises will cease to be made. Thus, breaking promises cannot be universalized.

Similarly is the case with suicide. To commit suicide out of disgust with life is not moral because it will lead to the annihilation of human life if it is universalized. On the other hand, if a man does not commit suicide even out of disgust with life, he would be adopting a maxim which can be followed by everyone.

In other words, thinking whether or not one could consistently will the maxim of one's own actions to be adopted as a universal law of nature yields a decisive reason for acting or not acting. This representation of the moral law also stimulates a feeling of reverence in the agent: awe at his own power to resist nature and to posit ends, and respect for others who share this power. "But reverence is a self induced feeling, stimulated by reflection - this sets it apart from all other feelings, which are stimulated by sensation".[34] Gradual progress in the exercise of freedom, increasing control over inclination and passion is reflected inwardly as contentment, "an analogue of happiness which necessarily accompanies the consciousness of virtue, [but] which does not indicate a gratification, as happiness does".[35]

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[34] Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., p. 69.
[35] Kant,I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. L.W. Beck , etc., p. 122.

Kant states that while willing a maxim on the basis of universal law, it has to be maintained that the willing of this kind is always to be considered also as an absolute end and never simply as a means; because, "...every rational being , exists as an end in itself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use of this or that will; he must in all his actions , whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be viewed at the same time as an end".[36]

The moral law requires us always to treat others as ends-in-themselves and not merely as means, but it does not forbid us to use others so long as their fundamental autonomy is not abused. Our relations to other persons form the basis for a second formulation of the categorical imperative. We should treat other persons as ends in themselves rather than as means to other ends, which would be how we would treat them using means/end rationality. The example of a lying promise brings this out. If I borrow money from you on the promise of repayment, knowing fully well that I cannot repay you, I am using you for my own ends. On the other hand, treating people as ends in themselves is to treat them with dignity.

To regard every rational being as an end in itself and never as a means is indeed a great contribution of Kant in moral philosophy. The maxim of end in itself is related to the maxim of universal law in the sense

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[36] Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., p. 90.

that while the late states that one ought always to act on a maxim which can be willed as a universal law; the former states that the willing of this kind is always to be considered as an absolute end and never simply as a means.

The third maxim: "So act as if you were through your maxim a law making member of a kingdom of ends".[37]

Kant defines a kingdom as a "systematic union of different rational beings under common laws".[38] Every rational being derives his actions from the maxim of universal law and in all his actions, he regards himself and other rational beings always as ends. In doing so, "there arises a systematic union of rational beings under common objective laws-that is a kingdom".[39] Through the kingdom of ends, Kant attempts to bring out complete harmony between the maxim of universal law and the maxim of end-in itself.

These three maxims of Kant's moral laws cannot be derived from the experience; they are *a piori* and derived from reason. And since reason belongs to the rational will, so these maxims are derived from the rational will.

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[37] Ibid., p.34.
[38] Ibid., p.95.

[39] Ibid.

In Kant's view, moral responsibility lies in the willing alone because the consequences are dependent upon the laws of nature in the phenomenal world, willing is due to man's free rational nature.[40] Acting through the rational will requires freedom, Kant asserted. The laws of freedom are self-imposed laws for Kant. Freedom lies in obeying self-imposed laws. Freedom, thus, belongs to the rational will because it is the rational will that is free. And since these laws are self-imposed, they express autonomy of will. Kant says, "..a free will would act under the laws, but these laws could not be imposed on it by something other than itself; for if they were, they would merely be laws of necessity. If the laws of freedom cannot be other imposed they must be self-imposed. That is to say, freedom would be identical with autonomy".[41] In this way, freedom of will, rational will and autonomy of will, in Kant, are identical concepts and they are related to the concept of goodwill, duty, categorical imperative and maxims of morality. On this basis it may be said that Kant's moral laws are possible in the noumenal world and it is reason which gives laws in accordance with which one ought to act. Kant says, once a person recognizes the existence of such laws, '(a person) must necessarily take an interest in it'.[42]

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[40] Singh, R.P., *A Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant's Philosophy,* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, 1987), p.120.
[41] Kant, I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*. tr. by H.J Paton, etc., p. 39.
[42] Ibid., p.117.

The exercise of the will must not be determined by anything external to the agent if an act is to be praiseworthy. Acting on a maxim is acting according to law, which determines the person to follow it. Kant defines a maxim as that "upon which we act. It is purely personal principle".[43] It is a subjective principle of action, because the subject does actually act upon this principle. Kant distinguishes a subjective principle from an objective principle. In his view, an objective principle "is one on which every rational agent would necessarily act if reason has full control over his actions, and therefore one on which he ought to act".[44] This is possible, Kant claimed, because the rational will is a law unto itself, that being rational generates its own laws. Moral laws, according to Kant, are objective principles and they become subjective principle when a rational being acts on those principles. Making the moral law the principle of duty introduces the element of obligation into every moral act. Whatever is right to do we are obliged to do in obedience to the commands of the moral laws. We need no external promulgation of this law-i.e., no express formulation in words by lawgiver- for this law is inherent in reason itself. Its various maxims can be deduced from what Kant calls 'the categorical imperative'.

Kant's categorical imperatives are based on his separation between ought and is, and hence it becomes an example of the method of abstraction adopted by him. Nevertheless, Kantian ought statements are

[43] Ibid, p.20
[44] Ibid.

the formulations of normative principles as separate from factual propositions.

In summing up, we can say that there limitations involved in Kant's views on morality. The basic limitation lies in separating ought from is, willing from action and freedom from necessity. The result of such a separation does not take into account of objective reality. But moral actions, Kant admits, have to be performed in the concrete human affair, i.e., in objective reality. For Kant, man is the centre for both epistemology as well as morality. But the sphere of epistemology, in Kant's view, is distinct from the sphere of morality. , and this disjunction is concerned with the criterion for judging an action to be moral or not. The criterion for judging moral actions lie in the willing alone and it excludes the knowledge of the objective reality where the willing is to be actualized. But unless and until we know about the objective reality, it is difficult to perform moral action. So we find that the willing of any maxim whatsoever is inseparably linked with knowledge of objective reality. However, Kant, within his framework of moral laws, does not include the cognitive aspect of object reality. In Kantian formulation, there seems to be a dichotomy between reason and inclination to imply an irresolvable conflict between the forces of morality and the forces of desire as known by the drives for pleasure and happiness. But if Kant can be construed as combining morality with epistemology then the limitations of Kantian solution to the moral problem can be resolved. Morality should strive

towards actuality. An epistemological position should lead towards the changing of objective reality, and thereby, actualizing ideality of ought, willing and freedom. This kind of dialectical relationship between epistemology and morality has the potential of overcoming the limitations of Kantian view of morality, and can lead to an effective solution to the problem of morality.

CHAPTER 4
Aristotle and Kant: Shared Views and Differences

Introduction:

In this chapter, I shall compare and assess the role of happiness and moral duty in Aristotle and Kant. Aristotle attempts to construct a theory of moral life on the idea of practice of virtue interpreted in terms of certain natural dispositions towards human well being; Kant, in contrast, denies the appropriateness of giving regard to natural dispositions in the determination of moral judgement, and emphasizes instead the importance of duty and obligation. Whereas Aristotelian ethics is an ethics of virtue, Kantian ethics is an ethics of duty. Aristotelian virtue ethics does not distinguish sharply between moral and non-moral value and justifies the virtues by showing how they contribute to the agent's own *eudaimonia* or happiness. By contrast, Kant distinguishes sharply between moral and non-moral value and criticizes Aristotelian *eudaimonism* for justifying morality in terms of happiness. Aristotelian conceptions of virtue give a prominent role to cultivation of proper emotions and appetites, whereas Kant insists that a good will be determined by reverence for the moral law, not emotion or inclination. Both of these perspectives contain a central problem as they stand as tools for morality – the Aristotelian tradition lacks the structure of cognitive development, and the Kantian tradition lacks the affective component.

Certain differences between Aristotle and Kant are well known. Aristotle is concerned with the way that the emotions can interfere with the operation of practical reason and that emotional attachments make us vulnerable to fortune. Aristotle thinks of the emotions as potentially responsive to reason. Though the Aristotle's identification of virtue and happiness represents a form of *eudaimonism* that Kant rejects, Aristotle's refusal to recognize non-moral goods as genuine goods appears to foreshadow Kant's sharp distinction between moral and non-moral goods, and their distrust of emotions that have not been fully rationalized anticipates Kant's own claims about the role of the emotions in moral motivation.

The dualism between reason, on the one hand, and emotion and inclination, on the other hand, is central to Kant's conception of moral worth. However, it is worth remembering the sharp contrasts in which Kant often formulates this dualism. In the *Critique of Practical Reason,* Kant describes inclination as "blind and slavish" and insists that a rational being regards them as "burdensome" and "wishes to be free of them". "Inclination, to be good-natured or otherwise, is blind and slavish; reason, when it is a question of morality, must not play the part of mere guardian of the inclination, but, without regard to them, as pure practical reason it must care for its own interest to the exclusion of all else. Even the feeling of sympathy and warmhearted fellow-feeling, when preceding the

consideration of what is duty and serving as a determining ground, is burdensome even to right-thinking person, confusing their considered maxims and creating the wish to be free from them and subject only to law-giving person".[1] Further, he states: "It is a beautiful thing to do good to men from love to them and from sympathetic good will, or to be just from love of order; but this is not yet the true maxim of our conduct which is suitable to our position amongst rational beings as men, when we pretend with fanciful pride to set ourselves above the thought of duty, like volunteers, and, as if we were independent on the command, to want to do our own good pleasure what we think we need no command to do".[2]

This dualism is also at work in the *Groundwork*'s account of the good will, where Kant famously contrasts action done from a sense of duty and action done from inclination in his discussion of four kinds of conformity to duty. Neither the prudent shopkeeper, who treats customers fairly as a policy of prudence, nor the sympathetic man, who performs beneficent actions out of a sense of sympathy, displays moral worth. By contrast, Kant finds moral worth in the person who performs beneficent actions even though his own sorrows have extinguished his natural sympathy for others and in the person who performs beneficent actions despite congenital indifference to the sufferings of others.

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[1] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. L.W. Beck (New York Liberal Arts Press, 1956), pp. 122-23.
[2] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. T.K Abbott (London: Longman, 1909), p.175.

Aristotle asks what the good is for human being, what actions help human being to flourish and produce a happy life. Kant asks what a human being should do to realize his moral duty as a free being. Aristotle focuses on the conditions and substance of daily moral life and the application of general rules grasped from experience in a concrete moral order. Kant's project is precisely to free practical reason from such material conditions, and to form a new order on transcendental principles that can be produced a priori. Aristotle finds activity in conformity with virtue, chosen for the right reasons over a lifetime, to be what constitutes the moral life. He considers intelligence a causal principle as one deliberates and chooses what behaviours are appropriate. The best person, one of practical wisdom consistently reasons correctly, grasping the principles of what is right, and acts to concretize the principles. Such a person is the product of good habits of deliberation and action formed in the community, nurtured by an ethos in which normative criteria are embedded.

In contrast to this inductive approach of Aristotle, Kant eschews empirical practical wisdom and heteronomy. He seeks a moral law via a transcendental deductive approach that defines universally objective rules. This basis of Kantian morality lies in pure practical reason, *a priori*, which discloses the categorical imperative, one form of which is: "Act in such a way that the maxim of your action becomes universal". Only a universal categorical imperative can be valid for all and, therefore, command all,

asserts Kant. For Kant, practical reason's function is to produce a good will, a will that chooses to follow reason and duty, not inclination or desire. The good will, according to Kant, is the only good thing without qualification. It alone, not its consequences, nor ends nor any contingencies of particular circumstances, determines the moral goodness of all actions. The good will's only motive is duty to obey the moral law. The autonomous person is Kant's moral person, self-legislating the moral law, dutifully applying and following the law, and acting in accord with the categorical imperative simply out of respect for its truth and force.

On Kant's view, good will is the only thing good without qualification and that good will involves rational will. Further, Kant maintains that good will or rational nature is the source of all value and thus is the only thing that has unconditional value. All other things other than good will have conditional value, and the condition of their value depends on the choice of rational beings. As Chritine Korsgaard puts it, "rational choice has value-conferring status. Since happiness is an end for all finite rational beings, happiness has conditional value. Since rational nature is condition of all value, it has unconditional value".[3] Since our practical reason is better suited to the development and guidance of a good will than to the achievement of happiness, it follows that the value of a good will does not depend even on the results it manages to produce as the consequences of human action.

[3] Christine Korsgaard, "Aristotle and Kant on the Sources of Value", *Ethics* 96 (1986); pp.486-505.

Where Kant speaks of the goodwill determined by reason, acting from duty to follow universal law, Aristotle sees the good person, a human person in a real community, trying to deliberate about what is right in a particular situation as well as in general, in order to be good, live well, and achieve the happiness found in living virtuously. While Kant is devoted to proving human freedom, the autonomy of pure practical reason, and the inadequacy of material principles to furnish a universal principle, Aristotle appropriates and takes into account the community and its standards as concrete representations of and as a starting point for the achievement of practical wisdom.

In spite of these differences, however, there are some points on which Aristotle and Kant are fundamentally in agreement. First, both understand that becoming moral is a human task. Effort is needed to become good, and mature guidance is needed to construct a moral life. The young require the assistance of a responsible community to become properly educated and take on a good rather than bad character, or what Kant calls, 'moral personality'.[4]

Further, Kant and Aristotle understand good will and virtue respectively to be fundamental to the development of moral agency, and both autonomy as self-mastery, through which the moral agent becomes

[4] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. F.Menks, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.23.

rationally accountable for his or her actions. Their views of moral character and moral maturity inform their notions of the effort and guidance needed in the process of becoming a moral person. Aristotle focuses on the centrality of virtue in this endeavor. Aristotle says that virtue is a state of character or a habit that makes a person good, that makes a person function well, and that lies in a mean. "It is the nature of moral qualities that they are destroyed by deficiency and excess, just as we can see in the case of health and strength. For both excessive and insufficient exercise destroy one's strength, and both eating and drinking too much or too little destroy health, whereas the right quantity produces, increases and preserves it. So it is the same with temperance, courage and other virtues. The man who shuns and fears everything and stands up to nothing becomes a coward; the man, who is afraid of nothing at all, but marches up to every danger, becomes foolhardy. Similarly, the man who indulges in every pleasure and refrains from none becomes licentious; but if a man behaves like a boor and turns his back on every pleasure, he is a case of insensibility. Thus temperance and courage are destroyed by excess and deficiency and preserved by mean".[5] He goes on to say that the mean of virtue is not absolute, but varies with individuals. For example, he notes, in determining the proper

[5] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thomson, (U.K: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 34.

amount of food for an athlete, what is too much for a runner might be just right for a wrestler.[6]

We have, he says, the capacity to become virtuous but must practice virtue in order to bring this capacity to fulfillment. Through actions one acquires the virtues that guide right action, just as one becomes a good musician or builder through practicing these arts. The cultivation of virtuous habits involves to love virtue and to choose a life of virtuous action.

Thus, while an awareness of the context of moral life found in Aristotle, he also articulates a virtue that transcends the particular moral community, even though the content of the deliberation, and the understanding brought to that consideration will be culturally bound. The virtue of careful moral deliberation and choice is universal. Aristotle articulates, similarly, universal virtues in addition to practical wisdom. Aristotle's person of high moral character lives the life of virtue, developing insight into the ethical. This person, through moral experience and reflection grasps the principles that are embedded in ethical practice; principles that transcends the customs and conventions.

The mature moral person for Kant is the autonomous person – the individual who is both author and subject of the moral law. Moral law,

[6] Ibid., p.40.

then, is for freedom, in two senses: self-legislative (autonomous) beings, and as persons able to apply the moral law to situations that arise in daily life. Mental discipline trains the mind to think, preparing it for autonomy, and moral discipline is required to accustom agents to act in accordance with the rules, the reasonableness of which they eventually are able to understand. Character is matured by obedience to rules which a child has a child's duty to obey as preparation for the later duties of ethical maturity.[7]

In Kant's discussion of morality, the development of good character has a central role. Specific virtues must be inculcated in the youth because they foster the good character that an autonomous person must have in order to live in accordance with the moral law; truthfulness, promise-keeping, reverence for the rights of others, and egalitarianism. Fortitude, to endure or abstain, is for Kant the supreme virtue, for it is required for willing to live according to duty and the law when passions urge contrary behaviour. Kant specifically addresses certain desirable traits of character that he calls, 'the subjective conditions for susceptibility to the concept of duty: conscience, love of others, respect, moral feeling'.[8]

It is not suggested that the differences between Aristotle and Kant are minimal, but it should be clear that each, though their approaches are from the opposing positions of teleology and deontology, does direct an

[7] Kant, I., *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. by H.J. Paton, (NewYork: Harper and Row, 1960), p.33.
[8] Ibid., p.57.

acknowledgement of a place in moral life for virtue and the development of good character, for freedom to deliberate, chose, judge, and initiate action and for the human ability to grasp and apply the principles of ethical practice. They also both acknowledge not only the individual's responsibility for establishing and maintaining a good character and moral life, but also the community's moral responsibility in the process. To seek clarity and precision, this chapter is divided into two parts:

(I) Aristotle and Kant on Happiness.

(II) Aristotle and Kant on Duty.

Before I come to the Part I of this chapter, I would like to clarify that an examination into the unfolding of a moral life reveals that it develops within a pre-existing moral order. There is a context within which the agent is to construct character and order a moral course, and it is an Aristotelian perspective that addresses this reality. However, a Kantian perspective is required to provide an emphasis on freedom, on the individual as law-giver and creative initiator of action, and to acknowledge the role of a formal and transcending principle in a morally plural world.

A conventional understanding of Aristotelian and Kantian perspectives, despite the commonalities already noted, allows no such similarity and is, in fact, generally considered to be antithetical. A reappraisal of the dichotomous nature of these perspectives will allow an

interpretation of the core views of each perspective and thus facilitate the requirement of the present moral dilemmas.

(I) Aristotle and Kant on Happiness:

In this section, I shall contrast the Aristotelian conception of happiness as the right focus for moral action with the Kantian denial of happiness as the ground for moral principles. Both Kant and Aristotle agree that morality cannot exist apart from a synthesis of both the rational and the sensuous human characteristics. However, their formulations of this interaction are radically different. Whereas Aristotle focuses on the interdependence of thinking and desiring in the pursuit of any objective, Kant does not portray a necessary unity of rationality and inclination at each stage of effective deliberation and action.

According to a common view, Aristotle is a *eudaimonist*; they derive or justify the virtues by showing how they contribute to the agent's own *eudaimonia* or happiness. By contrast, Kant sharply criticizes *eudaimonism* for deriving or justifying morality in terms of happiness. For Kant, moral duty and respect for the moral law must be grounded in reason itself and cannot be made to depend on any independent standard.

Aristotle and Kant agree that the *ergon* of a human being is reason. Kant contrasts persons with things, the difference being that rational

beings are designated as persons because their nature indicates that they are ends in themselves. [9] For Kant and Aristotle, the moral agent subordinates inclinations and desires to reason.

Aristotle is part of the eudaimonist tradition according to which (a) an agent's practical reasoning ought to be governed by a correct conception of agent's own *eudaimonia* and (b) virtues are traits whose expression must contribute to the agent's own *eudaimonia*. He understands *eudaimonia* in terms of the human function, which he identifies with the exercise of an agent's deliberative capacities, and treats virtue as the dominant component of *eudaimonia*. Aristotle claims that happiness is the supreme good from which all other acts are derived. "Verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is *eudaimonia* (happiness, prosperity, or good fortune), and identify living well and doing well with being happy".[10] For Aristotle, the end of happiness must be chosen for its own sake and never merely as a means to something else. Because there is evidently more than one end, and we choose some ends for the sake of something else, then clearly not all ends are final ends. Hence, the concept of the supreme good contains something that is final.[11] By contrast, Kant, who conceives of happiness in terms of the satisfaction of desire, criticizes

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[9] Kant, I., *Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals,* tr. H.J.Paton, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1969) p.53.
[10] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* tr. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 1947). pp.16-18.
[11] Ibid., pp. 35-37.

all forms of *eudaimonism* for justifying morality in terms of happiness.[12] *Eudaimonism*, he holds, implies the mistaken view that morality is a system of hypothetical imperatives. But Kant's conception of happiness is very different from Greek and, in particular, Aristotelian conceptions of *eudaimonia*, and this undermines his criticism of *eudaimonism*. Interestingly, despite Kant's criticisms of *eudaimonism*, there are important similarities between Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* and Kant's conception of the highest good. Both view the highest good as a complex whole consisting of virtue and other goods, in which virtue conditions the value of these other goods. Despite these similarities, however, differences arguably remain. Though virtue is a complete good, for Aristotle, it is not an unconditionally complete good; it is chosen for the sake of *eudaimonia*. This violates Kant's strictures on the relation between virtue and the good. Moreover, one may wonder whether the value of external goods for Aristotle is, as happiness is for Kant, entirely conditional on virtue. Some external goods seem to contribute constitutively to a complete good independently of their role in virtue, and it is not clear that Aristotle restricts their value to those who lead virtuous lives.

As for a conception of the good, Aristotle looks for the highest good. Happiness, he claims is the highest good. "If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance

[12] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. L. W. Beck, etc., pp.111-2.

with the highest virtue; and this will be that of the best thing in us. Whether it be reason or something else that is this element which is thought to be our natural ruler and guide and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also divine or only the most divine element in us, the activity of this in accordance with its proper virtue will perfect happiness".[13] This activity, according to Aristotle, is contemplative. The highest good, as we have seen, includes intellectual activity and virtuous activity. For Aristotle, happiness is constrained by the formal criterion. Virtuous activity will be the primary though, not a part of the nature of happiness, external goods are also required for happiness to be possible.

Kant, on the other hand, considers happiness as a component of the highest good. At this point Kant has gone as far as he can from the side of the law alone in the determination of a material object of volition. Every action must have an object or end. That end prescribed by the moral law is the moral good, which is the good will itself. Thus the will is obligated to will willing itself (that is, moral perfection) as its end. But if the will is to be good, it must will something in the act of volition. While the moral law prescribes the conditions of willing and sets these conditions before the will as its object, these conditions cannot be fulfilled until the will itself embodies these conditions as the form in an actual, concrete volition

[13] Mckeon, Richard, ed., *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, (USA: Modern Library Paperback Edition, 2001), p.940.

whose material (while subject to the law) must be acquired through sensibility, that is, through the faculty of desire. If, therefore, the law is not extended to the condition of man, then the law cannot provide a material object of volition.

Kant's theory is well prepared, of course, for the extension of reason to the conditions of man since it has its foundation in the human situation. Kant builds his ethics on the foundation of the experience of obligation, which is the experience, not of a pure rational being, but of human, a rational-sensible being. This is the experience of the heterogeneity of the good in which both the natural good as the fulfillment of human's sensible nature and the moral good as the fulfillment of human's rational nature are pre-supposed. Having recognized the fact of human's sensibility from the outset - not only as an essential part of his nature but also as a condition of the experience of obligation[14] -Kant, in keeping with the foundations of his theory, can extend reason beyond the consideration of man as a merely rational being to the limits of man as both rational and sensible. Kant does not stop, therefore, with perfection as the sole end which is also a duty. He insists rather that one is like-wise obligated to seek the happiness of others as a second end which is also a duty.[15] Human beings have happiness as their natural good, and happiness is defined as that satisfaction taken in the fulfillment of needs and inclinations. Kant observes: "To be happy is necessarily the desire of

[14] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr.by L.W.Beck, etc., pp..143 & 197-8.
[15] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by T.K. Abbott etc, pp. 298-303.

every rational but finite being, and thus it is an unavoidable determinant of its faculty of desire".[16] Now as it is applied in a specific volition, the moral law can only prescribe the form of its own universality to which material, supplied by the faculty of desire, must be added. Since we are finite rational beings, we all have happiness as the object of desire; hence, we can introduce our own happiness as material content for our volition if one condition is met-namely, if we have included within the content and structure of our volition the happiness of others. We are morally obligated to seek the happiness of others because we, in addition to being finite, sensible beings, who naturally and invariably seek our own happiness, are also rational beings, who are constrained to act according to the universal demand of the moral law, which constrains our will to pursue the happiness of others as the prior condition of the moral right to pursue our own. Kant reasons as follows: "The law that we should further the happiness of others arises not from the presupposition that this law is an object of everyone's choice but from the fact that the form of universality, which reason requires as condition for giving to the maxim of self-love (personal happiness) the objectivity of law, is itself the determining ground of the will".[17] The reason why I ought to promote the happiness of others is not because the realization of their happiness is of consequence to myself (whether on account of immediate inclination or on account of some satisfaction gained indirectly through reason), but solely because a

[16] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr.by L.W.Beck etc., pp. 136 & 170.
[17] Ibid., p.146.

maxim which excludes this cannot also be present in one and the same volition as a universal law.[18]

As finite, rational, yet sensible beings, we naturally and necessarily desire to seek our own happiness; yet this is never possible in accordance with law unless it is on the condition of our seeking the happiness of others. We do not necessarily care for others. As far as our own desires are concerned, we may have contempt for the welfare of others. But we can never will an object according to a universal maxim unless, in the determination of that maxim, consideration is given to the fulfillment of the happiness of others. Now a material object of volition that can inform and direct the will in the act of volition is supplied. And yet, remarkably, this material stands under the determination of law because it is a demand of the law and not of inclination that one must seek the happiness of others. It is only the law with its demand of universality that insists one is wrong to desire others to further his interest (which is a desire of all men), unless he at the same time furthers their interests. Unless a person also wills the interests of others, he has no right, no justification under the law, for having others will his. But if a man has no respect for the law and chooses to disregard its demand, he is certainly able and even inclined to have others seek his interest while he totally disregards theirs. He may find it is prudent to hand out a favor here and a favor there in order to get what he wants. In this case, however, he is bargaining and gives only in

[18] Kant, I., *Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals*, tr. by H.J. Paton,.etc., p.109.

order to receive something in return. But when he considers his needs and wants as a sensible being under the jurisdiction of the law of his rational nature, he must forego his desires either to exploit others, or to trade advantageously with them, or to ignore their needs altogether. For he cannot rationally will the attainment of the natural good for himself except under the condition of his worthiness to do so - except, that is, under the condition that he wills the attainment of the natural good universally according to the demand of the law. Thus he must seek the happiness of others as a condition of his worthiness to seek his own happiness which he in fact desires to seek. Hence we see that it is not his concern for happiness that leads him to consider the happiness of others. On the contrary, his concern for virtue, that is, for the worthiness to be happy, motivates him to do so. He pursues his own moral perfection by pursuing the happiness of others. In admitting the content of sensibility into the maxim of the will, the law does not resign its claim to determine the object of the will. It continues to impose its form upon the material of the faculty of desire. As a consequence the material object of volition, in spite of its sensible content, is not defined prior to the law, but is defined by the law itself. Apart from the law, any material of the faculty of desire is merely a desired end. Only after the imposition of the form of universality upon the content of desire does that content (now drastically altered) become the good as the material object of moral volition.

Kant's primary objection to happiness as a moral end is that it does not give rise to the universality, necessity, and harmony which he is determined to achieve in his ethics. Kant writes that making happiness a moral end would result in 'the extreme opposite of harmony' because 'the wills of all do not have one and the same object, but each person has his own welfare. Although such wills pursue their own interests could 'accidentally agree' with one another, no necessary universal law could be established.[19]

The impossibility of universality and necessity with a principle of happiness (even a utilitarian principle of general happiness) is a result of the fact that the knowledge (of what constitutes happiness) rests on mere data of experience. Because 'each judgment concerning it depends very much upon the very changeable opinion of each person,' the principle of happiness can only give rise to general but never universal rules. For Kant, however, ethics must be constituted by a moral law, one which "holds good for everyone having reason and will.[20]

Kant's rejection of happiness thus depends upon his prior, deep commitments to universality and necessity in ethics, which are only made possible by his two-world metaphysics, in which the intelligible realm is valued more highly than the empirical. Kant's bifurcation of the world into two distinct realms -- one of sense, inclination, empirical data,

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[19] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by L.W. Beck etc., p27.
[20] Ibid., p.37.

contingency, and particularism and the other of pure reason, duty, concepts, necessity, and universality - allows him to claim that necessity and universality is possible in ethical theory. However, Kant's metaphysics is unstable and self-contradictory in ways which substantially undermine his ethical project. At the very least, there is too little justification for either dividing up the world or ranking those worlds in terms of value.

Indeed, Kant's and Aristotle's desires for absolute certainty, universality, and necessity differ greatly. For Kant, a philosophical system not containing those three elements is less-than-ideal; he is clearly striving for clear, indisputable ethical principles to be universally applied to all rational beings. Aristotle, on the other hand, warns against asking for too much certainty in ethics and, in fact, rejects the idea that there is a need for universalism. He writes that matters concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, any more than matters of health, and that particular cases cannot be resolved by any universal rule because the agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion.[21] Given these leanings, it is not surprising that Kant repudiates all inclinations as legitimate motivations to moral action in favor of duty, while Aristotle advocates using the emotions to help form better dispositions.

Indeed, there are differences; but there are some points on which Aristotle and Kant are in agreement fundamentally. Aristotle describes the

[21] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. by J.A.K. Thompson, etc., p.34.

good life as a person's search for, and a progressive participation issuing in happiness. He holds that virtue depends on knowledge of and conformity to, the ultimate teleological rationality of things; happiness is the product of wisdom. Kant, in his own way, expressed the similar conviction. The locus of virtue is the good will and the will is good when, and only when, it is obedient to the moral law which is the law of the noumenal world. Happiness, he thinks, is contingent on virtue, not automatically, but by divine fiat; God, somehow, in the long run, rewards virtue with proportionate happiness.

In the end, Kant's attempt to extract order from human life - a continually changing and evolving process - seems artificial, particularly in comparison to Aristotle's lack of concern for such regularity in ethics. Kant's ethics thus seems to want to find necessity and stability where change and growth naturally exist - and, as a result, rejects the personal happiness far too quickly.

(II) Aristotle and Kant on Duty:

In Kant's formulation, the nature of moral duty requires one to act always to treat others as ends and never as means only. Since treating others as means is to use them to further one's own self-interest (or some other interest), and this can be done in many completely innocent ways, the crucial question is what treating someone as an end also amounts to. An end clearly stops the action of the will, so that the will does not

continue to some further good. That makes the end a good-in-itself. While we may value others as goods-in-themselves, we usually do make use of them for ulterior ends; and the only way to reconcile their function as both end and means is, if they are willing to pursue some ulterior end in our behalf. Thus, Kant's formulation calls on us to respect the autonomy and dignity of persons, allowing them the freedom to help or not to help us in the pursuit of goods. If they are not willing to help us, then we cannot use them as means to our self-interested ends. That complements the version of moral duty given above. There we leave people alone to pursue their self-interest, while with Kant we do not force them to pursue ours.

Kant's formulation, therefore, is different from Aristotle's formulation. Kant reduces the virtues to a secondary place. For him, the concept of duty is paramount. According to Kant, only duties of justice are coercible, not duties of virtue. According to Kant, duty should "sparkle like the jewel" so that it has 'an influence on the human heart so much more powerful than all other incentives which may be derived from the empirical field that reason, in consciousness of its dignity, despises them and gradually becomes master over them.'[22]

But, according to Aristotle, moral education is achieved by action. Just as we acquire skill in carpentry by building, and skill in music by playing an instrument, so we acquire virtues by doing the things that

[22] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* tr. by L.W.Beck, etc., pp. 122-23.

virtuous people do. Thus, over time, we develop habits. We become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions. Hence it is important that we acquire good habits right from our youth. Kant agrees with Aristotle that the virtues must be 'acquired' because they are not 'innate', and a person cannot 'will' virtuous behavior until one has gained the 'power' to do so through trial and exercise. But unlike Aristotle, he insists that this is an exercise in pure practical reason in so far as the latter, in consciousness of its superiority (through freedom) gains mastery over the inclinations.

In order to move Aristotle's position toward Kant's one must impose on the former the categorical difference that the latter creates in order to reject the former's account of virtue as habit and rational skill. But if Kant's own extended account does erode the difference he invents, then it is easier--theoretically as well as practically--to make his difference one of degree, and treat Kant's position as an improvement on Aristotle's. For example, in *The Morality of Happiness*,[23] Julia Annas maintains that Aristotle's definition of happiness is unstable. He does not provide a coherent account of the relation between pleasure, virtue, and external goods which constitutes a complete and self-sufficient life; his definition is too dependent on personal luck to survive the vicissitudes of fate. And she has a point because Aristotle insists that we cannot call a person

[23] Annas, Julia., *The Morality of Happiness*.(New York: Oxford UP, 1993) chap.18

'happy' except in terms of a 'complete life', and then only after that person is dead and completely beyond any chance of misfortune.[24]

For Kant, practical reason's function is to produce a good will, a will that chooses to follow reason and duty, not inclination or desire. The good will, according to Kant, is the only thing good without qualification. It alone, not its consequences, nor ends nor contingencies of particular circumstances, determines the moral goodness of all actions. The good will's only motive is duty to obey the moral law. The autonomous person is Kant's moral person, self-legislating the moral law, dutifully applying and following the law, and acting in accordance with the categorical imperative simply out of respect for its truth and force.

Aristotle claims that what constitutes human goodness, or happiness, is dependent on virtue. According to Aristotle, virtue is an exhibition of rationality in activity. More specifically, he argues that a person can exhibit rationality in two kinds of activities. He thus divides virtue to reflect the division of the rational element of the soul. When reason constitutes the activity in and of itself, intellectual virtue is exhibited (philosophical and practical wisdom). Moral virtue is seen in a person's actions when he or she succeeds in obeying the precepts of reason (being courageous, temperate, and liberal). Moral virtues are developed when a person possessing rational control of his or her behaviour

[24] Ibid., chap7-12.

introduces measure, order, and harmony into his or her social intercourse. He contends that virtues are dispositions to behave in a certain way and indicate action and not simply potentiality. He argues that human striving for self fulfillment is a conscious effort involving choice, intent, and deliberation. It is the conscious enactment of virtue, then, that entitles us to be good or bad.[25] Aristotle emphasizes that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue.[26] Therefore, virtue is a disposition of character. It is a disposition which makes a person good. An action is good, Aristotle contends, if it is motivated by virtuous choice.

For Aristotle, the sense of justice gives rise to duty and obligation. The other virtues, such as temperance and courage, do not give rise to obligation, unless they are somehow annexed to or united with justice. Whenever Aristotle speaks of duties he does so with reference to the obligations that follow from justice - the duties of parents to children and those of brothers to each other, those of comrades and those of fellow-citizens.

According to Aristotle, justice always refers to the good of another, or to the common good of all. Virtues such as temperance and courage, when they are isolated from justice, concern the well-being of the

[25] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* ,tr.J.A.K. Thomson, etc., p.38.
[26] Ibid., p.164.

individual himself. That is why only justice, on Aristotle's view, entails duties, which are obligations to act in a certain way for the welfare of others. If the good of no individual is involved, it seems that a person has no duty to be temperate or courageous, even when he or she possesses these virtues.

Precisely because of the essentially social character of justice, Aristotle raises the question 'whether a person can treat himself or herself unjustly or not'. He is willing to admit that a person can do justice or injustice to himself or herself only in a metaphorical sense which is not a relation between a person and himself or herself, but a relation between one part of himself or herself and another. Apart from this metaphorical duty of the passions to obey reason, duty in the strict sense comes, in the opinion of Aristotle, only from the precepts of justice, which concern the relation of one person to another.

On this theory, duty is not co-extensive with morality, the sense of duty is not identical with the moral sense, and specific duties obligate a person to other person even when no general law exists to be obeyed. Difficulty is found with this theory by those critics who think that the whole of morality, not simply part of it, involves duties. For example, does a person have a duty to tell the truth only to others, but not to seek for oneself? Kant holds that there are private as well as public duties, or in his

language, internal duties in the realm of ethics as well as external duties in the realm of jurisprudence. The idea of duty, Kant declares, would alone be sufficient as of action even if the spring were absent which is connected by forensic legislation...namely external compulsion. Making the moral law the principle of duty introduces the element of obligation into every moral act. Whatever is right to do we are obliged to do in conformity to the law of nature in obedience to the commands of the moral law. We need no external promulgation of this law – i.e., no express formulation in words by a lawgiver – for the law is inherent in reason itself. Its various maxims or precepts can be deduced from what Kant calls 'the categorical imperative'. For Kant, acting dutifully consists in the submission of the will to the reason, and in overcoming all contrary inclinations or desires.

In Aristotle, virtue entails moderation in the avoidance of pain as well as in the pursuit of pleasure. He raises the question whether all pleasures are good and all pains evil. According to Aristotle, sensuous pleasure as an object often conflicts with other objects of desire. And if 'pleasure' means satisfaction of desire, there can be conflict among pleasures, for the satisfaction of one may lead to the anxiety of another. Though he admits that most pleasures might perhaps be bad without qualification, Aristotle claims that happiness would involve some pleasure. At this point, he introduces the principle of virtue. The virtuous person is one who takes pleasure only in right things, and is willing to suffer pain

for the right end. On Aristotle's account, if pleasures, or desires and their satisfaction can be better or worse, there must be a choice among them for the sake of happiness. Kant makes this choice depend on discrimination between lower faculty of desire or pleasure and higher faculty of desire, not on virtue. He regards virtue merely as one of the parts of happiness, in no way different from the others. But Aristotle seems to think that virtue is the principle means to happiness because it regulates the choices which must be rightly made in order obtain all good things; hence he defines happiness as 'an activity of soul in accordance with virtue'.

In Aristotle's formulation of happiness, duty is not entirely excluded, but neither is it given an independent significance. It is merely an aspect of the virtue of justice, and amounts to no more than the just person's acknowledgement of the debt one owes to others or one's recognition that one is under some obligation to avoid harming other persons and to serve the common good. Just as Aristotle treats duty only in terms of justice, so Kant considers happiness to have a moral worth only so far as to be worthy of it is an end set by the moral law.

For Aristotle, the person of practical wisdom is the one who exercises the rational principle and hence knows how to exhibit the right amount of any capacity at the right time, in the right way, and to the right person. In other words, the person of practical wisdom exhibits rationality

in action such that his or her moral capacities are balanced along a continuum of excess or defect. Too much or too little of an expression of capacities will result in conflicting or rebellious desires as they impact on each other.

In order to make explicit the implications of Aristotle's ground for morality we will now turn to Kant's denial that happiness can be a sound foundation for moral actions. Kant renounces happiness as the principle of morality because it obliterates the specific difference between virtue and vices. Kant argues that Aristotle's doctrine of the mean conflates virtues and vices and hence can provide no practical guide to moral behaviour. For Kant, all that Aristotle's doctrine can account for is a worth that is relative to the unique constitution of the observer. Finally, Kant argues that Aristotle's ethical theory is propelled by a heteronomy and therefore is an example of how the dialectic of reason operates.[27] Kant's ethical theory, like Aristotle's, begins with an exposition of the properties which a moral agent must possess in order to acquire and exhibit goodness.

Kant ardently opposes Aristotle's assertion that perception governs virtue. He argues that empirical principles cannot serve as the basis for moral laws. According to Kant, the universality by which moral laws are

[27] Kant,I., *Foundations of the Metaphysic of Morals,* tr. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1969) p.25.

valid for all rational beings, without distinction, cannot be derived from a particular tendency of human nature.[28]

While Aristotle distinguishes virtue from strength of will (especially in relation to the virtue of temperance), Kant makes no such distinction. For Kant, virtue is always understood as self-constraint - resisting the desires and inclinations that can lead us away from right action. On the other hand, Aristotle thinks it is possible, through self-control and the formation of good habits, to reach a state in which the desires and inclinations no longer fight against the judgments of reason. This is Aristotle's paradigm of true virtue.

Aristotle emphasizes that it is generally difficult to know what is good for a human being. The most we can hope for in ethics is to say what is usually good. The virtue of prudence (or practical wisdom) is hard to acquire because it depends on the presence and support of all the other virtues. But Kant asserts that human reason, even in the commonest mind, can easily be brought to a high degree of correctness and completeness in moral matters: it is within the reach of everyone, even the most ordinary man. Indeed, he says that the ordinary man is more likely than the philosopher to hit the mark in moral matters because he is less likely to be confused by irrelevant considerations.

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[28] Ibid.,p.69.

Whereas Aristotle focuses on the interdependence of thinking and desiring in the pursuit of any objective, Kant does not portray a necessary unity of rationality and inclination at each stage of effective deliberation and action. In fact, in his concern with moral worth as the prime consideration in all actions, he appears to suggest that humans could do without a source of needs. Inclinations are so lacking in absolute worth that the universal wish of every rational being must be indeed to free himself completely from them.[29] Further, in his discussion of the realm of ends, Kant suggests that the sovereign who is free from the plague of inclinations is the model for mere members of society. He argues that the sovereign cannot maintain this position merely through the maxims of his will but only when he is a completely independent being without need and with power adequate to his will.[30] In his formulation of virtue, Kant goes so far as to portray inclinations as the fundamental opponent of the moral disposition. Virtue, according to Kant, is fortitude, the capacity to resist a strong but unjust opponent, i.e., inclination.[31]

Kant develops the notion of duty to show that one acts from duty out of respect for the law. One realizes that to respect the moral law one must act from duty.[32]

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[29] Ibid.,p. 53.
[30] Ibid., p.59.
[31] Kant, I., *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue,* tr. James Ellington (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1964) p.37.
[32] Ibid., p.63.

Further, Kant argues that the doctrine of the mean is faulty because ethical duties must not be estimated according to the capacity attributed to a man of fulfilling the law.[33] The law, which commands categorically, determines the moral capacity of an individual. Here Kant is rehearsing his belief that ethical duties derived from our knowledge of the empirical activities of the collection of people must be subordinate to the rationality of what ought to be. Therefore, according to Kant, Aristotle's theory of the mean is fatally flawed throughout. No moral worth can be ascribed to an action founded on happiness because, for Kant, there can be no such thing as degrees of moral worth. Either the action, determined by the universal law, is a duty or it is not.

Kant claims that Aristotle's ethics is a heteronomous one because the person or societal matrix which determines which behaviours are virtues and vices is an object dictating the law to the will. Kant emphasizes that such a moral principle can admit only of hypothetical imperatives. Consequently, Kant returns to the position that actions have moral worth only if they are done from duty. Otherwise, there can be no recognition of duty, no respect for the law, and hence no moral responsibility for failing to be good. Nature would dictate the law.

A defensible account of virtue is possible to the extent the moral enterprise remains faithful to the overall intent of Aristotle's account of

[33] Ibid., p.64.

virtue. Specifically, the account must adhere to the idea of moral knowledge acquisition as a matter of a complex interplay between reason and practical experience. Aristotle regards effective moral agency as grounded in natural human association such as kinship, friendship, love, and hence is not automatically concerned exclusively with the denial or suppression of affectivity. In contrast to Kantian understanding of moral agency, the Aristotelian agent, rooted in the contingency of his circumstances and draws his moral energy from the phenomenal. Kant affirms the grounds of moral agency to be rooted in the dictates of reason and the dispassion of the universal imperative. The Kantian agent draws his moral agency from the noumenal.

Further, the two considerations of moral agency address two very different understanding of the nature of humanity. Aristotle defines virtue as a mean. He tells us that virtue is impaired by excess or deficiency in activity. Aristotle shows how this is the case by using bodily strength and health as illustrations. First of all then we have to observe, that moral qualities are so constituted as to be destroyed by excess and by deficiency—as we see is the case with bodily strength and health (for one is forced to explain what is invisible by means of visible illustrations.[34]

[34] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. by H. Rackham, ed. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 77.

Excess or deficiency in exercise destroys bodily strength. Likewise, excess or deficiency in food or drink destroys health. To use the words of Aristotle, "Strength is destroyed both by excessive and by deficient exercises, and similarly health is destroyed by too much and by too little food and drink; while they are produced, increased and preserved by suitable quantities."[35]

It is not too difficult to see how this is the case. Take strength as an example. Without any exercise whatsoever, a person has very little strength. Walking up or down some flights of stairs might be difficult to a person who does absolutely no exercise. Even if such an individual is able to traverse some flights of stairs, that person may be out of breath and exhausted after doing so.

Too much exercise proves to be problematic albeit for a slightly different reason. Too much exercise, whether in cardiovascular workout or in lifting weights, thins out a person's strength. Too much exercise can burden the heart and overwork muscles, thus weakening a person's strength. Just as excess or deficiency in exercise destroys bodily strength and excess or deficiency in food or drink destroys health, so too, excess or deficiency destroys virtue. Take courage for instance. Too much fear or too little fear and too little confidence or too much confidence destroys the virtue of courage. The same, therefore, is true of Temperance, Courage,

[35] Ibid.

and the other virtues. The man who runs away from everything in fear and never endures anything becomes a coward; the man who fears nothing whatsoever but encounters everything becomes rash.[36]

Likewise, too much or too little pleasure destroys the virtue of temperance. Similarly he that indulges in every pleasure and refrains from none turns out a profligate, and he that shuns all pleasure, as boorish persons do, becomes what may be called insensible. Thus Temperance and Courage are destroyed by excess and deficiency, and preserved by the observance of the mean.[37]

Virtue, then, is a mean between the two extremes or vices, excess and deficiency. The mean, however, is not to be construed merely as some sort of quantitative notion whereby virtue is defined as some degree of moderation. Acting virtuously involves knowing the proper way to respond, the right attitude to carry, the right persons towards which to direct action, the proper time to act, etc., when acting. Courage,[38] for example, is a virtue concerning feelings of fear and confidence, especially in battle. A courageous person avoids the excesses of cowardice and rashness. On one extreme is cowardice. A coward fears everything and fails to stand ground. On the other extreme is rashness. A rash person fears

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. J.A.K.Thomson, (London: Penguin Books, 2004),pp.66-7.

nothing and meets every danger. A courageous person knows exactly how much fear and confidence to exhibit and shows it in the appropriate way, given the circumstances. In general, a person living the good life consistently and habitually always knows how to properly respond in any given situation.

Let us now turn to what Kant says about virtue as a mean. Kant denies that Aristotle's doctrine of the mean can have moral import because moral worth cannot be contingent on how well something works. Further, Kant argues that the doctrine of the mean is faulty because ethical duties must not be estimated according to the capacity attributed to a man of fulfilling the law.[39] The law, which commands categorically, determines the moral capacity of an individual. Here, Kant is rehearsing his belief that ethical duties derived from our knowledge of the empirical activities of the collection of people must be subordinate to the rationality of what ought to be. Therefore, according to Kant, Aristotle's theory of the mean is fatally flawed throughout. No moral worth can be ascribed to an action founded on happiness because, for Kant, there can be no such thing as degrees of moral worth. Either the action, determined by the universal law, is a duty or it is not.

Kantianism is a deontological moral theory which claims that the right action in any given situation is determined by the categorical imperative. A deontological moral theory denies that the morally right

[39] Kant, I., *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue,* etc., p.64.

action is determined by its consequences. An action may be right even if it leads to a situation that is not the best possible situation (it may be right even if it leads to one of the worst situations). A deontological theory claims that the right action is determined by what the agent's (i.e., the person doing the action) duty is. It further claims that one should always do what it is one's duty to do. Kant also associates reason with the drive for complete knowledge of the conditions of things. The highest principle of morality is the categorical imperative; it is supposed to be that without which moral life would not be intelligible at all. In this way, a principle in this robust sense expresses the totality of a certain domain; it tells us what it is to be a person, or a moral agent. The highest principle of theoretical cognition is what Kant calls the 'principle of the synthetic unity of apperception'. Its role is to unify independent accounts that Kant gives of sensibility and understanding. In doing so, it yields the principles of the pure understanding, which are principles determining the complete domain of material nature, with respect to its 'possibility' or 'form'. They tell us what it is to be an object in this domain. In *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant shows that this principle comes from reason. And this means that certain conditions of the possibility of moral life, and likewise of theoretical cognition, are determined independently of experience.

In contrast to deontological moral theory of Kant, Aristotle's teleological moral theory holds that the rightness or wrongness of an

action is always determined by its tendency to produce certain consequences which are intrinsically good or bad. Generally notions of deontology maintain that all consequences are irrelevant to the rightness and wrongness of a particular action, but no such prohibition coheres to the delimitation of morally relevant circumstances. Circumstances are what alter the effect of actions; for example, a deontologist may say that lying is wrong in all circumstances except where such lies would prevent unjustifiable harm, and that all lies that fail to adhere to this maxim are wrong, no matter what the consequences may be.

The above mentioned claim of deontology is contradictory, unless consequences are interpreted to mean consequences other than those that consist in unjustifiable harm. But on this interpretation, the claims of the deontologists (no matter what the consequences may be) become trivially true. The irrelevance of the consequences, taken to indicate a crucial distinction between deontologists and teleologists become emptied of significance because all the events deemed morally relevant are already referred to in the formulation of the rule and in the specification of the circumstances.

The teleological position is similarly misleading for reasons that exactly correspond to those raised against deontology. The morally relevant events referred to by the deontologist in the description of the

action and as 'specified circumstances' are now called 'consequence of the action' by the teleologist, are held forever separate from the action itself, and, hence, comprise an external locus for the moral determinants of the action. At first glance, it appears to lend credence to the claim that teleology provides a justification or explanation that deontology lacks. That is, the teleologist claims that an action is right or wrong because of some facts about that kind of action, namely its consequences, while the deonotologist claims that some actions are right or wrong without appealing to any further fact concerning it. In other words, the distinctness of consequences from what they justify appear to give consequences justificatory power. However, to reason this way may lead to confusion by the action/consequence dualism. To the extent that the deontologist and the teleologist both notice that certain are 'wrong making' it makes little difference whether these events are taken to be part of the action or external to it. A further result of this action/consequence dualism is that the teleologist, by concentrating on consequences held external to the action, may avoid recognition of morally relevant aspects that allows it to remain a part of the action. For example, it is mistaken to say that lying is not wrong unless it has bad consequences. All other things being equal, lying is wrong by definition.

The teleological position that the deontologist, by use of the dictum 'consequences are irrelevant', is guaranteed to omit aspects of

moral relevance, is unfounded. It is precisely because the deontologist has chosen to use the language of rules rather than the language of ends that whatever is deemed of moral relevance is expressed in terms of moral rules and maxims. If the deontologist is of eccentric moral persuasion, s/he may omit aspects that others may feel relevant, but there could not be anything in the language of deontology that requires her/him to do so. The criteria of inclusion and exclusion lie beyond the terminology of deontology. Equally unfounded is the deontologist claim that by judging an action by its consequences, however they are to be framed, must necessarily omit similarly relevant aspects. The logic and language of ends set practically no limits on what may be considered an end, and only the teleologist's moral opinions set limits on what may be counted as a morally relevant effect.

The presence of morally significant effects that are of sufficient potency to be obligation generating, and are not liable to translation into a deontological language of rules, is logically consistent. Rules concern only what is obligatory and forbidden, and hence, only the most significant consequences, when made components of expanded versions of the actions, of which otherwise they would be consequences, can be reformulated as moral rules. Consequences that can be translated into rules, must, therefore, be of an equal obligatory stature with rules. Events that lack this nature, that are good, but insufficiently good to produce

obligation have apparently, no deontological equivalent. However, while there are no moral rules that concern actions that are right but no duties, the notion of imperfect duties is intelligible. Hence, for example, the general obligation to act benevolently, where no given instance of benevolence is a duty, serves as the deontological analogue for consequences that are good, but have sufficient power to generate obligation. Similarly, just as there are action of such moral strength that, due to their very nature, no moral rule can be formulated to express them as duties, there are actions in the teleological realm for which the negative agentic outcomes outweigh good consequences.

The dichotomy between deontological and teleological theories has been expressed in various ways. However, there are perfectly good philosophical arguments which can be used to show that they are not dichotomous. Rather they are complementary to each other, i.e., reason and emotion are complementary. For this argument, we can concentrate on what Nowell-Smith has to say in *Ethics*. "The notion of duty does not play the central role in traditional that it plays in modern ethics and the notion of doing one's duty for duty's sake hardly appears before Kant. Earlier philosophers thought it quite sensible to ask 'Why should I do my duty?; the obligation to do one's duty needs justifying and can only be justified by showing that doing his duty is, in the short or long run, advantageous to the agent; indeed the classic treatises on the subject might be said to be

mainly concerned with this justification. This point of view is called 'teleological' and is opposed to that called 'deontological', according to which duty rather than purpose is the fundamental concept of ethics".[40]

Further, he writes: "Ethical theories are often divided into teleological theories, according to which the notions of duty, rightness, and obligation are supposed to be defined in terms of or in some other way dependent on the notions of goodness and purpose, and deontological theories, according to which the notion of obligation is incapable of being analysed or made dependent in this way".[41]

From the above passage, it is clear that two different though related distinctions are being drawn here. On the one hand, the deontologist like Kant holds that duty is the fundamental concept of morality. On the other, he holds that the notion of obligation is not analyzable in terms of goodness or purpose. With this view, we can see that deontologist places the concept of duty at the centre while goodness and purpose are of minor importance. Thus Kant, whose writings in moral philosophy contain a great deal of discussion of duty is rightly classified as a deontologist because of the consequences of the action. As we can see, Kant in *Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals,* set out to establish the supreme principle of morality (which is concerned with ends and purposes), much

[40] Nowell-Smith, *Ethics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, I954), p.133.

[41] Ibid.

is said about both the good will, and about the harmony of ends in the 'Kingdom of Ends', to make that clear. For Kant, the concept of rational nature as an end in itself is very important to Kant's whole moral theory, since moral activity, like any other, needs an end.

For Aristotle, if character is well habituated, and stable and reliable, and if the virtuous person chooses virtuous actions knowingly for their own sake, then reliance on the spirit of emotion to move one at a particular time seems either to meet or be in conflict with these other demands. Now, what is in the background here seems to be a traditional Kantian line on the emotions and on acting from principle. To act because of one's knowledge of what one should do is of course for Kant to act because doing that action is the right thing, irrespective of inclination or desire. Kant captures the point by the notion of duty. However, a Kantian perspective is required to provide an emphasis on freedom, on the individual as law-giver and creative initiator of action, and to acknowledge the role of a formal and transcending principle in a morally plural world.

Much more can be said about the differences and shared views between Aristotle and Kant. Perhaps their difference is best summarized in stating that, for Kant, one ought to be deserving of happiness rather than motivated to be happy. Kant's effort to provide a better understanding of

morality was not an effort to provide a new moral code. According to Kant a good person is someone who always does their duty because it is their duty. It is fine if they enjoy doing it, but it must be the case that they would do it even if they did not enjoy it. The overall theme is that to be a good person you must be good for goodness sake.

CHAPTER 5
Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the concepts of happiness and duty have been the most operative terms in the discourse on ethical issues. Both Aristotle and Kant have made significant contributions to this discourse in terms of ends, actions and the consequences. We have put forward the hypothesis about the connection between happiness and duty, namely that there is dichotomy between happiness and duty, and happiness presupposes the performance of moral duties. Within the scope of this dissertation, it is fitting to offer, by way of conclusion, some thoughts on how one might go about answering them.

My interest has been to critically examine the Aristotelian conception of happiness and Kantian conception of duty. Aristotle offers the best account of happiness. Happiness, according to Aristotle, is not reducible merely to physical pleasure. On the contrary, happiness is a much more complicated concept, having to do, in part with the characteristic function of human beings. The purpose of this dissertation is to explicate Aristotle's conception of highest good for humankind, happiness and the Kantian conception of duty. The majority of this dissertation is dedicated to explicate and examine happiness and duty.

Aristotelian conception of happiness includes, but is not limited to, two activities: intellectual activity and virtuous activity. Two criteria are used to determine the nature of happiness, final or complete and self-sufficient, respectively. A good that is final or complete without qualification is always chosen for its own sake and never for the sake of something else. Some goods, such as money, are goods we pursue solely for the sake of other goods, such as security and pleasure. In contrast, other goods, such as friendship or virtue, are pursued both for their own sake and for the sake of some other good, such as happiness. Happiness, however, is the only good that is chosen for its own sake and never for the sake of something else.

The second criterion of happiness is self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency is not to be interpreted as applying to an individual living in complete solitude. A good that is self-sufficient is worth choosing for its own sake. Happiness is self-sufficient insofar as it makes life lacking in nothing.

Understanding the *ergon* argument is crucial to comprehending how intellectual activity and virtuous activity are part of the nature of happiness. The *ergon* of human beings or the characteristic activity of human beings has to do with our reasoning capacity. The characteristic activity of human beings cannot be nutrition and growth, because plants

share in this activity. Moreover, the characteristic activity of human beings cannot be sensation, since other animals share this experience. Hence, claims Aristotle, the characteristic activity must involve the activity of reasoning.

When Aristotle claims that the activity of reasoning is the characteristic activity of human beings, he is not thereby claiming that rational activity is distinctive to human beings of all things. Rather, insofar as the natural world is concerned, rational activity is unique to human beings. Such an explanation fits with the fact that later on in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle compares human beings with the gods, namely, gods and human beings both participate in the activity of reasoning.

The activity of reasoning is used in at least two activities: intellectual reasoning and practical reasoning. Regarding the former, Aristotle claims that a life that includes contemplation is the best sort of life, and a life that includes contemplation is better than a life without any contemplation or theoretical reasoning. One of the most important activities involving intellectual reasoning is intellectual or philosophical activity.

Regarding contemplation or intellectual reasoning itself, it is final and self-sufficient. Contemplation is final, given that it is always desired for its own sake and never for the sake of something else. Contemplation is self-sufficient, in that it is worth choosing for its own sake. What Aristotle means by contemplation or intellectual reasoning is reasoning for the sake of knowledge or knowing for knowledge's sake. The *ergon* of human beings or the activity of reasoning is also used in practical reasoning. One of the most important activities involving practical reasoning is virtuous activity. Aristotle stresses the importance of action or doing what is virtuous.

Of two main types of virtue, intellectual virtues and moral virtues, the *ergon* of human beings plays an important role in the practice of moral virtue. People have to use their reasoning capacity to perform virtuous activity. Persons learn to do acts by repetition, by doing virtuous acts consistently and regularly. Only by doing so, a person becomes virtuous.

Virtue, for Aristotle, is a disposition of the soul. It is a state of character, in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to emotions. Virtue, then, is a state of character, in which we have a disposition to choose the mean between extremes, the mean between excess and deficiency. Specifically, moral virtue is a state of character in

which we use our reasoning faculty to deliberate and determine what choice to make in any circumstance.

That happiness consists of intellectual reasoning is not controversial. However, that happiness also includes practical reasoning is highly debatable. Some claim that happiness consists of intellectual reasoning exclusively, and such a claim is maintained on the basis of a few points. Contemplation is the highest good. Only highest goods constitute the nature of happiness. Intellectual activity is the highest good. Though Aristotle does affirm intellectual activity as the highest good, that piece of evidence is not enough to demonstrate that the nature of happiness consists of intellectual activity exclusively. He explicitly claims that certain beings do not qualify as happy if they do not participate in virtuous activity. Animals, such as oxen or horses, cannot qualify as happy.

And, given Aristotle's conception of happiness, neither are children happy, given that they are not yet engaging in virtuous activity. Not only are children not yet capable of engaging in virtuous activity, but also, children are not yet able to participate in intellectual activity. Thus, we can understand why Aristotle claims that children cannot be happy.

Besides the fact that Aristotle says that beings that do not participate in virtuous activity do not qualify as happiness, two other

pieces of evidence lend favor to my interpretation that virtuous activity is part of the nature of happiness. First, happiness is a good of the soul and the nature of happiness includes goods of the soul exclusively. Intellectual activity, virtuous activity, and friendship are goods of the soul; unlike other goods, such as wealth or well-being, which is an external good and bodily good respectively. Goods of the soul, according to Aristotle, are good in the fullest sense and in the highest degree. So, virtuous activity is part of the nature of happiness. Aristotle's discussion of the virtuous man in the *Nicomachean Ethics* indicates his awareness that it is ignoble to fail to pursue virtue and hence that virtue ought to be pursued. Second, in his discussion of the popular views of happiness, in a rejoinder to a popular view that happiness is virtue, Aristotle says that insofar as the activity of virtue includes being virtuous, he is in agreement. Happiness, then, involves doing virtuous acts regularly and consistently. Hence, those two pieces of evidence together show how virtuous activity is a part of the nature of happiness.

Differing from Aristotle in his moral philosophy, Kant associates *eudaimonism* (i.e., the ethics of happiness) with *hedonism* (i.e., the ethics of pleasure). For Kant, happiness is a rational being's consciousness of the pleasantness of life uninterruptedly accompanying his/her whole existence, and has its basis in self-love. Therefore, according to Kant, both *eudaimonism* and *hedonism* commit the same mistake by undermining morality and destroying its sublimity, since they put the motives to virtue

and vice in the same class. Both are utilitarian in that they are concerned with consequences, with means and ends.

On Kant's view, an action done from duty has its moral worth, not from the purpose which is to be attained by it, but from the maxim by which it is determined, and, therefore, does not depend on the realization of the consequence of the action, but merely on the principle of volition by which the action has taken place. In other words, an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination. Thus Kant sys that a person shows his moral worth if he does good, not from inclination, but from duty.[1] However, there are occasions when elements of obedience to duty and inclination to the action are combined so intimately that it is impossible to answer the question whether the act is done from duty or from inclination, since this offers alternatives too crude to capture the essential features of the case. It is not a question of there being two distinct motives to the action which happen to be intermingled but which could be in principle isolated and considered separately. Rather, in these interesting cases, the action originates in a single, yet complex, motive and the categories of action 'from duty' or 'from inclination' are inadequate for the characterization of it. One way to conduct this investigation would be to offer a complete account of all the possible likenesses and differences which might be, on different occasions, at issue when actions 'from duty'

[1] Kant, I., *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals: Moral Law*, trans. by H. J. Paton, (London:Hutchinson University Press, 1969), p.19.

or 'from inclination' are contrasted.[2] For example, a father is playing with his child not out of a sense of duty but out of pure joy and pleasure. In Kantian terms, this would be acting from 'inclination' not from 'practical reason', so would possess no moral value. But we now may suppose a person who finds himself unable to enjoy spontaneously with his child, though he goes out of his way to entertain the child out of a sense of his duty as a father.[3] This is a possible case which provides the context in which the term 'inclination' goes with acting 'as one spontaneously felt inclined' and acting 'out of pure joy and pleasure'; and the term 'duty' goes with acting 'out of a sense of duty as a father'. The Kantian idea of duty is not this at all, though many have thought it was; it is rather the idea of what one has or has not a categorical obligation to do simply as a rational being, which may be many things in excess of one's duties as a father. Such 'capacity' related duties tend not to include very elevated moral tasks, and hence it easily appears that the Kantian idea of duty, if assimilated to this one, omits to account for many fine moral achievements.

This dissertation suggests that it is philosophically possible, and practically fruitful, to leave behind dichotomous thinking and define new foundations for moral principles that draw upon both Aristotelian and Kantian perspectives. What is required is not a melding of the two into one system, but a rapprochement that allows the genius and purity of the two

[2] Dent, N. J. H. "Duty and Inclination", *Mind,* New Series, Vol. 83, No. 332, (Oct., 1974), p.552. URL: http://www.jstor.org/ Retrieved on June 13, 2008.
[3] Ibid., p.553.

perspectives to remain potent and available. To retain both purity and potency, and enable each perspective to benefit from the insights and strengths of the other by means of the modified view, requires epistemological and ontological foundation. The following ontological and epistemological assumptions are offered as a reasonable and appropriate foundation for the amalgamation of happiness and duty that is envisioned as the pedagogical ground of morality.

The first ontological assumption is that of Kant's observation that being human entails a primordial freedom; it is this freedom that makes moral agency possible. Kant labels this freedom 'spontaneity' and it underlies agent's choice; the choice to make or break promises, to cheat or to refrain from cheating, to be loyal or disloyal. By acting, and understanding the causality of their actions, agents confirm this freedom. This constitutive and positive freedom makes morality both possible and necessary; individuals are moral and must be moral; they can and must act, and chose to act.

An earlier formulation of this contention can be found in Bradley in which Bradley's metaphysics supposes a structured conception of morality as an ontological necessity. Within this necessity, morality is conceived as a process of self-realization. This is not merely a process in which persons engage casually, if and when they inclined. It is bound up

with very nature as persons, and escapes conscious volition. Regarding this, Bradley notes; 'Neither in me, nor in the world, is what ought to be what is, and what is what ought to be."[4] In response to the question "Why should I be moral?" Bradley responds: If I am asked why I am to be moral, I can say no more than this, that what I can not doubt is my own being now, and that, since in that being is involved a self, which is to be here and now, and yet in this here and now is not, I therefore cannot doubt that there is an end which I am to make real; and morality, if not equal to, is, at all event, included in the making real of myself. The only rational question here is not why? but what? What is the self that I am free to know and will?[5] To be is to acknowledge the role of freedom in the process of further becoming. Bradley goes on to require, as a moral duty, a social realization of the self, which is, furthermore, only a stage in the realization of the absolute whole that is the ultimate reality.

Despite the contextuality and conditionedness of life, and the external influences of character, agents, in their inner life, locate the freedom to deliberate, decide and function. "Freedom is the basis on which we hold persons accountable for their actions, their characters and their moral lives".[6]

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[4] Bradley, F., *Collected Essays*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p.313.
[5] Ibid., p.84.
[6] Ricoeur, P., *Nature and Freedom*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974), p.24.

Self-directing freedom allows agents to determine consistent courses of action that create a moral character. Creating a moral character is revealed as a task stemming from actualizing the freedom that is the central task of being human. Some agents do it thoughtfully and purposefully; others do not. The consistency and the moral quality of the actions that define moral character depend upon the internal and positive dimension of freedom that is the genesis of the autonomy. The autonomous person can discern the laws which right reason shows to be correct and to which thoughtful person find they have a duty to conform their acts of spontaneous freedom. In conforming and acknowledging freedom, agents understand themselves not merely as conditioned objects responding to the exigencies of existence, but as self-realizing entities with the responsibility such understanding implies. In taking on a nature that can be called 'human', one's freedom necessitates that one chooses and builds a moral personality, decides what rules will govern one's moral life, and decides how to apply those rules in specific circumstances.

Thus, although freedom maybe termed primordial, the agent's actualization of that freedom occurs along a spectrum that displays the moral opportunities available. One has the freedom to build and maintain a moral character within the conditionedness of existence, but also the freedom to become a reflective self-legislator and creator of moral laws to address dilemmic circumstances. Moral freedom finds expression,

however, not in a vacuum, but in a complex environment, and this arena of morality is disclosed in consideration of the belonging and understanding that distinguishes human being.

Being with others is fundamental to living a life that can be recognizably called human. Individuals live in a matrix of webs of relationships comprised of families, friends, neighbourhoods, colleagues, and organizations. Within this matrix, the agent lives out both public and private existences. Being fully human, having a world at all, entails being in relationship with others. While it is true that human relationship takes many forms, human beings find that caring relationship- one in which there is a mutual reciprocal regard and responsiveness- are those that allow the actualization of the possibilities of flourishing. It is in establishing and sustaining such relationships that agents take responsibility, exercise conscience, and develop both obligations and expectations. The agents must decide whether circumstances dictate that s/he reacts as a member of a specific set of relationships, with the special obligations and expectations that involves, or as a dispassionate and non-involved arbitrator based upon the endowment of personhood on others rather than shared intimacy. Further, how is an agent to translate notions of belonging in his/her moral life but through a developing and expanding ability to understand the parameters and requirements of individual personhood in relation to others. The greater the ability one has to

internalize understanding concerning belonging, then the greater the possibility for moral growth.

The third ontological assumption that underlies Aristotelian and Kantian perspective lies in the position that it is human kind's mode of being to understand and to seek further understandings. Understanding is not something possessed but is a constituent element of existing as a person in the world; it is part of the very nature of personhood. To have limited understandings and to seek no others is to be diminished as a human being. Understanding is an ontological process not merely a mental one. That is, we do not derive our understanding merely from precepts, concepts, rules and principles, but most fundamentally from our life experiences as thinking, feeling, willing, and acting beings.

It has been shown that freedom, belonging, and understanding can form an ontological basis upon which a rapprochement between happiness and duty may be realized. Within that reality, the nature of knowledge must be addressed in order for the agent to make coherent progress within the moral enterprise. The epistemological issues raised by these contentions are investigated below.

The structure of an epistemology that is suited to a rapprochement between happiness and duty can be derived from the logical requirements

of such a process when the polarities of the system are Aristotelian and Kantian in nature.

To justify the truth claims of such an epistemology, it must involve a rational a priori in which the basic principles of reason are intrinsic to the operation of knowing mind logically prior to, and independently of, any grounding in sense experience.

The main thrust of such an epistemological formulation must be the claim that all genuinely informative propositions which express a truth claim involve two sorts of basic elements that correspond to the two polarities of the system: principle of reason, characterized by direct or indirect self-evidence, which are therefore *a priori* in the sense that these principles have a truth value that is logically prior to, and thus independent of the experience. This involves the dual claim that sense knowledge is possible only through the exercise and application of *a priori* principles of reason to the relevant sense data, and that only through the content of such sense data it is possible for the mind, structured through *a priori* principles of reason, to know truths about matters of empirical fact. Therefore, no genuine knowledge of factual content is possible without the application of rational principles derived from reason, and no genuine conceptual knowledge is possible without perceptual content derived from experience.

What follows is a formulation of the framework and shape of enquiry that culminates in a justificatory process to establish the utility of the framework and the extent to which it meets the required ontic and epistemic goals.

Moral philosophy is essentially prescriptive; usually based upon a challenge of the assumptions underlying that position, or the inference made from those assumptions, or the ground of those inferences, in order to offer a formulation or claim of greater power, credibility and increased prescriptivity. For example, Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, complains: It still remains a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general that the existence of things outside us...must be accepted on faith, and that if anyone thinks good to doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his/her doubts by any satisfactory proof.[7]

Aristotle makes a distinction between the rationality that formed the basis of theoretical or scientific enquiry and the rationality of morality. For Aristotle, moral reasoning is not any kind of theoretical reflection upon a world of absolute and unchangeable forms of happiness and duty, because happiness and duty are not objects that exist in the world but exist only in the immediacy of human relationships, and are of practical rather than theoretical nature, and therefore subject to practical reasoning. Kant

[7] Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. J.M.D. Meiklejohn, (NewYork: P.F. Collier, 1978), p.34.

agrees with Aristotle that practical reason demands a deeper justification for human existence. Furthermore, both agree that a life of so-called pleasure and self-indulgence is not a life of real happiness or true freedom.

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