

# Kant's Moderate Cynicism and the Harmony between Virtue and Worldly Happiness

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**ABSTRACT:** For Kant, any authentic moral demands are wholly distinct from the demands of prudence. This has led critics to complain that Kantian moral demands are incompatible with our human nature as happiness-seekers. To address this worry, Kant would need to show us that aiming at morality does not require us to abandon our hope for happiness in this life. This paper argues that Kant—building on insights from Rousseau that Kant identifies with Cynicism—offers an account of a harmony between virtue and worldly happiness that can sustain such a hope.

## 1. Happiness in Kant's Pure Moral Philosophy

One of the central tenets of Kant's practical philosophy is that the demands of morality are wholly distinct from and not at all subservient to the demands of self-interest or happiness. This tenet is already implicit in the famous opening claim of Part One of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* that only the "good will" could be good without qualification (*GMS* 4:393).<sup>1</sup> Happiness is not owed the same respect as morality because it is "an effect and not an activity of the will" (4:400). This fundamental difference between happiness and morality is revealed in the way each engages our practical reason: prudential demands are expressed in hypothetical imperatives instructing us merely to take the means to a given end, whereas the demands of morality are expressed in a categorical imperative concerned solely with "the form and principle" of the action rather than its expected result (*GMS* 4:415–16). For this reason, "the

maxims of virtue and those of one's own happiness are quite heterogeneous with respect to their supreme practical principle" (*KpV* 5:112) such that "making someone happy is quite different from making him good" (*GMS* 4:442). Moreover, happiness and virtue are not merely different, but often opposed. Happiness represents "a powerful counterweight to all the commands of duty" (*GMS* 4:405) such that "inclination to good living and virtue conflict with each other" (*Anthropology* 7:277). Although happiness is always pleasant to its possessor, it can actually be bad when it corrupts the will by means of the arrogance often accompanying it (*GMS* 4:393; cf. *KpV* 5:111). Indeed, the cultivation of reason required to achieve a good will may even reduce our happiness "below zero" (*GMS* 4:396).

In claiming that the pursuit of morality is something wholly distinct from the pursuit of happiness, Kant seems to have commonsense on his side. However, this seemingly commonsensical claim is vulnerable to an important objection: happiness is so central to our practical aspirations that a morality completely divorced from happiness does not seem like it could be an ideal suited to human beings. This is an old but powerful objection to Kantian ethics. Thus Christian Garve objects in 1798 that Kantian ethics, by denying that virtue makes one happy, "destroys all incentives that can move the human being to act."<sup>2</sup>

Now one could simply dismiss this objection as one to which Kant is not obligated to reply. After all, it is central requirement of Kant's whole approach to ethics that one explicate the concept of morality independently of any account of human nature. For Kant, such a "pure" moral philosophy is precisely what allows us to preserve the commonsense distinction between virtue and happiness by resisting the perennial temptation of philosophers to explain the possibility of moral obligation in terms of our need for happiness. An adequate defense of Kant along these lines would require a defense of the possibility of such a "pure" moral philosophy—and, in turn, of transcendental idealism and the rest of the critical philosophy. Given the difficulties involved in such an endeavor, it would clearly be preferable if we could respond to the objection by showing that Kantian moral demands are, in fact, compatible with the aspiration for our own happiness. It would mark, by contrast, a rather fanatical devotion to the letter of

Kant's method to deny that such a response would even *enhance* the plausibility of Kantian ethics.<sup>3</sup> And even the fanatic would have other reasons for wanting to know whether virtue and happiness are compatible in this way.

In keeping with this assessment of the force of the objection, a central aim of contemporary scholarship on Kant's practical philosophy has been to show that Kantian ethics is not as hostile to our own worldly happiness as the objection assumes. Consider the passages about "moral worth" from the *Groundwork* that seem to imply that maxims must work *contrary* to self-interest and our inclinations if they are to have moral content (4:397–98; also see e.g. *KpV* 5:83–84, 156). Commentators have shown that we can interpret these passages as claiming that the moral content of maxims is simply something wholly *different* from their fitness to satisfy our inclinations—and thus that these passages need not be read as asserting that morality is *opposed* to our own happiness.<sup>4</sup> And they can bolster this interpretation by reminding us that Kant tells us explicitly that pure practical reason "does not require that one should *renounce* claims to happiness" (*KpV* 5:93). Indeed, Kant's own response to Garve's objection is not a mere reassertion of the purity of moral philosophy but rather a statement of the legitimate place of happiness in the aspirations of the virtuous: Kant insists that he never claimed that the human being is "required to *renounce* his natural end, happiness, when it is a matter of complying with his duty," but rather, since the human being *cannot* renounce happiness, that he must "*abstract* altogether from this consideration when the command of duty arises" (*Theory and Practice* 8:278–9; cf. *GMS* 4:400.25–29, *KpV* 5:130).<sup>5</sup>

This line of defense goes a long way towards answering the objection but is ultimately insufficient. Even if happiness is something permissible or even good-as-long-as-subordinated-to-morality, it might turn out that the pursuit of morality is actually incompatible with happiness. This would be the case if, for example, the social and natural worlds were such that it would be manifestly more profitable to be prepared to lie than to have a firm maxim of honesty. In this "pessimistic scenario" (as I will call it), the pursuit of happiness would be permissible conceptually or *logically* but not in practice or *in reality* since it clearly would be imprudent to

approach the world with a virtuous disposition. And then the question would re-emerge how morality could be a practical ideal for beings who cannot help but care deeply about their own happiness. What we need, then, is some assurance that this pessimistic scenario does not hold, i.e. that virtue does not *in fact* require the systematic sacrifice of one's own worldly happiness. Only then could we erase doubts about the compatibility of categorical moral demands with our human nature as happiness-seekers.<sup>6</sup>

In what follows, I aim to develop a Kantian response to this challenge. My claim is that despite Kant's insistence on the specific difference between happiness and virtue, he does offer an account of a harmony between virtue and our own worldly happiness. I begin in the next section, by showing that whereas Kant's own early attempt to answer this challenge appeals to a *necessary* connection between virtue and happiness (in the concept of the highest good), an account of a merely *contingent* harmony is sufficient for an effective response. In order to develop a Kantian account of such a contingent harmony between virtue and happiness, we first have to examine Kant's own views on how happiness can be best approximated in this life. To this end, I discuss, in section 3, the ancient Socratic view, presented most starkly by the Stoics, that happiness is achieved not through devising and executing plans to satisfy the desires one already has, but instead by limiting one's desires to those whose satisfaction depends only on one's own activity. In section 4, I connect this view to Kant's account by showing that Kant's skepticism about our ability to plan for happiness—most famously articulated in the *Groundwork*, but treated most fully in his historical writings—can be understood as an descendent of the ancient Socratic idea, especially as developed by Rousseau, that a dependence on external things and especially on the opinions of others is the principal source of our unhappiness. This account of our failure in our typical attempts to achieve happiness serves to introduce, in section 5, Kant's own prescription for happiness, namely what I call his “moderate Cynicism”: according to this prescription, the best chance we have for approximating happiness in this life lies in our willingness to do without (but not in actively denying ourselves) all the luxuries that have come to seem like necessities in our corrupt era. I conclude in section 6 by

showing how this moderate Cynic prescription for happiness stands in harmony with virtue as Kant depicts it.

## 2. Morality for Happiness-Seekers

That Kant himself takes seriously the problem of the compatibility of moral demands with our pursuit of happiness is apparent from the central place the problem occupies in the practical philosophy he develops in the decade or so prior to the publication of the *Groundwork* in 1785. In that period, Kant aims to account for the incentive we have to comply with the purely intellectual moral law by means of the idea of “the highest good” as the single object of the will in which virtue and happiness stand in a *necessary* harmony. We can consider this early view, especially as it appears in the Canon of the first *Critique* of 1781, to be his “official” solution to the problem: although Kant will go on reject the view that the highest good provides an incentive to morality, his major ethical works seem to ignore the problem altogether rather than providing an alternative solution. In this section, I will briefly consider this “official” solution and its deficiencies before turning (in section 3) to an alternative “unofficial” account of a *contingent* harmony between virtue and happiness that can be reconstructed from Kant’s writing from throughout his career.

Kant’s ethics of the 1760s already insists upon the kind of sharp distinction between morality and happiness that is characteristic of his mature practical philosophy, even anticipating his later distinction between hypothetical and categorical imperatives (e.g. *Prize Essay*, 2:298–99; *Remarks* 20:149.22, 155.18–27). Accordingly, in student lecture notes from this period, Kant criticizes Baumgarten for failing to distinguish the motives of ethics from the motives of mere usefulness (*Beweggründe des Nutzens*). But, clearly sensitive to the question how we could be

moved to act apart from questions of usefulness, Kant goes on to locate the proper motive to morality in the feeling of “the highest pleasure [*Lust*] in one’s own morality,” a feeling he calls “blessedness” (*Seligkeit*) (*Praktische Philosophie Herder*, 27:18–19).<sup>7</sup> Following Baumgarten, Kant claims that happiness (*Glückseligkeit*), “the highest enjoyment of pleasure [*Wollust*] that [one] is capable of in the circumstances,” requires not merely physical well-being or good fortune (*Glück*), but also this purely moral, intellectual blessedness (27:46).<sup>8</sup> Happiness is thus not possible without virtue. Moreover, the pursuit of mere well-being at the expense of blessedness does not represent a viable option for a partial happiness: physical well-being “depends on external circumstances,” and “the longing for mere well-being must therefore, by the law of mutability, already make for unhappiness,” whereas the morally good is “fruitful in physical goodness” since “we are the ground” (27:46). Indeed, Kant asserts that the pursuit of virtue would not come at the expense even of well-being: good fortune and blessedness “do not actually conflict on the whole, though they have to be distinguished” (27:19).<sup>9</sup>

In seeking to find the motive to morality in “blessed” happiness rather than in mere well-being, Kant presumably aims to distinguish his view from a crude hedonism that could not make a principled distinction between moral and non-moral pleasures. Kant distances his view from such a hedonism even further by implying here (anticipating his later account of the highest good) that this blessed happiness could be achieved only in the life to come (27:46).<sup>10</sup> Despite this, Kant clearly remains uneasy with the idea that happiness, even when removed from mere sensibility in this twofold way, might be needed to motivate us to morality. His ambivalence on the matter is captured in a remark from this period in which he writes that although “common duties do not need the hope of another life as their motivation,” the pleasures of virtue cannot outweigh their inconvenience “unless the representation of a future state in which moral beauty persists and happiness is increased ... comes to its assistance” (*Remarks*, 20:12; also see 20:18.06 and 28.07).

In lectures from the 1770s, Kant offers a more comprehensive treatment of the relationship between happiness and virtue. Central to the ethics developed in this period is the distinction

between the “pathological” principle of satisfying inclinations and what he now calls the “categorical” commands of morality (e.g. *Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:276). But this distinction does not prevent Kant from seeing the need to provide an account of how we can be moved to follow the purely intellectual, objective law of morality (the *principium diiudicationis*) by means of some kind of assistance from subjective grounds of inclinations or feelings (a *principium executionis*). To begin with, Kant rejects outright as “unnatural” the “morose ethics” that requires us to renounce all claims to happiness.<sup>11</sup> Happiness instead has a necessary connection to morality since it is the “natural promise” of morality, even constituting the “incentives of morality” (*Triebfeder der Sittlichkeit*). In this sense, Kant claims, “Happiness is no ground, no *principium* of morality, but a necessary *corollarium* thereof” (27:304).<sup>12</sup> In making such claims, Kant seems to want to have his cake and eat it too: morality is something wholly different from happiness, but the promise of happiness is still needed to move us to act. Indeed, Kant seems to concede the awkwardness of his own position when he says that to comprehend how a strictly universal and thus wholly intellectual rule of the understanding can actually move a person to act is “the philosopher’s stone” (*Moral Mrongovius*, 27:1428).

Additional evidence about Kant’s approach to this problem during this period can be found in his discussion of the “ethical systems of antiquity” in terms of their conception of the *summum bonum*, or highest good, as the unity of “well-being and behaving well” or “physical good and moral good,” that is, happiness and the worthiness to be happy grounded in moral perfection (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:248–49). Kant suggests that the ancients brought these elements into a single whole on account of philosophy’s aim of reducing our knowledge to the fewest principles (27:249; cf. *Moralphilosophie Herder*, 27:3). But Kant’s actual objections to Stoicism and Epicureanism in these student lecture notes suggest that he sees the attempt at the unification of happiness and virtue in the highest good principally as an attempt to explain the pull that morality has on us or (what amounts to the same thing) to explain how virtue is part of an ideal appropriate for human beings. On Kant’s telling *both* moral theories fail to account for the proper incentive to morality in terms of happiness. By claiming that the highest good consists solely in

happiness (*Glückseligkeit*), Epicurus wanted to “give incentives [*Triebfeder*] to virtue,” but he did so only by robbing virtue of its distinctive value. Zeno, by contrast, did full justice to the intrinsic value of morality, but he “took away the incentives to virtue,” all of which “are drawn from the senses,” by claiming that the consciousness of the worthiness to be happy is sufficient for happiness itself (27:250–251).

Although Kant rejects both these ideals, the ideal he recommends in these lectures as superior, the Gospel’s ideal of holiness, also depicts happiness as an incentive to morality: the ideal of the Gospel has the greatest moral purity and perfection but also “the greatest incentive,” namely happiness or blessedness (*Glückseligkeit oder Seligkeit*), “but not in this world” (27:251). And, again, although Kant makes his characteristic assertions in this regard that doing good deeds “with the intention merely of being rewarded by God” would fulfill merely the letter of the law without an authentically moral disposition (27:279; cf. 283–84) and that the principle of moral appraisal is not a theological one (27:277), he nevertheless also claims that theology is “of course” (*freilich*) an incentive to morality (*Triebfeder der Moral*) since without a supreme judge “there would be no inner incentive, no reward and no punishment” (27:278–8). And in lecture notes dated to as late as the Winter of 1783–4, Kant remarks that “the duties of morality are apodictically certain since they are set before me by my own reason; but there would be no incentives to act in accord with these duties as a rational human being if there were no God and no future world” (*Religionslehre Pölitz* 28:1073).<sup>13</sup>

Kant publishes a closely related view in the Canon section the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781. He tells us there that the prospect of happiness can never be the ground or condition of an authentically moral disposition, for in that case “the disposition would not be moral and would also therefore be unworthy of complete happiness” (*KrV* A813/B841). However, moral ideas could serve as “incentives for resolve and realization” only if morality and happiness stand in *necessary* connection as elements of a single highest good (A810/B838) since only then could moral ideas “fulfill the whole end that is natural for every rational being” (A813/B841). In short, it would be impossible to regulate one’s life by moral maxims if reason did not connect with the

moral law “an efficient cause which determines for the conduct in accord with this law an outcome precisely corresponding to our highest ends, whether in this or in another life” (A812/B840).

The obvious problem with this early solution to the problem is that the claim that morality could be an incentive to action only in conjunction with the promise of happiness—even when doubly qualified in terms of the intellectual “blessedness” attained in a future life—seems to undermine the strict distinction between morality and happiness that is central to Kant’s practical philosophy even in this early period. Perhaps for this reason, the account of the highest good in the *Critique of Practical Reason* of 1788 and in other later works no longer serves to answer the question of the moral incentive and instead answers a question about systematicity with respect to the concept of practical goodness. In these later discussions, Kant explicitly denies that the highest good is meant to be the determining ground of the will in any way (*KpV* 5:108, 130; *Religion* 6:5, 162) and, more specifically, denies that it is only on the presupposition of God and a future life that duty “gets a sure basis and the requisite strength of an *incentive*” (*Theory and Practice*, 8:279).

In the *Groundwork* and second *Critique*, Kant does not appeal to the concept of happiness in his treatment of moral motivation. His treatment there is instead dominated by the account of the feeling of “respect” for the moral law. We might try to make the case that Kant’s account of respect obviates his own earlier worry about the compatibility of morality and happiness: the subjective feeling of respect is able to outweigh any concern we might have for our own happiness. In that case, the pessimistic scenario would be no threat at all. But rather than assess the adequacy of such a view, I want instead to consider what resources Kant has for actually addressing the threat. That is, I want to make the case that Kantian ethics coheres with rather than denies an intuitively plausible conception of the place of happiness in human life. In fact, the general aim behind making such a case—to present the demands of morality as consistent with our nature as sensible rational beings—is shared by the account of respect itself. Kant extends this aim in his account of the “aesthetic preconditions” of duty from the *Metaphysics of*

*Morals*, where he argues that the validity of the categorical imperative allows us to infer as universal to human nature certain “predispositions on the side of *feeling*” that make us susceptible to being moved to action by the moral law (6:399–404). Kant never makes the parallel argument that the validity of the moral law presupposes a harmony between virtue and our own worldly happiness. But, as we will see, Kant’s own prescription for approximating happiness in this life is one that does depict the end of happiness as standing in harmony with the end of virtue. That Kant should choose to offer such a prescription at least suggests that he himself is not completely satisfied with simply dismissing the worry about happiness and that he, like many of his contemporary defenders, instead holds out hope that his account of the demands of morality could be presented as consistent with our nature as happiness-seekers.

In this section, we have seen that Kant’s early solution to the problem of the compatibility of the pure demands of morality with our human nature as happiness-seekers appeals to the *necessary* harmony between virtue and *otherworldly* happiness in the idea of the highest good. But, throughout his career, Kant also develops an account of a *contingent* harmony between virtue and one’s own *worldly* happiness. This represents an “unofficial” solution to the problem in the sense that Kant does not advertise it as a solution. But it is an effective solution nonetheless: while the mere *permissibility* of the pursuit of happiness is too little for a response to the critics, we also do not need the *necessary* connection between morality and happiness supposed by the typical eudaimonist theories as well as by Kant’s own “official” solution in terms of the highest good. Such a necessary connection even threatens to undermine the strict separation between moral and pragmatic incentives.<sup>14</sup>

Kant’s “unofficial” account shares with Greek eudaimonism the concern with the harmony between virtue and happiness in *this* life. But, unlike the eudaimonists, Kant does not claim (and in fact actively denies) that there is a *necessary* connection between virtue and happiness in this life: according to Kant, that would suppose either, with the Stoics and Epicureans, that the connection is analytic (a supposition which would manifestly erase the specific difference between happiness and morality) (*KpV* 5:111), or else, with many moderns, that there is a causal

*law of nature* making it the case that our virtue necessarily brings with it a proportionate amount of happiness in this life (a supposition which seems manifestly false) (5:113).

Kant's denial that there is a necessary relation between virtue and worldly happiness implies that worldly happiness cannot provide a requisite incentive to morality: if happiness were a requisite incentive to morality (or even a requisite part of or auxiliary to the incentive to morality), then we would be morally obligated only precisely to the extent that the end of morality coincided with that of our own happiness. That is, happiness could provide an incentive to morality *as such* (as opposed to just this or that moral action in particular circumstances) only if the connection between virtue and happiness were a *necessary* one, which is to say, only if happiness and morality were part of a *single* highest good. An account of a contingent harmony between virtue and happiness is thus consistent with Kant's mature view that happiness, and hence the highest good, cannot be considered an *incentive* to morality. But can Kant offer a satisfactory answer to the more general question about the compatibility of morality with our human nature without appealing to the highest good as an incentive to morality? An appeal to the highest good and hence to happiness as an incentive to morality *would* be essential if an agent could consider an action worth pursuing only to the extent that he also considered the action to be the one that maximizes his own happiness, that is, if we were to assume some version of psychological egoism. But if we reject psychological egoism—and its failings are widely, even if not universally, acknowledged—then we do not need to explain the possibility of morality in terms of a kind of happiness with which morality is necessarily connected. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that rejecting psychological egoism does not obviate the question about the compatibility of morality with human nature: even if it is implausible to claim that *every* action we undertake is undertaken with a view to our own welfare, it still remains plausible to claim that we humans beings might not be capable of organizing our life around an ideal that we know will be systematically hostile to our own welfare. Hence showing even a *contingent* harmony between morality and my own happiness can serve as a response to a reasonable version of the worry about the compatibility of morality with human nature.

### 3. Kant and the Stoics on Happiness as Self-Sufficiency

Although Kant ultimately rejects the appeal to the highest good in service of answering the question about how the pure moral law could be an appropriate ideal for happiness-seekers like us, his own prescription for worldly happiness draws on a key theme from the tradition most closely associated with the concept of the highest good, namely the eudaimonist tradition:<sup>15</sup> happiness is attained by being independent of nature and other human beings, that is, by being self-sufficient or free in the sense of being (as much as possible) the source of what one needs to be satisfied. We will see that for Kant, as for the eudaimonists before him, this freedom links the life of worldly happiness to the life of virtue: the self-sufficient person does not need to dominate or manipulate others to get what he wants; and, conversely, the virtuous person has only a highly provisional attachment to all ends whose satisfaction depends on fortune or other human beings, thereby sparing himself the disappointment shared by all those who place their aspirations in ends whose attainment is out of their control.

On the well-known Stoic view, the sage literally cannot be harmed since he considers only his own virtue to be a true benefit to himself and does not count as good anything that can ever be taken away from him, even his own life.<sup>16</sup> The underlying thought here is that the sage is distinguished from the ordinary foolish person insofar as he refuses to value anything that lies outside his own power, everything except the health of his own soul or power of choice, that is, his virtue. Happiness is achieved only when one lacks nothing one wants,<sup>17</sup> but the ordinary person always lacks something he thinks he needs. Even worse, he is constantly anxious that fortune will not favor him and that other people will hinder him from getting what he wants. His plan to attain happiness by securing beneficial external circumstances becomes a Sisyphusian task that can never result in the mastery of fortune that alone would bring him happiness.<sup>18</sup> Since the sage, by contrast, holds only the health of the soul to be good, he wants nothing he does not

already possess, and he will not grieve over anything that can be taken away from him. Thus the sage alone is truly happy since the sage alone leaves nothing that matters to him to fortune or the whim of other people.

Kant obviously rejects a central element of this Stoic account: for Kant it is a fantasy to think that virtue itself could be sufficient for happiness. Kant does not address this feature of the Stoic account of happiness specifically, but instead argues against the generic eudaimonism he identifies as common to both Epicurus and the Stoics: they both found happiness in “the consciousness of living virtuously” and hence they both “found happiness in precise proportion to virtue already in *this* life” (*KpV*, 5:115). It should be noted that this account does not accurately reflect ancient Stoicism in at least two respects: (1) it supposes that we can *gradually* increase our virtue and with it our happiness and, conversely, that if we sink lower into vice that our happiness will sink that much lower as well; and (2) it suggests that the happiness of the sage is a state of satisfaction that is the *effect* of her contemplation of her own virtue, paradigmatically the effect of conscience or moral sentiment. Despite these anachronisms, this generic eudaimonism does suitably reflect the Stoic view that virtue is sufficient for happiness and thus that happiness is in our power to obtain just to the extent virtue is. And Kant thinks there is at least a partial truth in this view: the consciousness of one’s own virtuous activity does provide a purely intellectual contentment, a contentment that can even be compared to God’s self-sufficient blessedness or “self-contentment.” However, Kant claims against such a view (and implicitly against his own earlier view) that this wholly self-wrought contentment is at best a mere “analogue of happiness” (*KpV*, 5:117). In the late *Vigilantius* lecture notes, Kant admits, similarly, that we can attain a purely intellectual “contentment of our heart” through good conduct, but adds: “But man is also a natural creature, and to that extent is subject to conditions of nature that absolutely demand satisfaction. He can forgo nothing that his bare necessities [*Nothdurft*] demand” (27:648).<sup>19</sup>

The key point to note here is that for Kant, unlike for the Stoics, our happiness *always depends on something other than our virtuous activity*, namely on the satisfaction of non-moral

desires. This marks an essential difference between the physical good (happiness) and the moral good: “Happiness contains all (and also not more than) that which nature provides us; but virtue contains what no one other than the human being can give himself or take away from himself” (*Theory and Practice*, 8:283n.27–29). Stoicism erases this difference by supposing that happiness arises not with the cooperation of nature or other people, but rather from one’s own virtuous activity alone. And the generic eudaimonism that Kant considers asserts, likewise, that happiness results from virtue *directly*, i.e. without satisfying any non-moral desires and hence without the mediation of the broader natural and social worlds. On this view, the human being has the unrestricted power to give or take happiness away from himself since a virtuous disposition is already sufficient for happiness. Kant thus considers it a refutation of the eudaimonist’s attempt to unite virtue and happiness to point out that the virtuous man suffers especially acute pangs of conscience, giving him a “gloomy air,” while the wicked man is “often in full enjoyment of his happiness” since “the greater the villain, the less does conscience plague him” (*Moral Mrongovius II*, 29:623; cf. *KpV* 5:38.18–22 and *Theory and Practice* 8:283n.29–35).<sup>20</sup> And Kant makes essentially the same point against those who defend God’s justice by claiming that the wicked are punished by their own consciences: it is a delusion to think that the workings of conscience provide for the harmony between virtue and happiness that would be needed to find justice in this world (*Theodicy*, 8:261).

If the eudaimonists are wrong and our happiness always depends on something other than virtuous activity, then it may turn out that the choices required by virtue will bring a misery to the agent that cannot be outweighed by virtue’s advantages. Kant embraces this conclusion. His examples illustrating the point often involve a prisoner being threatened with torture or death by a tyrant if she refuses to lie. What is most striking about these cases is that the harm that could be avoided by ignoring moral demands is *extreme*. But what is important about the martyrdom scenarios for our present purposes is instead that the resulting harm is *manifestly not outweighed by the advantages of virtue*. In these extraordinary cases, there is no room for debate about what the oblique consequences of honesty or dishonesty will be: in these cases, there is no need for

any deep understanding of psychology or the workings of the social or natural world to see that this prisoner will be worse off for having a virtuous disposition. Compare this with more ordinary tests of virtue, which involve threats to our own *reasoned plans* for happiness: I am tempted to lie just this once in order to secure the loan I need for my future success. In an ordinary case like this, virtue certainly does not have *manifestly* harmful consequences: my judgment that it would be disadvantageous to refrain from the lie assumes a great deal about how happiness can best be achieved in a complex natural and social world.<sup>21</sup> And, as we will see, Kant's view is that our judgments about what would make us happy are unreliable and that virtue is, in fact, rarely as disadvantageous as it might first seem.

In conceding to commonsense that a painful death is manifestly a harm that outweighs the benefits of virtue, Kant shows that he rejects the eudaimonist conceit that the virtuous sage is *necessarily* happy, that he *cannot* be harmed. Despite this, Kant actually accepts a central feature of the Stoic understanding of happiness and, consequently, also of the Stoic prescription for the attainment of happiness: we increase our chances for happiness to the degree that we are self-sufficient with respect to the satisfaction of our needs. And Kant also accepts the Stoic view that we can never gain an adequate control of what we need for our physical well-being. But Kant departs decisively from the Stoics by denying that we can renounce our pursuit of this elusive physical well-being and be satisfied solely with our own virtuous activity (or, in Kant's rendering, with the "blessedness" that would be its immediate effect). Kant draws the gloomy conclusion from all of this that we cannot expect happiness in this life, even as a reward for good behavior.<sup>22</sup>

This gloomy conclusion certainly distinguishes Kant's view from that of the Stoics. But we should not take Kant to mean that there is no happiness at all to be found in this life or that there is no better or worse way to approach the world when it comes to our happiness. Even if we can never have a complete control of what we require for our contentment, we can still *increase* that control. The obvious strategy for increasing this control would be to make the world conform to our wish and will as much as possible. This strategy is criticized by the Stoics as the strategy of

fools: we can never become happy this way since we can never master the external circumstances necessary to satisfy the desires we have. But once we reject as fantasy the Stoic ideal of a human happiness wholly independent of any external circumstances, then it is no longer clear what is foolish about this strategy: the Stoic's complaint then seems like it is really a complaint about the congenital misfortune of mankind.

A second strategy looks inward instead of outward: we can increase our control over the conditions for our contentment by restricting our desires to those that require the least cooperation of external circumstances or to those that have the best chance of being fulfilled. It seems commonsensical that there should be at least a limited role for such desire-restriction in a sensible plan for happiness. For example, I can spare myself unnecessary disappointment by expunging idle wishes for things that I cannot possibly achieve. More generally, it seems prudent to expunge desires that pose a greater risk to my happiness than their satisfaction promises in benefits. (I might weigh the probability and magnitude of reward I can expect from satisfying the desire against the toil, opportunity costs, anxiety, and the probability and magnitude of disappointment I can expect from aiming to satisfy it.) This calculation seems to imply that it would be a pathologically risk-averse form of imprudence to follow the Stoic prescription of ensuring, above all else, that I have desires whose satisfaction is in my control: if my focus is on minimizing the possibility of disappointment, I will forgo the rewards of satisfying desires whose satisfaction is out of my control. But risking disappointment seems to be the price one must pay for aiming at greater rewards. So we might be tempted to follow Nietzsche in considering this a prescription suited only to fearful weaklings and losers.

These strategies could be combined in varying proportions. But Kant's gloomy warning that we cannot attain happiness in this life suggests that he shares the Stoic view that we typically far overestimate our ability to control external circumstances: our attempts very often diminish rather than increase the control that we seek. Hence we will see that the second strategy is much closer to a Kantian prescription for happiness.<sup>23</sup> However, Kant's prescription is opposed to the Stoic view in one essential respect: it is a prescription for a *physical* well-being that remains

incomplete and precarious rather than for the perfect *intellectual* contentment of the Stoic sage. As we will see, Kant's prescription for happiness is best thought of as standing instead in the conceptually and historically closely related Cynic tradition of simplicity, which Kant associates not only with Diogenes (and occasionally Antisthenes), but also with Rousseau.

#### 4. Reason's "Weak and Deceptive" Guidance

Kant's claim that we cannot control the external circumstances that would bring us happiness makes its most famous appearance in the *Groundwork's* denial that the pursuit of happiness could be the natural purpose of human reason. The main claim there (setting aside Kant's larger aim in raising the question of the natural purpose of reason) is that reason gives us only "weak and deceptive guidance" in securing the satisfaction of our needs, "which to some extent it even multiplies," such that "the more a cultivated reason purposely occupies itself with the enjoyment of life, so much the further does one get away from true satisfaction." Thus Kant remarks (in a clear allusion to Rousseau's *First Discourse*) that those who pursue the arts and sciences "find that they have brought more trouble on themselves instead of gaining in happiness" and envy the common man who is closer to instinct; indeed, uncultivated instincts would be a much better guide to happiness than reason is (4:395–96).<sup>24</sup> This already indicates something important with respect to the possible conflict of morality and prudence: it is likely that we will not gain much in the way of happiness if we occupy ourselves with the pursuit happiness at the expense of morality.<sup>25</sup>

At least part of the background to Kant's claim that reason is an unreliable guide to happiness is his view that happiness is an ideal of the imagination rather than of reason (*GMS* 4:418–19; cf. *KU* 5:430, 232): although we all pursue the end of happiness under the nominal definition of "an absolute maximum of well-being in my present condition and in every future condition" (*GMS* 4:418), reason does not begin with its own idea of happiness, but is rather set with the *task* of

generating the single end of happiness from our manifold sensible inclinations.<sup>26</sup> This is why the agent “can never say determinately with himself what he really wishes and wills” (4:418)—not because of indecisiveness or a failure of introspection, but rather because one would have to be omniscient to know which inclinations and in which order would need to be satisfied in order to achieve that “maximum of well-being” and thus to know all the components that go into the whole of happiness. Indeed, there is no reason to think that the elements of such an aggregate even *could* cohere into such a whole.<sup>27</sup>

Kant’s stated conclusion from all this is that there are no rational “commands” or “precepts” regarding happiness, but only “empirical counsels” (*GMS* 4:418). This seems like an obvious point: we cannot discover what means we need to achieve happiness just by reflecting on our *idea* of happiness. But Kant draws a much stronger conclusion than this. We might think that goals such as wealth, intellectual improvement, a long life, or health are reliable, even if not infallible, means to happiness. But Kant claims that this is a mistake: all these goals are fraught with the potential to bring unhappiness. Even the seemingly innocuous goal of intellectual improvement has the potential to burden our desires with “still more needs” that will remain unfulfilled. Kant’s conclusion is thus not just that reason gives us mere *counsels* rather than *commands* regarding happiness; it is rather that we cannot count even seemingly prudent goals such as wealth, intellectual improvement, health, and a long life among the goals we are “counseled” by reason to pursue.

In coming to this conclusion, Kant seems to be relying implicitly on substantive views about our place in the complex natural and social worlds in which we act and how that place dooms to failure our typical plans for happiness. In keeping with such a reading, Kant’s own candidates for prudential counsels—introduced at this point of the *Groundwork* without any further discussion or evidence—are goals that seem to assume as little as possible about the course of the world: “regimen, frugality, courtesy, reserve, and so forth.” Counsels such as these do not instruct one how to best change *the world* for one’s own benefit, but rather instruct one how to change one’s own *attitude* or disposition in a way that suggests a maximum of caution in the face of the world’s

uncertainties. These more inward-looking goals are the only ones that experience shows are *always a good policy* to pursue.

The discussion of prudential “counsels” also hints (but only hints) at an essential part of Kant’s case against reason as a guide to happiness: that reason actually contributes to the problem of happiness by creating new needs. Kant says almost nothing about this dynamic in his major ethical works. One important source for an account of this dynamic is the brief *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*—which Kant acknowledges to be largely in agreement with Rousseau (8:116).<sup>28</sup> In that work, Kant outlines, under the guise of Biblical exegesis, the difference between an instinctual, natural being and a rational, free being. The human being as a natural being “did well for himself” (8:111). Through nascent reason, he was able to find gratification in things for which he had no instinctual drive—for example, a fruit that he could compare, with the aid of his imagination, to other things to which he was instinctually drawn (8:111–2). But rather than merely finding new *objects* to satisfy existing needs, reason thereby concocted *new desires* that eventually gave rise to “dispensable, even unnatural, inclinations under the name *luxury* [*Üppigkeit*]” (8:111). In this development, the human being discovers that, unlike animals, he must *choose for himself* a way of living, and he finds himself at a loss regarding this choice (8:112). The anxiety attending this choice is heightened by the fact that the being that has no instincts must also plan for the future—“the most inexhaustible source of cares and worries which the uncertain future incites and from which all animals are exempt” (8:113).<sup>29</sup>

The “garden” of innocence was a place of effortless safety; and when man leaves, he finds that “much worry, toil, and unknown ills are waiting for him” (8:114). But he finds this toil not because God has changed anything about nature—the Bible speaks of the ground being cursed with thorns and thistles—but rather on account of his unregulated desires, because he pursues “trumpery” and “trifles” (*Flitterwerk* and *Kleinigkeiten*) (8:115).<sup>30</sup> Even in exile from the garden, the human being drives himself ever further away from innocence: the farmer envies the simpler life of the nomadic herdsman “as more favored by heaven” (8:117), but the nomads eventually

let themselves be drawn into “the glittering misery of the towns” with their “soulless luxury in most abject slavery” (8:120).<sup>31</sup>

In the *Religion*, Kant identifies this corruption with the onset of the *passions*: by nature, the human being’s “needs are but limited, and his state of mind in providing for them moderate and tranquil”; but society occasions passions such as envy, lust for power, and lust for money (6:93). Human beings thereby “corrupt each other’s moral disposition and make one another evil” (6:94).<sup>32</sup> What Kant does not mention in the *Religion* is that these morally corrupt passions are also “pragmatically ruinous” to their possessors (*Anthropology*, 7:267): a passion is a kind of tyrannical inclination that “prevents reason from comparing it with the sum of all inclinations in respect to a certain choice” (7:265; cf. *Reflexion* 6610 [1764–1770]) and thus leads reason away from what might actually make us happy.

In the *Conjectural Beginning* essay, Kant mentions a second essential point only in passing: that our dissatisfaction is tied to others’ opinions of us and our relative standing with respect to others (8:113). Kant goes even further in the *Religion*: “only in comparison with others does one judge oneself to be happy or unhappy [*glücklich oder unglücklich*]” (6:27).<sup>33</sup> Kant suggests that our tendency to compare ourselves with others when it comes to happiness is itself “purely psychological” without any necessary moral implications (*Anthropology*, 7:238). But from this comparative self-love “originates the inclination to gain worth in the opinion of others” (6:27). And this inclination is powerful enough that it can easily become one of the passions that make us lose sight of our own happiness.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, the *only* objects of our passions are other people (*Anthropology*, 7:268.6–7, 270.3–5). (This social conception of passions is also suggested by the mention of “envy” in the discussion of the dissatisfactions accompanying the pursuit of wealth as a rejected candidate for a “counsel” of prudence.)

This point, developed in detail by Rousseau, has obvious implications for the development of vice. But what is essential to note about it here is that the account of the relative and comparative nature of our conception of happiness provides a framework within which we can understand why we do not remain satisfied with simplicity, but rather develop new needs (for the

“trumpery” and “luxury” of the *Conjectural Beginnings*) and hence new dissatisfactions.<sup>35</sup> Kant illustrates this point in lectures from the 1770s:

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The greatest source of fortune and misfortune [*des Glücks oder Ünglucks*], of comfort and discomfort, of delight and displeasure, lies in the relationship to other people. For if everyone in the town is eating poor fare together, I eat the same poor fare with gratification and a cheerful soul, whereas if everyone were well off and I alone in sorry circumstances, I would deem it a misfortune. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:366–7)

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<ext>

If I alone have poor fare to eat, and everyone else is eating well, then it offends me, and I am jealous of them about it; but if nobody in the whole town has anything better, then I am gratified. ... We find our place in the relations between things and not in the things themselves. We are jealous because others are more fortunate [*glücklicher*] than we are. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:438–9)

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In this way, reason’s expansion and multiplication of natural desires makes happiness more difficult to attain by requiring that I satisfy not just my simple, natural needs, e.g. for nutrition, but rather the more expansive conception of my well-being that I form by looking to the examples set by others: “He is poor (or considers himself so) only to the extent that he is anxious that other human beings will consider him poor and will despise him for it” (*Religion* 6:93). Once I understand my own happiness in this way, I cannot be satisfied with having a merely equal standing with others on account of the constant threat that others will surpass me (6:27). Within this social dynamic, my needs are potentially limitless.

## 5. Kant's Moderate Cynicism

For Kant, this competitive social dynamic is part of the inevitable history of mankind. But Kant nevertheless allows the individual enough freedom to reflect on this dynamic and—like the ancient philosophers—to find a measure of happiness in spite of it. According to the ordinary foolish outlook, our satisfaction depends on external circumstances that we must master if we are to have any chance of happiness. But the philosophic disposition requires that we master only *ourselves*:

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[A]ll our fortune or misfortune [*Glück oder Unglück*] depends on ourselves and on the way our minds accept the situation. If we consider the happiness of this life, which consists only in a delusion, and where often the beggar at the gate is happier than the king on his throne; if we assess the nullity of this happiness in view of the shortness of life; if we notice how a great misfortune at which everyone shudders can be borne nonetheless once it has already befallen us; ... we then see that there is much we can do without with magnanimity and amid all ills may still exhibit a resolute and cheerful soul. ... God ... has furnished us with all the materials for our comfort. The man who is in misery, but bears it with a composed and cheerful heart—who thinks nothing of it because it is simply there and cannot be altered—is not miserable: the miserable man is he who thinks himself to be miserable. ... It is up to us to put ourselves into a certain mood, which is a voluntarily chosen disposition, whereby we contemplate the world and its fates, and from which we pass judgment upon them. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, with variations from *Kaehler*, 27:367)

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By means of this attitude—discussed under the heading “self-mastery” or “autocracy”—we gain a measure of control over the conditions of our satisfaction and thus approximate the self-sufficiency that makes happiness possible.

For Kant, this philosophic attitude is not the unattainable ideal of the Stoics, but rather entirely practicable. He attributes his own tendency toward hypochondria to his “flat and narrow chest,” but claims that his philosophic attitude provides him with relief:

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[B]y reflecting that, if the cause of this oppression of the heart was purely mechanical, nothing could be done about it, I soon came to pay no attention to it. The result was that, while I felt the oppression in my chest, a calm and cheerful state prevailed in my mind, . . . . . The oppression has remained with me, for its cause lies in my physical constitution. But I have mastered its influence on my thoughts and actions by diverting my attention from this feeling, as if it had nothing to do with me. (*The Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:104)

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Kant notes in this vein that we overestimate the suffering of others “even though they could easily endure it,” adding that that this overestimation is actually salutary insofar as it is “a great antidote to selfishness” (*Remarks*, 20:9.19).

These passages highlight one form this philosophic disposition can take: we can decide to endure an unavoidable discomfort, thus remaining cheerful in circumstances where we would otherwise be downcast. A second form of this philosophic disposition involves a more radical reshaping of our agency. Instead of mastering our *reaction* to unavoidable discomfort, we master our *desires* or inclinations: “He must curb his inclination to things that he cannot have or can obtain only with much trouble, and then he is independent of them” (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:392). This more active expression of the philosophic disposition is central to Kant’s

prescription for happiness since it represents a positive antidote to the principal cause of our unhappiness, namely the unnatural desires for luxuries and status that arise within the competitive social dynamic.

We have seen that attaining independence from external circumstances by curbing one's desires is a goal central to the Stoic prescription for happiness (and virtue). But Kant makes clear here that he rejects as unattainable the Stoic ideal of a *complete* independence of external circumstances: "man has a source of happiness in himself; this cannot, indeed, consist in the fact that he acquires complete independence of all needs and external causes, yet it may be such that he requires little" (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:392). Kant endorses a Cynic version of the goal of self-sufficiency.

The Cynic recognizes reason's "weak and deceptive" guidance when it comes to our plans for satisfying our desires by controlling external circumstances, and hence he aims to alter his own disposition rather than those external circumstances. Like the Stoic, then, the Cynic aims at altering only what is in his own power, namely his own mood and activity. But unlike the Stoic, the Cynic denies that happiness can be achieved through his own efforts alone. Kant thus tells us that according to the Cynic ideal of "wise simplicity," the highest good (as the union of virtue and happiness) is "a thing of nature, not art": the Cynic aims to alter his own disposition in a way that allows *nature* to provide for his needs. The Cynic's ideal is thus the "man of nature" who is happy since his merely natural needs are easily satisfied. Kant remarks:

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Diogenes has much in his favor, for the accumulation of means and gifts of nature multiplies our needs; for the more means we have, the more our needs are augmented, and the appraisal of the human being grows toward greater satisfaction such that the mind is always uneasy. Rousseau, that subtle Diogenes, also maintained that our will would be good by nature, but that we always

become corrupted; that nature would have provided us with everything, but that we create new needs for ourselves. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:248–9)<sup>36</sup>

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Kant praises such a Cynic prescription for happiness throughout his career. In notes from the 1760s, Kant remarks: “The art of doing without, that is, not letting inclinations germinate in oneself, is the means to happiness; hence one can either seek honor, that is, earn the praiseworthy opinion of others, or strive to do without it completely and be indifferent toward it” (*Remarks*, 20:70 = *Bemerkungen*, 55). And in lecture notes from the 1790s, Kant remarks that the view that happiness is the sole highest good “would be preferable on the system of Diogenes, even for the Epicurean, since there is more pleasure in doing without than in the burden of all the means acquired for the purpose” (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 27:484).<sup>37</sup>

In explaining this prescription for happiness, Kant notes that when we consider what to pursue, we distinguish those things that seem indispensable from those things that we *want* to have, but that we do not really *need* to have. Kant calls the former the “means of need and of bare necessity” (*Mittel der Bedürfnis und der Nothdurft*), and the latter mere “means of comfort” (or “amenity,” *i.e.*, *Mittel der Annehmlichkeit*; or, in the *Kaehler* notes, “of leisure,” *i.e.*, *der Gemächlichkeit*) (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:393).<sup>38</sup> The “true needs of life” are the bare necessities we really cannot do without, such as clothing or food. In addition to these true needs, there are many other “pseudo-needs” (*Scheinbedürfnisse*), which we treat *as if* we cannot live without, even though they really ought to be considered mere means of comfort (394). The basic thought here is that, as natural creatures, we are subject to conditions that “absolutely demand satisfaction,” but that we must not “let anything become a need that nature does not necessarily require to be such: all the rest are the comforts of life.” If we let these mere comforts become needs, then “the want of these objects becomes an ill for us” (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* 27:648).<sup>39</sup>

Kant summarizes his prescription for happiness with the following account of the philosophic attitude:

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we must accustom ourselves to a resolute endurance of all discomforts—that is not yet misfortune. Hence, in regard to delicacies, we should get used to dispensing with them, and in regard to discomforts, to suffering them. The ancients expressed this when they said: *sustine et abstine*. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:393)

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The principle *sustine et abstine*—“*Leide und meide*” or “bear and forbear,” i.e., to endure one’s fate and to do without—captures the two forms of the philosophic attitude introduced above. Following tradition, Kant identifies the principle *sustine et abstine* as Stoic.<sup>40</sup> But Kant gives the *abstine* a distinctly Cynic interpretation.<sup>41</sup> And throughout his career, Kant endorses the principle, so understood, as prescription for happiness. Thus in his earliest set of notes on anthropology, he describes the double principle as “the way to be happy [*glücklich*] by negative means” (*Reflexion* 191 [1764–69], 15:71.2–3). And in his very last set of notes, Kant equates the negative aspect of the “doctrine of happiness” (*Glückseligkeitslehre*) with *sustine et abstine* (*Opus postumum*, 23:298.6–8 = *Reflexion* 1552, 15:974.9–11).<sup>42</sup>

Although Kant gives a Cynic interpretation to this Stoic principle, he nevertheless complains that Diogenes himself “overdid the duty of doing without to the point of subordinating thereto everything that can easily be acquired under all circumstances, for example, convenience of habitation, nourishment of the body, etc.” (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 27:650). Diogenes’ own life thus exemplifies the kind of “morose” or “monkish” virtue that Kant rejects. Obscured somewhat by Kant’s criticism here, however, is the fundamental point of agreement: the prescription for happiness requires that we limit our needs to those that are easily satisfied. Kant’s complaint against Diogenes is that even if we accept this prescription, there is no purpose

in punishing ourselves by denying ourselves, as Diogenes did, what can be easily acquired.<sup>43</sup> Nor should we deny ourselves even what might be more difficult to acquire:

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We ought not deprive ourselves of all comforts and pleasures, and enjoy none whatever; ... we must only enjoy these things in such a way that we can also do without them and do not turn them into needs. ... We ought not to impose discomforts on ourselves, invite all ills, and punish ourselves with chastisements; that is a monkish virtue, which differs from the philosophic attitude, which goes cheerfully to meet those ills that befall us and are unavoidable; for in the end, after all, everything can be endured. So here the *sustine et abstine* is taken not as a discipline [*Disciplin*], but as a willingness to do without them and not turn them into needs.

(*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:393)

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Therefore, the pragmatically “allowable pleasures” (27:392) include the comforts of life when enjoyed *as comforts* rather than needs, that is, when they provide more than the mere negative contentment accompanying this satisfaction of (whatever we take to be) our needs.<sup>44</sup>

Kant’s discussion of wealth (*Vermögen*, *Reichstum*) in his lectures of the 1770s provides an interesting example of his moderate Cynic attitude to external goods. On the one hand, wealth makes us independent of others since the wealthy do not have to serve or beg from others, but rather can get others to willingly serve them. This praise of wealth seems to mark a stark departure from the Stoic and Cynics: for the Stoics even slavery was not an ill, and begging was part of Diogenes’ lifestyle of simplicity.<sup>45</sup> But Kant adds that pursuing wealth as a cure for the dependence associated with poverty can easily become worse than the disease:

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But because money makes us independent, we at length come to depend on money, and since money makes us free of others, it enslaves us once more to itself. . . . Wealth ennobles merely the conditions of person, but not the person himself. Hence contempt for wealth is noble to the understanding, but wealth is noble in appearance. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:398–9)

</ext>

We should not avoid wealth and throw away our possessions, but if we consider our wealth to be an indispensable need, we will lose our self-sufficiency.

If following the Stoic principle is a reliable means to happiness, then we should expect that prudential reason will “counsel” not the pursuit of wealth, but rather the *sustine et abstine*. Indeed, the first of the candidates for the “empirical counsels of prudence” that Kant lists in the *Groundwork* discussion is “regimen” (*Diät*)—a term that Kant elsewhere associates especially with the Stoic double principle (e.g. at *MdS* 6:484–85; *Reflexion* 1540 [1799], 15:965.10–11; and *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:100.33). Kant’s second empirical counsel, that of “frugality,” is obviously closely aligned with the Stoic/Cynic *abstine*. The remaining counsels, “of politeness, reserve, etc.,” seem not to have any direct connection with the Stoic principle, but are nevertheless aligned with it in the minimal sense that they concern not the pursuit of any of the external “gifts of fortune” that might be considered general means to happiness (power, riches, honor, or health), but rather the cultivation of certain internal qualities of mind.<sup>46</sup>

If Kant intends us to count the Stoic double principle among the “empirical counsels,” then we can take him to mean it is always prudent to adhere to the principle. Of course, to say that it is *always prudent* to adhere to the principle does not imply that adhering to the principle will *guarantee* happiness. And it is also important to note that Kant does not intend the Stoic principle to be a *complete* prescription for happiness. But it is a *necessary* prescription, since we can be sure that without it our ever-expanding desires will leave us discontented. Kant thus sometimes speaks of it as a “negative” prescription, and this fits with his view that the

prescription lacks any reference to the comforts of life permitted by the prescription, comforts which add something positive to our lack of discontentment.

A complete account the Kantian prescription for happiness is beyond the scope of this paper. But before turning in the next section to how all of this relates to our consideration of the harmony of virtue and happiness, it is worth considering one more way that the Stoic principle, and with it the Cynic ideal of simplicity, is an incomplete prescription for happiness. Kant tells us that, by itself, simplicity is a merely passive ideal that would recommend a “pure enjoyment of a carefree life, dreamt away in laziness or frittered away in childish play” (*Conjectural Beginning*, 8:122). Kant of course has moral objections to such an idle life of enjoyment—which he imagines to be the life of “South Sea Islanders” (*Conjectural Beginning*, 8:122; *GMS* 4:423) or the Caribs of the West Indies (*Anthropology*, 7:233n). But he also claims that we cannot return to such a state of idle innocence, at least in part because we cannot *want* to return: the ideal of mere enjoyment is at odds with “reason’s reminder that [the human being] should give his life its worth through actions” (*Conjectural Beginning*, 8:122). We cannot be happy without doing and accomplishing something: “one’s life becomes cheerful more through what we freely *do* with life than through what we *enjoy* as a gift from it” (*The Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:104; cf. *Anthropology*, 7:238.1–9). It is in this spirit that Kant identifies “the highest physical good” with *resting after work* (*Anthropology*, 276.2–5; cf. 7:234.29–34, 7:238.1–9).

Kant gives some content to this view in lectures, where he claims that a happiness “without any desires consisting merely in enjoyment [*Genuss*]” is not an ideal for a human being; “he would be completely lacking in any incentives to action, since incentives consist in desires.” Speaking of the ideal of mere enjoyment, Kant remarks: “It would not occur to any human being who is aware of the powers and impulses in himself toward activity to exchange his state for this supposed happiness, even if he had to struggle with all sorts of discomforts” (*Religionslehre Pölitz*, 28:1080).<sup>47</sup> The crude state of simplicity is, accordingly, not a “golden age” at all, but rather an age where men had few needs but were lazy (since they did not need to work) and hence lived liked monkeys instead of human beings. The true golden age is instead the (future)

cultured age of humanity. Our misfortune is to live in our own “middle” and “worst” age—the corrupt age of luxury in which we have lost the contentment of the state of natural innocence without having yet realized the truly human form of happiness that is possible for beings who are active under laws of freedom rather living according to instinct (*Anthropologie Mrongovius*, 25:1417).<sup>48</sup>

As far as our happiness in this life is concerned, then, it is not enough to seek a negative independence from things and other people simply by limiting our desires. We must rather gain satisfaction from *our activity*, but maintain our independence in the process:

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One who wishes to sit down in peace and free himself from all work neither feels nor enjoys his life at all; but so far as he is active, he feels that he is alive, and only so far as he is industrious can he be contented. . . . When work is executed there is a feeling of satisfaction of which nobody is capable save he who has done the work. (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:396)<sup>49</sup>

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The satisfaction from work that Kant describes here is a relatively self-sufficient one insofar as one’s own work itself is not an object of competition in the way wealth, power, or honor are: one derives a satisfaction from *oneself* insofar as “in spite of all difficulties one has nevertheless completed the work” (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:396). We might say, then, that for Kant *sustine et abstine* does not give a positive *content* to the idea of happiness, but rather gives it a philosophic *form* in which our activity can be consistent with contentment: “we display autocracy by keeping our mind active and effective under the burden of work, but being content with whatever the work may be” (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:366).

We can summarize this section by saying that Kant’s prescription for happiness is for an active life of purposeful work protected from discontent by the moderate Cynic *sustine et abstine*. This prescription for happiness builds on the ancient notion, stressed by the

eudaimonists above all others, that happiness is attained through self-sufficiency or independence rather than through a vain pursuit of wealth, power, or honors that leads to the generation of new needs rather than to contentment or tranquility. It is in the spirit of this ideal that the elderly Kant offers his summary pragmatic advice to a young person:

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get fond of work; deny [*versagen*] yourself enjoyments, not to *renounce* [*entsagen*] them, but rather to keep them always in perspective as far as possible! Do not dull your receptivity to enjoyments by savoring them prematurely! The maturity of age, which never lets us regret having done without a single physical enjoyment, will guarantee, even in this sacrifice, a capital of contentment that is independent of either chance or the laws of nature. (*Anthropology*, 7:237)

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## 6. Cynic Happiness and Virtue

In many respects, Kant's account of the content of a virtuous life is a traditional one. From that point of view, it is not at all surprising that Kant follows other moralists in adopting the popular Stoic principle "*sustine, abstine*." But what might seem surprising is that Kant recommends a principle popular with *moralists* as a prescription for *happiness*. After all, what Kant is most keen to criticize in the ancient eudaimonists and their modern counterparts is their confusion of the principles of happiness and of morality. Consequently, one might easily imagine that Kant would consider the Stoic view that "*sustine, abstine*" doubles as a prescription for happiness to be a delusion concocted in order to force morality and happiness into an unnatural union. Put differently, one might easily imagine that Kant would think that valuing external goods such as

wealth, power, and honor above all others is not *foolish* at all (that is the just eudaimonists' delusion), but rather quite *prudent*; that Kant would criticize the pursuit of such goods not as *imprudent*, but rather simply as *evil*; and thus that he would think that it is *morality alone* that requires us to give up such an ambitious plan for happiness and to limit our pursuit of happiness to something more modest. I have tried to show that Kant is very far from adopting such a stance toward happiness. On Kant's view, it is not morality alone that prevents us from pursuing the ambitious form of happiness imagined to lie in the satisfaction of unrestrained desires: prudence itself requires the pursuit of a more modest, and more morally benign, form of happiness.

It is certainly true that this alignment of the ends of virtue and our own worldly happiness depends upon the revisionary conception of happiness suggested by the *sustine et abstine*. For that reason, we might wonder whether the happiness that Kant aligns with morality really answers to the need for happiness that is part of our human nature. But we have seen that Kant is insistent not only that the more ambitious plan for happiness is self-defeating, but also that this modest form of happiness can include the positive comforts of life: the *sustine et abstine* should be understood as requiring not a monkish self-denial but rather the pursuit of the satisfaction of our inclinations under the guidance of the regimen that protects us from the discontent associated with the unrestrained desires associated especially with the civilized state.

Nevertheless, there is one area of life where the regimen might seem to demand more than is possible for us: it seems to demand that one treat one's loved ones, one's own children even, among the things that one is prepared to do without, as mere comforts whose loss one would not count as a misfortune.<sup>50</sup> Such an attitude of Stoic detachment toward loved ones would certainly guard against various temptations to commit evil on their behalf, while simultaneously protecting one from an important source of potential misery and thus present anxiety. In that regard, it could be said to exemplify the harmony between virtue and happiness afforded by the Stoic principle. Kant himself would presumably embrace this point. This is not to say that he denies that we have an inclination to benefit our children. To the contrary, he identifies it as an aspect of the self-love that is an original predisposition in human nature and which, as such, cannot be eradicated

(*Religion* 6:26, 28). But such an inclination can nevertheless be “curbed” so that it harmonizes with other inclinations rather than growing into an affect (6:58). And this is consistent with positively cultivating this inclination in various ways: the attitude of detachment is consistent not only with a sympathetic will to share in the *feelings* of others but also with a “coldblooded” love, the opposite of callousness, that does not forfeit one’s self-sufficiency since it finds its pleasure in *promoting*, rather than in passively *contemplating*, the well-being of others.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, even conceding the impossibility of such a Stoic detachment from one’s own children need not threaten the basic strategy for preserving a harmony between virtue and happiness. Recall that Kant rejects the Stoic view that virtue *guarantees* happiness (which would suppose that we can forgo *all* needs) in favor of the view that cases of manifest conflict between virtue and prudence are possible but *rare* (e.g. in martyrdom scenarios). One will certainly *expand* opportunities for such conflicts if one adds the needs of others to the needs one considers essential to one’s own happiness. But these are not the sort of “pseudo-needs” that Kant identifies as especially dangerous to our happiness (and virtue). An attachment to one’s children is rooted in a “mechanical” or physical self-love rather than in the sort of self-love that involves *comparison* and that requires *reason* (6:26–27); in short, it is not the sort of attachment that gives rise to the passions within a pathological social dynamic—although it can certainly be infected by such passions.

The conception of happiness that remains on the moderate Cynic view is thus one that we can recognize as a *human* ideal. In comparison with the more ambitious, socially mediated ideal of happiness, it tightly restricts what we may count as a need. But it recognizes that the satisfaction of some needs (the “natural” ones) is indispensable for happiness and also allows for a full enjoyment of the comforts of life. Kant’s moderate Cynic conception of happiness is thus well-suited to accommodate Schiller’s demand that virtue involve “grace” or reason’s harmony with, rather than oppression of, our sensible inclinations. Kant tells us in this connection that virtue is “*beneficent* in its consequences” such that “the glorious picture of humanity [*Menschheit*], as portrayed in the figure of virtue, does allow the attendance of the graces, who, however, maintain

a respectful distance when duty alone is at issue” (*Religion*, 6:23–24n).<sup>52</sup> Kant provides some further content to this thought in his discussion of “the highest moral-physical good” of “humanity” (*Humanität*) that is achieved in the union of “social good living” and virtue exemplified by “a good meal in good company” (7:278–280; cf. 242).<sup>53</sup> Although the rules for hosting a dinner party may seem trivial, Kant notes:

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Nevertheless, anything that promotes sociability, even if it consists only in pleasing maxims or manners, is a garment that dresses virtue to advantage, a garment which is also to be recommended in a serious respect. — The  *cynic’s purism* and the  *anchorite’s mortification of the flesh* without social good living are distorted forms of virtue which do not make virtue inviting; rather, being forsaken by the graces, they can make no claim to humanity. (*Anthropology*, 7:282)

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Virtue does not presuppose monkishness, and the harmony between virtue and happiness does not presuppose a monkish conception of happiness.

It is not an accident that, on Kant’s view, the end of happiness aligns with the end of morality. We have seen that Kant adopts a diagnosis of the causes of unhappiness as well as a prescription for happiness that are influenced in an essential way by ancient ideals of the independence and self-sufficiency achieved through self-mastery. But what we have not so far noted is the more familiar point that Kant characterizes virtue in terms of the same set of ideals. Indeed, Kant marks off the whole topic of virtue by telling us that virtue requires “governing” one’s passions and “subduing” one’s affects (*MdS* 6:407-409) and thus “self-mastery” or “autocracy.”<sup>54</sup> Such a self-mastery is required for extirpating the “not merely *pragmatically* ruinous but also *morally* reprehensible” passions (*Anthropology*, 7:267). Kant thus appeals to the same family of ancient ideals centered around freedom and self-sufficiency when he remarks in this context about virtue: “Only in its possession is he free, healthy, rich, a king, and so forth and can suffer no loss

by chance or fate, since he is in possession of himself and the virtuous man cannot lose his virtue” (*MdS* 6:405).<sup>55</sup>

The close connection between the problem of happiness and the problem of morality is not surprising once we consider Kant’s appropriation of an essentially Rousseauian account of corruption in terms of the social dynamic of desires: for Rousseau, as for Kant, our unhappiness and our vice have a common origin in our pathological social relations. Given this common origin, it is not surprising that there is a large degree of overlap, and even a *harmony*, between the demands of Kant’s pure law of morality and prudential demands understood in the moderate Cynic way.

Kant of course *does* reject as a confusion the Cynic version of eudaimonism, according to which the ‘*abstine*’ doubles as the moral imperative. It is easy to see how that confusion arises: “if one has no needs, one also has no desires, and then our actions coincide with morality; for such a person it costs nothing extra to be honest” (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:249). For the Cynic sage who masters his desires in this way, honesty is not rooted in a calculation that honesty will serve his advantage through the maintenance of a hypocritical public reputation or in any other kind of self-interested calculation. Nor is his honesty rooted in the kind of sympathetic feeling for others that Kant says might warrant encouragement but not moral esteem. In short, his honesty seems like something Kant might be tempted to call “moral.” Despite this, Kant tells us in his discussion of the good will in the *Groundwork* that the ancients were wrong to offer unconditional praise to “moderation in affects and passions, self-mastery, and calm reflection” even if, as he allows there, these qualities “are conducive to this good will itself and can make its work much easier” (4:393–94). In a relevant passage from the lecture notes, Kant explains that self-mastery and self-sufficiency allow us to attain our ends without hindrance, yet can do so for ends that can be either morally good or morally bad (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 27:653.17–29). In the *Groundwork*, Kant goes even further by suggesting regarding moderation and self-mastery that “without the principles of a good will they can become extremely evil” (4:394).

It is not clear how the Cynic sage could become Kant's coldblooded "scoundrel" (*Bösewicht*) (*GMS*, 4:394) without first abandoning his simplicity and hence his self-mastery. Kant mentions the potential for corruption in the merely good or innocent (4:390.2–6; 4:404.37–405.5).

However, his deeper complaint against the Cynic is not so much a *prediction* that his simplicity will give way to corruption, but instead (like the complaint against self-mastery more generally) that the ideal of simplicity lacks any moral content: Diogenes was merely "good without virtue" (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 29:603; cf. *Remarks*, 20:11.12–13 = *Bemerkungen*, 14).<sup>56</sup> While the Cynic supposed that simplicity was a *sufficient* condition for virtue, "morality belongs to it quite necessarily as a distinct foundation" (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 27:484).

Nevertheless, Kant's denial of unconditional praise to the self-mastery or autocracy associated with the Stoic regimen does not prevent him from depicting such a regimen as at least a *necessary* condition for virtue: "A man cannot fulfill his duties if he cannot dispense with everything, since otherwise the inducements of the senses overwhelm him; he cannot be virtuous if he is not resolute [*standhaft*] in misfortune" (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:395).<sup>57</sup> Thus, while we have seen that Kant speaks of the Stoic double principle as a regimen for happiness and even for bodily health, he also conceives the principle as a regimen for *moral* health or *moral* self-preservation—the object of our duties of omission to ourselves—under the Stoic principle "live in conformity with nature" (*MdS* 6:419).<sup>58</sup> The cultivation of virtue or "moral ascetics" even "takes as its motto the Stoic saying *to put up with* the misfortunes of life that may happen and *to do without* its superfluous pleasures" (6:484). This Stoic regimen is the means to extirpating the passions and hence the regimen necessary for forming a properly moral "character" (*Pedagogy*, 9:486.34–487.3; cf. 499.5–10).<sup>59</sup> What passages like these highlight is that the Stoic regimen does not merely make it easier to conform to the standard of external *behavior* required by duty (*virtus phaenomenon*); it is instead closely linked to the exercise of virtue itself (*virtue noumenon*).

In lectures, Kant distinguishes merely pragmatic self-mastery from "the true self-mastery," which is "moral in character" and in which "laws [of morality] hold categorical sway over

sensibility” (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:360–61; cf. *Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 27:653.25–30). As Kant draws the distinction, we exhibit pragmatic self-mastery in the execution of *any* prudential imperative since that involves subordinating some inclinations to others under a rule of the understanding. (Kant’s example is getting out of bed when one wants to sleep late.) This ability is morally significant since virtue requires the strength to carry out one’s good maxims (*Religion*, 6:29). But we should not expect this ability to capture Kant’s prescription for happiness: we do not approximate the ancient ideals of self-mastery and self-sufficiency merely by engaging in practical reasoning at all. It is instead, Kant tells us, the “true,” *moral* self-mastery that is associated with the ancient ideals of self-sufficient happiness, tranquility, resolute cheerfulness, and apathy (27:366–68). And this claim suggests that Kant considers only the *moral* form of self-mastery under the guidance of the categorical imperative to be the source of the independence and self-sufficiency associated with happiness.

Kant does in fact suggest in one late note that “the doctrine of happiness,” whose “negative aspect” is the Stoic *sustine et abstine*, actually “presupposes morality.”<sup>60</sup> If that is indeed Kant’s view, it would not be the Stoic view that morality itself makes us happy, but rather the Cynic view that the virtuous disposition is the one in which our non-moral needs can be easily satisfied since they are the simple needs of nature. Such a view certainly answers the worry about the compatibility of the demands of morality with our nature as happiness-seekers: pursuing morality is necessary for attaining happiness. However, nothing Kant says seems to justify the strong conclusion that the Stoic regimen could be fully effective as a *pragmatic* principle only if it were itself guided by the categorical imperative. Indeed, although Kant criticizes Diogenes’ regimen for lacking moral content, he never suggests that this marks a defect in the regimen’s pragmatic effectiveness as well. More generally, we would need some further reason to deny that we could successfully pursue the Stoic regimen on strictly prudential grounds.

Nevertheless, Kant does not need to maintain that the Stoic regimen actually presupposes morality in order to have an adequate answer to the worry about the compatibility of the demands of morality with our human nature. Kant’s account of happiness shows that the

requirements for morality are in many ways harmonious with the requirements for prudence, even revolving around the same set of ideals involving the extirpation of passions through self-mastery and hence independence or freedom. And this is enough for us to establish that the pessimistic scenario does not hold and thus that the demands of morality do not require me to abandon my hopes for happiness in this life. We are entitled to this hope not because morality allows me wide latitude in pursuit of my private ends, but rather because prudence itself—when understood in the proper, moderate Cynic way—limits my ambitions in a way that allows the end of happiness to be in harmony with the end of virtue.

It is true, of course, that on Kant's view we can never thoroughly *like* fulfilling the law in the way a holy being would: we experience the demands of morality instead as a humbling blow to our self-conceit. But we have seen that we can understand this as much more a blow to our inevitable plans for the *illusory* happiness we seek in competition with others than it is for happiness itself. Indeed, by striking down the pursuit of that illusory form of happiness, morality seems to offer a positive benefit to those who do not or cannot adopt the philosophic attitude to happiness on pragmatic grounds. Unlike the benefit to his business that the shopkeeper can expect from his honest dealing (*GMS* 4:397), this is a benefit one gains only by *really* being moral, that is, by *really* subordinating one's pursuit of happiness to morality and not just by *acting* as if one did.<sup>61</sup> Kant's moderate Cynicism does not, of course, *guarantee* that I will be happier if I am virtuous. Nor does it guarantee that I could not pursue a successful strategy for happiness without any concern for morality at all. Nevertheless, it does show that, on Kant's own view, there is a very deep sense in which the pursuit of morality is compatible with our nature as finite beings who necessarily seek happiness.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kant's works are generally cited according to volume, page, and (where useful) line numbers from *Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (AA). For his *Reflexionen* (handwritten notes), I also provide the editorial number (and, where useful, the approximate date) given in Volumes 14–19

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of AA. *The Critique of Pure Reason* (*KrV*) is cited according to the pagination of the first (A) and second (B) editions. I use the translations listed in the Bibliography (all from the Cambridge series of translations), but I have sometimes made minor changes to these translations and have provided my own where none was available. Translations of many of the *Reflexionen* can be found in Kant, *Notes and Fragments*.

<sup>2</sup> “Now if the Kantian moral system, in its original strictness, neither conceded that virtue makes the human being happy ... nor allowed one to pay any heed to external rewards—Kantian ethics in this form, I say, destroys all incentives that can move the human being to act *at all* and hence all incentives that can move him to act *virtuously*” (Christian Garve, *Uebersicht*, 377-378; also see Bernd Ludwig, “Kant, Garve, and the Motives of Moral Action,” 188). This complaint is obviously closely related to Friedrich Schiller’s oft-discussed jest that one should aim to despise one’s friends to ensure that one is virtuous in serving them. (See H. J. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, 48–50; Allen Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, 28–30; *Kantian Ethics*, 281n4; A. M. Baxley, “The Beautiful Soul and the Autocratic Agent”; Jens Timmerman, *Commentary*, 152–154; and Henry Allison, *Commentary*, 107–120). Hegel appears to have Schiller’s jest in mind when he derides the “empty assertion” that “in volition, objective and subjective ends are mutually exclusive,” an assertion that “produces a view of morality as a perennial and hostile struggle against one’s own satisfaction” (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right* §124 and Remark). Against this assertion, Hegel notes: “There is nothing degrading about being alive, and we do not have the alternative of existing in a higher spirituality” (§123, Addition).

<sup>3</sup> Compare Christian Garve’s wry remark (in his famous review of Kant’s first *Critique*) that the Kantian view that the mere *worthiness* to be happy is the fundamental value in the world will be “less evident to many readers than some of the propositions that that author’s critique has rejected” (“Garve Review,” 76; quoted in Allison, *Commentary*, 57).

<sup>4</sup> This is H. J. Paton’s epistemic “method of isolation” (*The Categorical Imperative*, 47–49). Also see Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment*, 13–19; Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom*, 111; Allison, *Commentary*, 106–120; and Baron, *Kantian Ethics Almost without Apology*, 148–49. For skepticism about this particular line of interpretation, see Guyer, *Kant on Freedom, Law and Happiness*, 291; and Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, 27–29. (Significantly, both Guyer and

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Wood nevertheless affirm that Kantian moral demands are not in themselves demands to neglect the pursuit of one's own happiness.)

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Wood, "Kant versus Eudaimonism," 278; Baxley, *Kant's Theory of Virtue*, 77; and Allison, *Commentary*, 157n24. Thus Kant claims it "quite contradicts my assertions" to attribute to him, as Garve does, the view that the virtuous person does not strive to be happy (*Theory and Practice* 8:281).

<sup>6</sup> Without explicitly addressing this challenge, Gary Watson and Allen Wood also claim that for Kant the moral life offers us at least as good a chance at happiness as a life that subordinates moral concerns to the pursuit of happiness. I discuss their interpretations below (especially in note 26). Although I will not discuss the point here, Kant is clearly concerned with the same question from the point of view of a theodicy. See *Theodicy* 8:261–62.

<sup>7</sup> The text of the student lecture notes clearly reflects Kant's own views in general terms, but cannot be taken to be perfectly accurate. For that reason, I rely upon the notes principally to reinforce and elucidate views expressed in published works rather than as a wholly independent source of information on Kant's views. For extremely useful information on the lecture notes, see Naragon, *Kant in the Classroom*.

<sup>8</sup> On the relation between blessedness and happiness, see e.g. *Reflexion* 6117 [1783–88], 18:460; *KpV* 5:128–9; *MdS* 6:387; and *Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius*, 27:644. Baumgarten (*Metaphysica* §787) claims that the happiness (*felicitas* or *Glückseligkeit*) of finite beings consists in a combination of physical well-being (*prosperitas* or *gutes Glück, Wohlfahrt*) and blessedness (*beatitudo* or *Seligkeit*), where blessedness is defined as the perfection posited in the soul through ethical goods (*bona moralia* or *sittliche Güter*). Baumgarten anticipates some of Kant's substantive views on happiness here when he claims that the ethical goods that bring blessedness depend proximally on our own agency or freedom, with the implication that the strictly physical goods of fortune (*bona prospera* or *Glücksgüter*) are not wholly within our control. This can be compared to Aristotle's view that although happiness can be defined in terms of the "activity of soul exhibiting virtue," happiness "needs the external goods as well" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a16–19, 1099a31–1099b7).

<sup>9</sup> Thus: "With us, moral and physical feeling are always combined! For God, in His goodness, has for the most part laid down the same rules for practical [i.e. pragmatic] and moral

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perfections” (27:16). These claims are asserted without any argument in the notes, but we can get some clues about what he has in mind once we turn to his account of the contingent harmony between virtue and worldly happiness.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Baumgarten, *Metaphysica* §791.

<sup>11</sup> The term “*ethica morosa*” is from Baumgarten, *Ethica Philosophica* §6 (reprinted at AA 27:874). Kant follows Baumgarten’s suggestion of “*mürrisch*” as a translation for “*morosa*.” Kant sometimes associates this view with Stoic ethics.

<sup>12</sup> Shell discusses the corresponding view as it appears in the anthropology lecture notes of the 1770s (*Kant and the Limits of Autonomy*, 95).

<sup>13</sup> Some of these passages are also discussed by Lara Denis in “Autonomy and the Highest Good.” In his essay “Freedom as the Inner Value of the World,” Paul Guyer discusses two sorts of happiness that feature centrally in Kant’s handwritten notes on ethics from the 1770s and early 1780s: (1) the universal, systematic happiness of all rational beings acting according to moral laws (2) the individual self-contentment or intellectual “blessedness” that results from organizing empirically given inclinations in accordance with the possibility of that universal system of happiness. Although a version of the first sort of happiness continues to play an important role in Kant’s mature moral philosophy, the second sort does not.

<sup>14</sup> In the second *Critique*, Kant claims that if our ideas of God and a future life were objects of theoretical insight (rather than being mere practical postulates), then the certainty with which we could expect to be rewarded for virtuous behavior and punished for vice would lead us to act always *in conformity with* duty, but never *from* duty (such that we would lack any of the “moral worth” on which the worth of our person and even the whole world depends). A possible *contingent* harmony between virtue and worldly happiness (of the sort in Kant’s “unofficial” account) would likewise leave the future uncertain in a way that would allow us to experience the demands of morality as distinct from the demands of inclination.

<sup>15</sup> Kant counts the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Cynics among the eudaimonists. He completely ignores the eudaimonist tendencies of Aristotle’s ethics—and, more generally, treats his ethics in an extremely superficial way. In fact, Kant’s view resembles Aristotle’s to the extent that they both hold that happiness requires external goods and that virtue can assist but can never

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ensure that we will attain them. See note 8, above, and Engstrom, “Happiness and the Highest Good in Aristotle and Kant,” 129–130.

<sup>16</sup> Plato’s Socrates famously says that “no evil can happen to a good man” (*Apology* 41) and Epictetus repeats the claim (*Discourses*, Book 3, Chapter 26, Section 28). Also see e.g. Seneca, *De constantia sapientis*, Chapter V, Sections 5–6.

<sup>17</sup> “For what is it that every man seeks? To be secure, to be happy [*eudaimônêsai*], to do what he pleases without hindrance or compulsion” (Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.1.46).

<sup>18</sup> I believe that if I can just advance to a higher social rank “then I shall live in the greatest prosperity and happiness,” but when I attain that rank, I notice that “things are the same all over again.” And if this ambition leads me all the way into the Senate, then I have merely attained “the finest and most luxurious slavery of all” (Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.1.33–40); for “neither kings nor friends of kings live as they wish” (4.1.51).

<sup>19</sup> Hence Kant claims in a note that whereas God is wholly self-sufficient with regard to his contentment—which is thus a “self-contentment” (*Selbstzufriedenheit*) or blessedness (*Seligkeit*)—human happiness requires well-being and hence “physical causes” (*Reflexion* 6117 [1783–8]; cf. *KpV* 5:117.25–28). In at least one set of lecture notes, Kant concludes from this that God cannot be called “happy” at all, but only “blessed” (*Religionslehre Pölitz*, 28:1060, 1089–1091; cf. *Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* 27:644).

<sup>20</sup> Kant continues in the lecture by noting against the “eudaimonists” that “virtue does not always make for happiness” and that it, “on the contrary, contributes much to human unhappiness.” Indeed: “From morality we reap no benefit; on the contrary it costs us” (29:623). That is, the eudaimonists are mistaken to suppose that virtue *itself* makes us happy or to suppose that the self-contentment that accompanies virtue is sufficient for happiness (624). Kant is particularly concerned to discourage his auditors from thinking of morality as something advantageous: “all morality is lost” if we are “virtuous for the sake of advantage” (623). But he simultaneously makes clear here that none of this implies that we must or even can abandon our own advantage: “The rewards of virtue must not serve as motivating grounds to the practice of it, *not because we can dispense with all advantage*, but because then it would be self-serving” (624; emphasis added). In this way, Kant invites us to interpret the claim about morality’s “cost” in the same pedagogical context as the claims about moral worth in *Groundwork* I: it is precisely when

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morality imposes costs on us that it “shines,” and hence morality “should be expounded in its pure inner worthiness, and merely linked with the possibility of reward; that would have a better effect than at present, where everything is mixed up together” (29:624). This is also the context of Kant’s similar claims against Garve in the *Theory and Practice* essay about the value of representing the costs rather than rewards of virtue (8:279). (For a discussion of the shared pedagogical context of *Groundwork I* and *Theory and Practice*, see Jens Timmerman, “Simplicity and Authority: Reflections on Theory and Practice in Kant’s Moral Philosophy,” 169–172.) We will see that Kant’s own view is not that virtue is equivalent to or even a direct *cause* of worldly happiness through a moral self-contentment, but rather that virtue is a state that allows for the satisfaction of non-moral desires.

<sup>21</sup> Speaking of such a case, Kant says: “I must reflect carefully whether this lie may later give rise to much greater inconvenience for me than that from which I now extricate myself; and since . . . once confidence in me is lost this could be more prejudicial to me than all the troubles I now think to avoid, I must reflect whether the matter might be handled *more prudently* by proceeding on a general maxim and making it a habit to promise nothing except with the intention of keeping it” (*GMS* 4:402.20-30). Prudence “looks to the outcome and this is highly uncertain; a good head is required to find a way out of the crush of arguments and counterarguments without cheating oneself in the total reckoning” (*Theory and Practice*, 8:288).

<sup>22</sup> “Our good-fortune [*Glück*] in life (our welfare in general) depends rather on circumstances that are far from all being in our control. So our happiness [*Glückseligkeit*] always remains only a wish that cannot ever become a hope unless some other power is added” (*MdS* 6:482). Kant claims that this is why we get drunk (*Anthropology*, 7:170).

<sup>23</sup> In notes from the 1760s, Kant juxtaposes these two strategies in terms of both happiness and virtue: “One can promote welfare [*Wohlfahrt*] either by allowing desires to expand and striving to satisfy them; one can promote rectitude if one allows the inclinations of delusion and luxury to grow and strives toward moral incentives to resist them. With both of these challenges, however, there is another solution, namely not allowing these inclinations to arise” (*Remarks*, 20:39.11–16; also see 20:16.08, 17.16, and 77.13). In the *Religion*, Kant reminds us that we can’t extirpate these inclinations; “we must rather only curb [*bezähmen*] them, so that they will not

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wear each other out but will instead be harmonized into a whole called happiness” (*Religion* 6:58).

<sup>24</sup> Kant is recorded in lectures as summarizing this point and drawing a conclusion that sounds almost Schopenhauerian in its gloominess: “If Providence had sought merely our happiness, it would have done so by giving us not our weak reason, but rather an instinct to guide us to happiness. ... Reason is such a bad guide that the people who live most in accordance with instinct are happiest, rather than the one who makes plans through reason and amounts to nothing. Here on earth no human being can be happy. Maybe somewhere else” (*Moral Mrongovius II*, 29:640; also see *Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:367.20). (For a discussion of the teleological point, see *KrV* B425–6 and *Idea* 8:19–21.) Thus the consolation of the virtuous is not happiness, but rather the shortness of life (*Moral Mrongovius II*, 29:624). Those who reflect on this state of affairs tend toward misology (4:396) and hence renounce reason in favor of “simplicity” (*Anthropologie Friedländer*, 25:533; see Shell, *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy*, 101–102).

<sup>25</sup> Compare J. S. Mill’s remark: “Those only are happy ... who have their minds fixed on some object other than happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvements of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way” (*Autobiography*, Chapter 5, 100).

<sup>26</sup> An idea of reason presupposes the systematic “form of a whole cognition, which precedes the determinate cognition of the parts and contains the conditions for determining *a priori* the place of each part and its relation to the others” (*KrV* A645/B773). Reason’s function in generating the single end of happiness is merely *regulative* since it unifies what is given independently through sensible inclination (A800/B828). In morality we infer “from the whole to the particular,” that is, we assess the worth of each particular end by means of the antecedent idea of a whole of all ends. “In the idea of happiness, on the contrary, we have no concept of the whole, *but rather we only compose it out of parts. And just for this reason we cannot direct our actions according to an idea of happiness, because such a whole cannot be thought by us*” (*Religionslehre Pölitz*, 28:1057). Happiness is instead the satisfaction of all our inclinations brought together into a merely “tolerable system” (*KpV* 5:73.9–11). Gary Watson’s insightful account of the harmony of virtue and worldly happiness in Kant focuses on this indeterminacy of

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the idea of happiness. On Watson's interpretation, (1) the moral self-contentment accompanying virtue makes us happy by providing us a sense of meaningfulness even in the satisfaction of non-moral desires and (2) only morality can provide the sort of rational order to our non-moral ends that could form them into a system presenting a tolerably determinate conception of what would make us happy ("Kant on Happiness in the Moral Life," pp. 87–91). But these two points are attributed to Kant somewhat speculatively and in any case assert *too* intimate a connection between virtue and happiness, as if it were virtue itself rather than the satisfaction of non-moral desires that ultimately makes us happy. (We might say that Watson's Kant is too close to the Stoic view discussed above and too far from the Cynic view attributed to Kant below. In fact, the view that Watson attributes to Kant is similar in important respects to Kant's thinking about happiness in the 1770s as discussed by Guyer in "Freedom as the Inner Value of the World.") Allen Wood makes the essential point in this regard that for Kant the dissatisfaction of a life devoted to happiness comes not simply from the indeterminacy of our conception of happiness, but more particularly from the social and competitive character of that conception. Wood concludes from this that, on Kant's view, since the pursuit of "the delusion of a perfect happiness" tends to make us unhappy, prudence itself would recommend that we instead pursue morality in conjunction with the morally permissible aspects of happiness ("Kant versus Eudaimonism," 279). However, Wood does not try to show what kind of happiness, if any, might *in reality* be consistent with the pursuit of morality. In fact, his conclusion that the pursuit of happiness as such is grounded in a delusory self-conceit seems to rule out the possibility of a morally benign form of happiness. (On this aspect of Wood's interpretation, see note 33, below.) For this reason, my own interpretation agrees with Watson (against Wood) that there is an alignment between the specific qualities of a virtuous agent and Kant's own prescription for happiness, but agrees with Wood (against Watson) that for Kant the principal source of human misery lies not in the indeterminacy of our idea of happiness by itself, but rather in the specific content given to that idea within a pathological social dynamic.

<sup>27</sup> Thus: "we cannot think to ourselves an idea of unbroken happiness [*Glück*]; our concepts of happiness depend upon an exchange of well-being and pain" (*Menschenkunde*, 25:1075; see Shell, *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy*, 166–67).

<sup>28</sup> Timmermann also mentions this essay in this connection (*Commentary*, 24). Wood offers a detailed account of Kant's diagnosis of the social origins of vice and unhappiness that highlights

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Kant's debt to Rousseau (*Kant's Ethical Thought*, esp. 5–9, 226–249; *Kantian Ethics*, 4–5). Wood notes, further, that these themes in Kant's thought can be linked to his account of the Cynic moral ideal, but he does not see the Cynic ideal as having significance for Kant's positive views in his practical philosophy ("Kant's History of Ethics," 11–12; *Kantian Ethics*, 90).

<sup>29</sup> From lectures of the 1760s: "Foresight, a daughter of affluence, is the source of unhappiness; enjoyment of the present, with attention to our morality, is our happiness" (*Praktische Philosophie Herder*, 27:44).

<sup>30</sup> Kant thus gives the Biblical curse a Cynic reading. Compare the remark attributed to Diogenes: "the life accorded to mankind by the gods is easy, but this ease escapes their notice, for they seek honey cakes, perfumes, and other such refinements" (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book VI, Section 44; as quoted in Hadot, *The Veil of Isis*, 144).

<sup>31</sup> "Luxury brings people together to the city. Rousseau wants to bring them to the country" (*Remarks*, 20:42 = *Bemerkungen*, 37). As evidence for the unhappiness of this state, Kant tells us "where luxury abounds, suicide is apt to be prevalent" (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:394; on this association, see Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, 245–255).

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the social passions, see Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, 259–265.

<sup>33</sup> As we will see, the Kantian prescription for happiness requires that the agent minimize the importance to her of such a comparative conception of happiness. And it is this prescription for happiness that, in turn, allows us to find the demands of morality to be consistent with our nature as happiness-seekers. It is therefore important to assess Allen Wood's claim that this statement from the *Religion* represents Kant's considered (or at least *best*) account of why a human being cares at all about his own happiness ("Kant versus Eudaimonism," 271–72) since Wood's claim seems to imply that Kant's view is that there is no human happiness apart from such comparisons. In claiming that for Kant our very desire for happiness is rooted in self-conceit (272, 276), Wood explicitly downplays (as unsatisfactory) Kant's view, articulated in other texts, that the basis of our pursuit of happiness lies in our status as rational beings that also have a finite or animal nature (271). But nothing in the context of the *Religion* statement seems to require that we read it as providing an alternative rather than merely a supplement to the account of happiness offered in those other texts: the passage from the *Religion* can be read as telling us how the human being, as a matter of historical fact, uses her rational powers to satisfy the needs

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she has as an animal or finite (“living”) being. A being who is not guided by instinct must use her own reasoning by means of concepts and *hence comparisons* to devise her own plan for satisfying her needs. And since reason is a poor guide, this very quickly takes the delusory form of a comparison with other people, with all the dangers and opportunities that brings. But, as we have seen in the *Conjectural Beginning* essay, this is not the first or only form such comparisons take.

<sup>34</sup> Wood notes the relevant dynamic when he remarks that (from the point of view of Providence) “the real point of being happy is to feed our insatiable *amour propre*” and that “our desire for happiness serves its natural purpose by making us unhappy” (“Kant versus Eudaimonism,” 271–4). Wood emphasizes the *morally* dangerous character of this comparative self-love rather than that dissatisfaction is its evitable result, but also notes in this connection that “an ethical theory that places the maximization of happiness before everything else is likely to be self-defeating—even in its own terms” (279).

<sup>35</sup> In a note under the heading “*Luxus*”, Kant writes: “Discontentment on account of the comparison with human beings, position, or youth” (*Reflexion* 1512, 15:834).

<sup>36</sup> Rousseau counts Diogenes among the many philosophers who, “in order to achieve distinction,” developed “absurd systems” (*Preface to ‘Narcissus,’* paragraph 20); but he is more approving elsewhere.

<sup>37</sup> Compare J. S. Mill’s remark that in the present state “the conscious ability to do without happiness gives the best prospect for realizing such happiness as is attainable” (*Utilitarianism*, Chapter 2, 16).

<sup>38</sup> For an earlier formulation, see the note in the *Remarks* beginning at 20:5.21.

<sup>39</sup> Compare Mill’s professed lesson from his own mental crisis: “The enjoyments of life . . . are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken *en passant*, without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient (*Autobiography*, Chapter 5, 100).

<sup>40</sup> E.g. at AA 7:100.32, 15:830.15, 15:834.21, 23:464.13. The principle is attributed to Epictetus by Gellius as “ἀνέχου et ἀπέχου” (*The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, 17.19.6; also see Epictetus, *Discourses* 4.8.20). Kant would have expected his readers to be familiar with the Latin version, “*sustine et abstine*,” as it was widely employed by both theologically and more secularly

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oriented moralists. Erasmus attributes these “two words” to Epictetus (whom he identifies as “a philosopher of the Cynic sect”) adding: “For a long time now they have been current as a proverb among educated men, and well do they deserve to be inscribed on walls and columns everywhere” (*Adages*, no. 1613, Book 2, Chapter 7, Section 13). Also notable is Andrea Alciato’s gloss in his popular 1546 *Book of Emblems* under the heading “ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου”: “Not only is unhappy fortune to be borne by man through endurance, but too happy a fortune often is to be feared as well. Epictetus used to say ‘Endure!’ and also ‘Do without!’” (29). The principle can also be found e.g. in Pierre Charron (*De la Sagesse*, Book 2, Chapter 7), Pascal (*Pensées*, Section 1, Paragraph 20), and Shaftesbury (“The Judgment of Hercules,” Chapter 6, Section 4).

<sup>41</sup> Diogenes and Antisthenes “posited the greatest good in *abstine*, i.e., the pleasure of being able to do without and thus in the enjoyment of life under the fewest possible needs [*Bedürfnisse*]” (*Metaphysik der Sitten* Vigilantius, 27:484). Kant does not identify the *sustine* with Cynicism in particular, and Kant’s praise of the “cheerful heart” in this context suggests a connection with Epicureanism instead (also see *MdS* 6:485). But in keeping with his Rousseau-inspired diagnosis of our unhappiness, Kant places the *abstine* rather than the *sustine* at the center of his prescription for happiness. Nevertheless, the *sustine* can be found in Cynic doctrine as well. Thus, it is reported of Diogenes that “in winter he used to embrace statues covered with snow, using every means of inuring himself to hardship” (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 6.22). And Diogenes is reported to have offered the following answer to the question what he gained from philosophy: “This at least, if nothing else—to be prepared for every fortune” (6.63). Rousseau offers similar advice in the *Emile*. Also see note 43, below.

<sup>42</sup> Thus we find that the lectures of the 1770s are consistent with those of the 1790s as well as with various written notes and published statements. Other places where Kant suggests the importance of the Stoic principle for happiness, and even for health, include: *Reflexion* 1512 [1780s] 15:834.17, 21; *Reflexion* 1540; *Vorarbeiten zum Streit der Fakultäten*, 23:464.9–17; *Vorarbeiten zu die Metaphysik der Sitten*, 23:403.1–2; *MdS* 6:484–5; and *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:100.32–35). We will see below that Kant’s characterization of the Stoic principle as a “negative” means of happiness shows that the Cynic ideal of happiness remains incomplete. “For Diogenes, the means of happiness were negative” (*Moralphilosophie* Collins, 27:248).

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<sup>43</sup> Diogenes allegedly lived in a wine jar, had only one meager cloak, and, in the name of simplicity, threw away his cup and drank out of his hands. Here it is relevant that Kant later attributes the death of Moses Mendelsohn in 1786 to an overly “severe discipline of the body” (*disciplina corporis severior*) taking the place of temperance (*temperantia*) (*On the Philosophers’ Medicine of the Body*, 15:941–2).

<sup>44</sup> I have emphasized that Kant warns against a “morose” interpretation of the Stoics’ *abstine*. But something similar could be said about *sustine* as well: the “philosophic attitude” goes to meet our ills not with a gloomy resignation, but rather with “fortitude” and the “cheerful spirit” of Epicurus (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:393.34–36, 395.8–10; cf. *Anthropology*, 7:186.23–25).

<sup>45</sup> Epicurus, too, warns of the dangers of wealth. See e.g. *Vatican Sayings*, Number 67. Seneca, by contrast, reminds us that the Stoics do allow the pursuit of preferred “indifferents,” noting in particular that “no one has condemned wisdom to poverty,” a wise man’s wealth being instead “like a favorable wind that sweeps the sailor on his course” (*On the Happy Life*, Sections 22–3).

<sup>46</sup> On reserve and politeness, see *Moralphilosophie Collins* 27:427–28, 444–46. Kant notes there: “If all men were good, we could afford to be open-hearted. But not at present” (445).

<sup>47</sup> Kant’s aim in the part of the lectures under consideration is to argue that our ill in the world is compatible with God’s benevolence since it leads us to a happiness that is greater than mere contentment. Kant notes here that the need for activity is also recognized by novelists, whose heroes’ happiness consists not in mere enjoyment, but rather in the tranquility following their struggles and difficulties in striving toward their end. For this reason, the entire life of a reasonable being can be considered a “drama” (*Anthropology*, 7:281). In anthropology lectures, Kant remarks that the contentment attained by satisfying all one’s needs, the contentment accompanying the “sufficiency” (*Genügsamkeit*) of the life of simplicity, cannot by itself be an incentive to action: “one cannot really understand how contentment could be an incentive to action since it is negative” (*Menschenkunde*, 25:1081–82). Moreover, Kant, like Rousseau, recognizes the positive contribution to human welfare from the arts and sciences. (See Shell, *Kant and the Limits of Autonomy*, 108–9.) Thus: “If one considers the happiness of the savage, it is not in order to return to the woods, but only in order to see what one has lost while gaining

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elsewhere; so that in the enjoyment and exercise of social luxury, one would not, with unhappy and unnatural inclinations cling to the former, and would remain a civilized human being of nature” (*Remarks*, 20:31). Thus: “Rousseau did not really want the human being to *go* back to the state of nature, but rather to *look* back at it from the stage where he now stands” (*Anthropology*, 7:326).

<sup>48</sup> In the corresponding section of the published *Anthropology*, Kant says that to answer the question (“with or against Rousseau”) whether the character of the human being “fares better” in the crude state or with the arts of culture, one must note that, unlike the animal, the human being achieves its destiny only as a species and not in each individual (7:324). “The human being is destined by his reason to live in a society with human beings and in it to *cultivate* himself, to *civilize* himself, and to *moralize* himself by means of the arts and sciences. No matter how great his animal tendency may be to give himself over *passively* to the impulses of ease and good living, which he calls happiness, he is still destined to make himself worthy of humanity by *actively* struggling with the obstacles that cling to him because of the crudity of his nature” (7:325). Kant also seems to have the happiness of the species in mind when he claims, in part of a long note from the 1780s, that happiness is possible only when it has an *a priori* intellectual (and thus moral) form (*Reflexion 7202*, 19:276–7). See Guyer, “Freedom as the Inner Value of the World,” 106–109.

<sup>49</sup> See Shell’s discussion of a related point in the anthropology lecture notes (*Kant and the Limits of Autonomy*, 109–110, 116–118.).

<sup>50</sup> Thus Epictetus: “If you wish your children, and your wife, and your friends to live forever, you are stupid; for you wish to be in control of things which you cannot, you wish for things that belong to others to be your own” (*Enchiridion* 14). Of course, to refuse to count one’s children among the needs necessary for *one’s own happiness* is not already to devalue their intrinsic worth as people or one’s special obligations to them as parents.

<sup>51</sup> Kant recommends, in a moral rather than prudential context, an affectless “coldblooded love” for others that consists not in a *wish* for their happiness, but rather in a “practical desire” that is “directed not so much to the object as to the actions whereby this object is brought about.” Thus if I see someone in distress whom I cannot help, “I may turn away coldly and say, with the Stoic: What is it to me? My wishes cannot help him. ... I show no sympathy for his plight in

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harboring passionate wishes for his deliverance. ... People pride themselves on having a kind heart when they merely wish that everyone might be happy. But the only one to have a kind heart is he who contributes something to that happiness” (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:417–421; cf. *MdS* 6:456–7 and *Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* 27:670–686; also see Denis, “Kant’s Cold Sage and the Duty of Apathy,” 53 *et passim*). Although Kant warns against a parochial love that would undermine a love of mankind, he also laments that “the friend to all humanity” has the opposite tendency to lose a practically effective adherence to individuals (*Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius* 27:673; *MdS* 6:452). In his own life, Kant found perhaps the only sure way to avoid this potential source of conflict between virtue and happiness: like Diogenes, he never had a wife or children. Cf. Epictetus *Discourses* 3.22.67–82.

<sup>52</sup> The last qualification shows that Kant remains in substantial disagreement with Schiller on the proper relationship between moral reason and inclination. See Baxley, “The Beautiful Soul and the Autocratic Agent: Schiller’s and Kant’s ‘Children of the House’.”

<sup>53</sup> See Formosa, “Kant on the Highest Moral-Physical Good.”

<sup>54</sup> Baxley (*Kant’s Theory of Virtue*) emphasizes the role of “autocracy” in Kant’s account of virtue. We have seen that Kant uses the term in Baxley’s sense in the context of a discussion of the Cynic regimen for happiness. In his published works, Kant favors the German “*Selbstbeherrschung*,” i.e., “self-mastery.”

<sup>55</sup> These ideals are expressed in a variety of ancient sources, but one strikingly similar list is given by Cicero’s Stoic spokesman in *On Moral Ends*, Book III, Section 75 (89). Kant’s exclusion of happiness from this list is of course significant. On the role of these ideals in Kant’s account of virtue, see Forman, “Kant on Moral Freedom and Moral Slavery.”

<sup>56</sup> The distinction between mere goodness and virtue is already Rousseau’s. See the *Second Discourse* Book I, Paragraphs 34–5, and Book II, Paragraph 18 = OC III.152–154, 171–2; and especially *Emile*, Book IV, 444–5.

<sup>57</sup> In this way, the Stoic principle could be said to give content to our indirect duty to assure our own happiness (a duty that already presupposes a measure of harmony between virtue and happiness). We have this duty because “want of satisfaction with one’s condition, under pressure from many anxieties and amid unsatisfied needs, could easily become a great *temptation to transgression of duty*” (*GMS* 4:399). This rationale for the indirect duty to assure our own

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happiness sits uneasily with Kant's discussion, only a few pages earlier, of reason's "weak and deceptive guidance" in our pursuit of happiness: in trying to fulfill our indirect duty to assure our own happiness, it seems that we would simply *increase* our anxieties and hence our temptations. This difficulty would of course be avoided if the indirect duty to assure our own happiness is pursued according to the Cynic prescription.

<sup>58</sup> "The rule is this: Seek to maintain command over yourself, for under this condition you are capable of performing the self-regarding duties"; "The autocracy of the human mind and of all the powers of the soul, so far as they relate to morality, is the *principium* of the self-regarding duties, and thereby of all the others" (*Moralphilosophie Collins*, 27:360, 364).

<sup>59</sup> Having such a "character" is what distinguishes the truly virtuous human being from the hypocrite and the mere conformist. See Frierson, "Character and Evil in Kant's Moral Anthropology" and Forman, "Principled and Unprincipled Maxims."

<sup>60</sup> It is a note we have encountered above: "The doctrine of happiness is the principle of gymnastics (negative, *sustine et abstine*) and well-being (*salus*); but *mens sana in corpore sano* presupposes morality" (*Opus postumum*, 23:298). See *On the Philosopher's Medicine of the Body* for the role of philosophical regimen in producing a "healthy mind in a healthy body" (15:939–40).

<sup>61</sup> Compare this to the danger that a theoretical insight into a future life would represent for morality (as discussed in note 14, above).

<sup>62</sup> For feedback on the central claims of this essay, I would like to thank audiences at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the University of British Columbia, and the 2013 Pacific Meeting of American Philosophical Association. I especially thank my commentator at the APA, Anne Margaret Baxley, for helpful comments and other assistance both there and on a longer written draft. I also would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for this journal, who made several important suggestions for further clarification (provided in notes 14, 20, and 57, among other places). Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support for this project provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities under grant FT-60041-12.

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